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PARTICIPATORY COMMUNICATION AND LOCAL

DEVELOPMENT:

A STUDY OF THE YILO KROBO MUNICIPAL ASSEMBLY

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DECLARATION

STUDENT'S DECLARATION

I, Dennis Yao Akoetey declare that this dissertation, with the exception of quotations and references contained in published works which have all been identified and duly acknowledged to the best of my knowledge, is entirely my own original work and it has not been submitted either in part or whole for another degree elsewhere.

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SUPERVISOR'S DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of this work was supervised in accordance with the guidelines for supervision of dissertation as laid down by the University of Education, Winneba.

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DEDICATION

To the Almighty God and my wife, Eugenia Akpene Azasoo and my family.



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ABSTRACT

The study investigated the communication channels used in the governance structure of the Yilo Krobo Municipal Assembly in its engagement with the local and community members. A qualitative approach based on the case study design was used for the investigation. Data was collected and analysed using in-depth interviews and focus group discussions; and analysis of data was conducted using the participatory communication and stakeholder theories as the theoretical framework. The in-depth interview was conducted with four Yilo Krobo Municipal Assembly officials and with two Assembly members. The focus group interview on the other hand, was conducted among five groups with eight members in each group and these were people who have lived in the setting long enough and understood the phenomenon understudied. The study therefore adopted the purposive sampling techniques where the research participants were intentionally selected and they provided relevant information that met the purpose for the study. The study contends that though participatory communication is one of the channels highly recommended for use by the District Assembly actors, the process of the Assembly's engagement with local communities lacks adequate communal participation that can effectively lead to empowerment of the local people in the governance process. This hindrance eventually leads to an undermining of local and community participation in local governance- the key to a functional decentralized government system.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background

Participatory communication is increasingly being considered as a key component in development projects especially at the grassroots levels around the world because of its potential to support development and address specific needs relevant to development as far as project sustainability is concerned (Mefalopulos, 2003).

There have been several studies done which emphasize the importance of communication in improving the social and economic lives of people especially with the focus on participatory communication where end beneficiaries in any local development are expected to be involved in the process. The focus on participatory or effective communication is visible in many studies carried out by non-governmental institutions, universities; either by themselves or sponsored by the United Nations in their projects executed in many parts of the world especially in the developing countries (The Commonwealth Foundation, 2013; UNICEF, 2008; United Nations Development Programs, 2011).

Enough studies done therefore suggest that the significance of participatory communication in local development cannot be underestimated (Castello and Braun, 2006) and its adoption in our local governance system consistent with the expectation of the 1992 Constitution of Ghana on decentralization and local governance would have been beneficial to the local people as end beneficiaries (Article 240 (2e) of the 1992 Constitution of Ghana).

The idea of participatory communication is to lay emphasis on the fact that we need to give listening ears to others and take on board what they have to offer especially in any process of development that affects them as end beneficiaries. Servaes and Malikhao (2005) for instance made the point that people are voiceless not because they have nothing to say, but because nobody cares to listen to them and to take their concerns on board. Participatory communication therefore according to Servaes and Malikhao (2005), helps reduce the social distance between communicators who may be policy initiators (in this case government) and receivers (the local people) and helps to facilitate exchange of ideas, knowledge and experiences between governments and the local people. Servaes and Malikhao (2005) argue that the need to listen is not only limited to those at the receiving end but “must involve the government as well as the citizens, the poor as well as the rich, the planners and administrators” (Servaes and Malikhao, 2005, p. 91) in any process of local development.

It is therefore the goal of this study to seek to investigate the communication channels that exist in the governance structure of the Yilo Krobo Municipal Assembly with the focus on dialogic communication which provides better avenues for participatory communication to enhance sustainable development. And, if the participatory communication approach exists, how efficient is it in achieving the expected results of involving the local people actively in the local development process consistent with earlier studies on better communication where local people are not merely seen as passive agents in the development process (Mefalopulos, 2008).

Communication as Payne (2001) puts it is crucial for our personal, professional and social importance; the effectiveness of our communication for instance determines our professional success and enhances our social engagements and by extension would be

helpful to enhance local development within the local government setting. Payne for instance makes the point that even if we pretend that our social lives weren't dependent on effective communication, our professional lives are. This means that with effective communication we can grow in our professional and social engagements as it helps us to exchange ideas with others. Communication helps to empower us and as Mefalopulos (2008) postulates, it offers us the opportunity to be part of definition of problems that affect us as well as being part of the solution. There is therefore no doubt that the use of participatory communication in the promotion of local development would help achieve the aim of empowering the local people to flourish in whatever they do to enhance their social and economic lives.

1.2. Participatory Communication and Local Development

Participatory communication has been seen to be the most effective form of communication in local development if development projects undertaken at the local level are to be sustained through the cooperation of the local people who are the end beneficiaries of any development initiative. This form of communication thrives within the domain of dialogic communication - two-way communication which is a departure from the diffusion or monologic model in communicating development initiatives (Mefalopulos, 2008; Servaes & Malikhao, 2005).

Servaes and Malikhao (2005) identify two major components of participatory communication as “dialogical pedagogy of Paulo Freire (1970, 1973, 1983, 1994) and the second involves the ideas of access, participation and self-management articulated in the UNESCO debates of the 1970s...” (Servaes & Malikhao 2005, p. 95-96). These, Servaes and Malikhao say everybody today accept as common sense in

development initiatives that can help ensure sustainable development. They further point out that any communication project that calls itself participatory must have these components as democratic principle to ensure that “subjugated peoples must be treated as fully human subjects in any political process” (p. 96). And, this according to Servaes and Malikhao (2005), implies “dialogical communication” (p. 96) which provides the opportunity for community participation, representation and involvement of people in the decision making process that affect them.

Coffey and Polèse (2005) defined the concept of local development as a particular form of regional development, one in which endogenous factors occupy a central position. This means that any process meant to stimulate or enhance local development largely must be that which is produced from within the local system itself. This is also consistent with the aims of participatory communication which sole purpose is to empower and make it possible for the local people not only to be part of a development process but to help in sustaining any process of change. Coffey and Polèse (2005) therefore emphasized that any development that can ensure sustainability must be that which is based upon local initiatives and locally created comparative advantages. Servaes and Malikhao (2005) also see local development as a means of “lifting up the spirits of a local community to take pride in its own culture, intellect and environment...aims to educate and stimulate people to be active in self and communal improvements while maintaining a balanced ecology” (Servaes & Malikhao, 2005, p. 98). Participatory communication for social change therefore according to Servaes and Malikhao is when people are seen as the nucleus of development.

The International Labor Office (Georgian Trade Union Congress, 2014) also states that the objective of local development is to create a participatory environment that strengthens capacities of local institutions to implement socially inclusive and employment-rich interventions. The International Labor Office (ILO) believes that through social dialogue, platforms are created for locally-led initiatives to advance economic and social welfare of the communities affected in the process of local development. Social dialogue at the local level as ILO postulates offers an opportunity to translate national objectives and employment policy frameworks into action and align them with existing local strategies. It is therefore obvious that for local development to effectively achieve its aim there is the need for participatory communication to reinforce the process to create such environment where the local people can feel being accepted as part of the process of development or change. The main aim of local development therefore according to ILO is to ensure that local development results in the implementation of economic and social interventions simultaneously that create the environment for sustained development through social dialogue. Therefore, in seeking to foster sustainable local development, the focus should not only be on designing communication strategies to send down information to the people involved about the significance of the development in question but also to effectively involve the people who are the end beneficiaries in the process.

Local development strategies according to the ILO must be anchored in social dialogue and through participatory communication. Dialogue between workers, employers and government creates a platform where informal economy actors can organize their collective voice to debate key issues from labor laws to land tenure to the social inclusion of marginalized groups. Locally led initiatives therefore according to the ILO, ideally, are supposed to be democratic, participatory, and inclusive of all

groups within a community, especially the vulnerable and minorities. From the argument of the ILO, it is crucial that in any process of local development which aims at enhancing the economic lives of the local people, steps must be taken to ensure, that the process is participatory in order to ensure its sustainability. The danger here, according to the ILO is that if participatory approach is left out in the equation the process risks being taken over by the elite class and may reinforce the existing economic disparities and conflict within the community and this is what participatory communication through dialogue seeks to address.

Castello and Braun (2006) in their study into local development in the field of agriculture observed, that beyond the use of modern technology to enhance agriculture produce, there is the need to integrate and link people and institution together through participatory or effective communication to promote knowledge on how to enhance agriculture yields to better farming and improved livelihoods. Castello and Braun further say that in communication for development “rural people are at the centre of any given development initiative and view planners, development workers, local authorities, farmers and rural people as communication equals; equally committed to mutual understanding and concerted action” (Castello & Braun, 2006, p. 10) and must be involved. This also sits with what Cabanero-Verzosa (2003) observed in her work about how modern technology alone cannot be sufficient in health delivery without effective communication. Cabanero-Verzosa therefore remarked that if public health programs were to influence behavioural change, then there is the need for health programs to make use of participatory communication particularly to encourage individuals to take preventive actions at the household levels. What this means is that if people are involved in issues that affect them and they are given the opportunity to make inputs about what concerns them, they get

better understanding of the issue and find it easy to own the process and by so doing the expected goal of communication for development to effect behavioural change can be achieved. Cabanero-Verzosa made a strong case that in the area of family planning, nutrition, maternal and child birth health, HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases, the approach of participatory communication in effecting behavioural change was successful.

Governance and Social Development Resource Centre (2010) in its studies observed that through two-way communication citizens are empowered to enter into dialogue with the state on issues that concern them and to influence political outcomes. Without the two-way communication approach, Governance and Social Development Resource Centre (GSDRC) observed that it would be difficult for the state to be responsive to the public needs and expectations of the local people. Communication for development therefore “can help address the lack of inclusion and participation of poor people in national development processes, and provide opportunities for them to communicate their perspectives into public policy debate” (GSDRC 2010, p .4). This sits with Article 240 (2e) of the 1992 Constitution of Ghana which states that “to ensure the accountability of local government authorities, people in particular local government areas shall, as far as practicable, be afforded the opportunity to participate effectively in their governance” (The 1992 Constitution, 2005, p. 150).

1.3. The Constitutional Perspective

The study also stems from the desire to investigate whether the constitutional provision that established Ghana’s local government system to ensure and enhance local development has been complied with or is on course to achieving its objective. Chapter twenty of the 1992 Constitution provides for establishment of local

government system and administration which shall be decentralized for effective administration. The concept as envisaged by the 1992 Constitution therefore is to bring central government closer to the people at the grassroots to affect them in enhancing their living standard. It is also to provide the avenue for the governed at the grassroots to hold public servants responsible and accountable about how state resources are managed in the process of local development. Participatory communication which Mefalopulos (2008) says offers the process of empowerment therefore can be seen as a stimulus for local development for instance to achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) now Millennium Sustainable Goals (MSG) adopted by the 2015 United Nations General Assembly (UN General Assembly, 2015) which aims to reduce poverty through local development. The Commonwealth Foundation (2013) in its research to contribute to the achievement of the MDGs goals for instance underscored the need for civil society participation in order to influence and improve upon development outcomes. It also underscored the need for awareness creation on citizens' right and empowerment of communities "to participate in public policy through strengthening social mobilisation and the people's voice in democratising local and national development" (The Commonwealth Foundation, 2013, p. 14).

For effective communication to reinforce local development as envisaged by the 1992 Constitution therefore, there is the need for key players to play their roles as required by participatory communication; that is all stakeholders participating in the definition of the issues concerning them and in this case at the local level. In article edited by Ofei-Aboagye and Osei-Wusu (2004), Peter Schellschmidt, Director of Friedrich Ebert Foundation (commenting on the role and training needs of the District Coordinating Director) indicates that Ghanaians expect a lot from the District

Assembly, but they do not really know how the Assembly business operates. The local people's focus according to Schellschmidt, is normally on the District Chief Executive and sometimes on the Presiding Member because they are unaware of the role of the Coordinating Director. Schellschmidt, however, observes that yet a critical reflection on the law that established the local government system (Act 462, Local Government Act, as well as PNDC Law 327, Civil Service Law) shows that the District Coordinating Director is the kingpin in the attainment of the Assembly's declared objectives. What this means is that perhaps, because of lack of participatory communication the local people themselves may not know their roles in the local development process let alone the appropriate place to turn to in times of need of information or assistance. This constraint, among others, may affect the process of local development as the local people also may not be aware of the rightful people to contact in the process of local development because of the communication gap.

Ahwoi (2010) for instance, in his book, *Local Government and Decentralisation in Ghana* underscored the importance of the local governance system but was quick to add that there has been only partial devolution of administrative authority to the district level. Ahwoi points out that "Central government agencies continue to retain their hierarchy from the national to the region to the district offices leaving the district assemblies that are supposed to facilitate policies for local development helpless" (2010, p. 122), a situation which Ahwoi observed as thus "real fusion has not yet occurred" (2010, p. 122) as envisaged under the 1992 Constitution. Ahwoi thinks this does not offer the local people the opportunity to effectively involve in the governance system in the 'definition of problems that affect' them as Mefalopulos (2008) would put it. Ahwoi therefore in his reform-proposal, *Rethinking Decentralization and Local Government (2010)*, to the 2010 Constitutional Review

Commission and Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA) argues, that in order to make the local people own the decentralized process and to enhance local development, one of the things to consider is to review the power of the 30 percent appointment of Assembly members to Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs) conferred on the President by the 1992 Constitution and vested in the Regional House of Chief. Ahwoi argues that the power has been bastardized by successive Presidents to appoint their party executive and cronies to the Assemblies instead of original rationale of using the provision to infuse expertise into the Assemblies and to cater for marginalized and disadvantaged groups in the process of local development.

1.4. Statement of the Problem

The United Nations Development Programs (2011) sees Communication for Development (C4D) as crucial in local development as it provides an avenue for opening new opportunities. More than just a strategy, the United Nations (UN) sees participatory communication for development as a social process that promotes dialogue between communities and decision makers at local, national and regional levels. Its goal therefore is to promote, develop and implement policies and programmes that enhance the quality of life of the local people. This is also consistent with what the International Labour Office (Georgian Trade Union Congress, 2014) postulates, that social dialogue strengthens community groups' capacity to engage in economic development through enhanced communication of local priorities and creates the environment for sustainable local development.

According to Mefalopulos (2008), dialogic mode of communication which provides room for participatory communication to thrive is "based on the horizontal, two-way

model of communication, creating a constructive environment where stakeholders can participate in the definition of a problem and solution” (Mefalopulos, 2008, p. 22) that affect them. The dialogic mode therefore according to Mefalopulos has two main purposes, communication to assess and communication to empower. Communication to assess enables stakeholders to know the peculiar problems that affect the governed and how to design effective means and strategies to empower them to overcome such problems and hence, communication to empower. However, studies show that in many cases monologic mode of communication is what appears to be dominant in our governance structure as revealed for instance by Agyemang (2010) in a study he conducted in the New Juabeng Municipality on provision of educational facilities.

Coldevin (2003) and Cabanero-Verzosa (2003) have done studies in the areas of agriculture and health respectively. These studies established that participatory communication has a positive impact on development project initiatives. Coldevin for instance made the point, that in Namibia where participatory communication was used among some selected farmers, the result was that “farmers who were part of the extension communication programme increased their planting of certified seeds by 24 percent, and seeding rows and use of fertilizers each by 23 percent...almost half of the participating farmers agreed that the use of flip-charts by extensionists helped them greatly to understand the improved farming practice” (Coldevin, 2003, p. 6) compared to farmers who had not been exposed to the training, knowledge and skills sharing which are key components of participatory communication.

However, Agyemang (2010) and Ahwoi (2010) point out that not much seems to have been done in respect of the use of participatory communication in local governance at the District Assembly level as prescribed by the 1992 Constitution which in Article

240 (2e) prescribes public participation for effective local governance and development.

This study, therefore, seeks to investigate how participatory communication is used by the Yilo Krobo Municipal Assembly to ensure true participation as envisaged both by participatory communication and Article 240 (2e) of the 1992 Constitution of Ghana.

1.5. Research Objectives

The main goal of the study is to assess the communication channels used by the Yilo Krobo Municipal Assembly in its local development process and to assess how the communication channels used help to facilitate people's participation in the development process.

In this research therefore, the study sought:

1. To identify the communication channels used in the local development process by the Yilo Krobo Municipal Assembly (YKMA).
2. To interrogate how the channels used facilitate the people's participation in the local development process.

1.6. Research Questions (RQ)

The research sought to answer the following questions:

1. What are the communication channels that are used in the development process by the Yilo Krobo Municipal Assembly (YKMA)?

2. How do the communication channels that are used facilitate people's participation in the development process?

1.7. Significance of Study

The significance of the study stems from the fact that decentralized planning is receiving increasing attention from the international development agencies as potential tool to fight against poverty and enhance provision of basic socio-economic infrastructure. At the heart of decentralized development planning system is to enhance grassroots participation in the development planning process and to facilitate the mobilization of support and resources for district development (Agyemang, 2010).

The decentralized local government system which is to prosecute the agenda of local development has been in existence in Ghana for over two decades now since 1988 and consolidated by the inception of the 1992 Constitution and yet people's participation in local governance as observed by Agyemang (2010) and Ahwoi (2010) continue to be a problem at the district level. This study, using the case study approach therefore, attempts to find out more about the phenomenon and to establish the challenges relative to people's participation in the development process of the Yilo Krobo Municipal Assembly; and, based on the findings, recommend strategies to enhance citizens' participation in the local development planning process of the Assembly in the provision of social and economic infrastructure developments in the municipality with the ultimate goal of improving livelihoods.

It is therefore expected that at the end of the study the findings will contribute to existing works on participatory communication as tool for sustainable local development.

1.8. Delimitations of the study

Geographically, the study was carried out in the Yilo Krobo Municipality in the Eastern Region of Ghana. The Municipality was selected for the study because it is endowed with potentials for local development. In terms of content, the study focused on participatory communication and local development in the decentralized planning system of the Yilo Krobo Municipal Assembly. The researcher therefore believes that the use of participatory communication to involve the local people to be part of the definition and solution of problems that affect them in the development process through local initiatives would help improve their living conditions. The study in terms of time frame covered one (1) year (from July 2015 to July 2016).

1.9. Background of Yilo Krobo Municipality

The Yilo Krobo Municipal Assembly which has its capital at Somanya forms part of the twenty three (23) Municipalities and Districts in the Eastern Region of Ghana. The municipality covers a total estimated surface area of 1,201 square kilometers of the total area of Eastern Region. The Municipality also shares boundaries with New Juaben Municipal and Akwapem North District to the West, Lower Manya Krobo District to the East, Fanteakwa District to the North and with Shai Osudoku District to the South (yilokrobo.ghanadistricts.gov.gh)

The Yilo Krobo by the 2010 Population and Housing Census (PHC) shows that the majority of the people are resident in the rural area and engaged in non-white color job activities such as farming and bead making. Of about 87,847 populations, 60,688 representing 69.1% live in the rural areas with 58% of the population engaged in agriculture activities. The municipality is blessed with limestone deposits used for production of cement and some tourist attractions such as Boti falls among others

(2010 PHC). The people of Yilo Krobo are krobos and the major language spoken is krobo though you can find some others speak Ewe and Akan languages.

The development potentials of the municipality therefore call for the need for participatory communication to effectively involve the natives in the development process in issues that affect them to ensure sustained development that would enhance the living conditions of the people. Such approach for instance would help the local people in the field of agriculture as they learn how to integrate modern technology with traditional farming methods to enhance their yields which in effect would enhance their living condition being the main objective of local development (Castello & Braun, 2006).

Again, human capital is very crucial in local development and therefore the need for healthy people to propel any development agenda is very crucial as well; and, Yilo Krobo as one of the areas with high prevalence of the HIV/AIDS pandemic poses a health challenge to local development as far as human capital is concerned. Therefore, participatory communication as rightly observed by Cabanero-Verzosa (2003) can help address health related problems by encouraging people to take precautionary measures in order to remain healthy for local development. Currently, it is reported that only 26 % and 33% of boys and girls respectively have any idea about the modes of HIV/AIDS transmission nationwide. The Eastern Region within which Yilo krobo is located has the highest regional HIV/AIDS prevalence of 3.7% and in spite of the fact that the national prevalence has decreased from 1.9% in 2013 to 1.6 % in 2014, Agormanya/Somanya in the Eastern Region records the highest district prevalence of 11.6% within the period (GHANA AIDS COMMISSION, 2014). This is a threat to human capital and in effect a threat to local development and adoption of participatory communication approach in the area of public health for instance as part

of the local development process would yield dividend in comprehensive approach to enhancing the living condition of the local people.

1.10. Summary

This chapter underscores the importance of communication in any human endeavor with the focus on participatory communication in local development. The goal as observed by Mefalopulos (2008) is to ensure behavioural change and empowering of the local people in any development initiative process within the decentralized governance setting. This is in line with the mandate of District Assemblies as envisage under Article 240 of the 1992 Constitution and Local Government Act, 1993, Act 462. The focus of the study however, is on the Yilo Krobo Municipal Assembly.

The chapter also shows through the literature reviewed that participatory communication which main aim is to achieve behavioural change and empowering process of the local people, has been considerably used in isolated development initiatives by private institutions. It is therefore believed that, the concept, if effectively used in our decentralized governance system, it will inure to the benefits of the local people who are the end-beneficiaries in the local development process as well as help to deepen good governance at the local levels.

1.11. Organisation of the study

The study is organized into five chapters. Chapter one looks at the general overview of the study, the problem statement as well as the delimitation of the study. Chapter two focused on review of related literature on participatory communication, local government and decentralized government system of Ghana as well as theoretical

framework. Chapter three dwells on Research design, data sources, data collection instruments, study population, sample size determination and data processing. Chapter four represents an analysis and discussion of the findings of the study conducted. The fifth and final chapter represents the conclusion and the recommendations of the study as well as summary of findings of the study.



CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

This chapter examines the relevant literature on the phenomenon under study. It addresses some of the issues outlined by earlier scholars and researchers on the subject matter under discussion which is ‘participatory communication and local development’. The review delves into the broad subject of communication and its impact on local development. The chapter begins with the concept of decentralization and decentralized planning as envisaged by the 1992 Constitution which serves as the platform for local development. It looks at communication of various forms with the focus on participatory communication and local development and ends with summary of key issues identified in the review.

2.2. Concept of Decentralization

The World Bank (2001) defines decentralization as the transfer of authority and responsibility for public function from the central government to intermediate and local government or quasi-independent government organization and or a private sector. However, there are three types of decentralization identified by the World Bank namely; the political, fiscal and administrative decentralizations. The World Bank therefore makes the point that the impact of decentralization on any local development would depend on the type of decentralization a country practices which would also inform its design contingent upon the political structure and administrative issues of the country in question. The concept therefore in a classical sense according to the Eryilmaz (2011) is to transfer authority, responsibility and resources from

central government to local governments to promote and enhance sustainable local development and hence, reinforce central government-local government relations (Eryilmaz, 2011, as cited by Ozmen, 2014). This is to say that the local governments then serve as the window to receive from the centre and give to the grassroots; a system which provides the opportunity for the people to have a say in the decision making process and definition of problems that affect them in the local development process (Mefalopulos, 2008).

Ahwoi (2010) also argues for instance, that Ghana's decentralization system notwithstanding its theoretical framework laid out is at the moment operational only at the administrative level while political and fiscal authorities are still centralized, as "...Central government agencies continue to retain their hierarchy from the national to the region to the district offices leaving the district assemblies that are supposed to facilitate policies for local development helpless; a situation which Ahwoi describes as real fusion has not yet occurred" (p. 122) as envisaged under the 1992 Constitution.

Ghana's decentralized system as argued by Ahwoi (2010) is dated as far back to the pre-independence era to the Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC) era in 1982 and finally consolidated with the coming to force of the 1992 constitution. The PNDC government according to Ahwoi (2010) was convinced that the only way to alleviate poverty was to ensure that governance is transferred to the people at the grassroots to be part of the local development process to ensure participation in the decision making process about issues that affect them and also to hold government officials accountable. Ahwoi argues that the PNDC government at the time had the political will and was committed to seeing decentralization materialize but lacked the "technical capacity to transform that political will into a functioning, effective

decentralized system of governance” (Ahwoi 2010, p. 1). However, Ahwoi also made the point that the inability of the decentralized system which was to create the platform for adequate local development to flourish was as a result of vague, unclear and uncertain laws on local government and decentralization; a situation which left even local government officials “confused and lack the sufficient understanding of the local government reforms and of the roles expected of councilors (Assembly members) and the district bureaucrats” (Ahwoi, 2010, p. 241).

From the observation of the World Bank (2001) and Ahwoi (2010), it is important to note, that since District Assemblies are at the heart of Ghana’s decentralization system, in assessing the impact of the decentralized governance setting on local development, one would have to know which type of the system that is dominant and operational at the local level as postulated by the World Bank and whether the system used provides the platform for the opportunities such as the use of participatory communication among others for sustainable local development or not.

2.2.1. Legal Framework for Ghana’s Decentralized Development Planning

The organizational and administrative framework for the decentralized development and governance was given a legal basis under the PNDC Law 207 of 1988. This was replaced by the Local Government Act, 1993, Act 462 and emphasizes the ‘administrative district’ as the focal point of planning activity. The law established 110 Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs) at the time and currently we have about 216 MMDAs. The Legislative Instrument, 1994 (LI 1589) also established the Urban, Zonal, Town Councils and Unit Committees. They are established as the lower tiers of the administrative decision-making body in the decentralized development planning to help deepen local development and

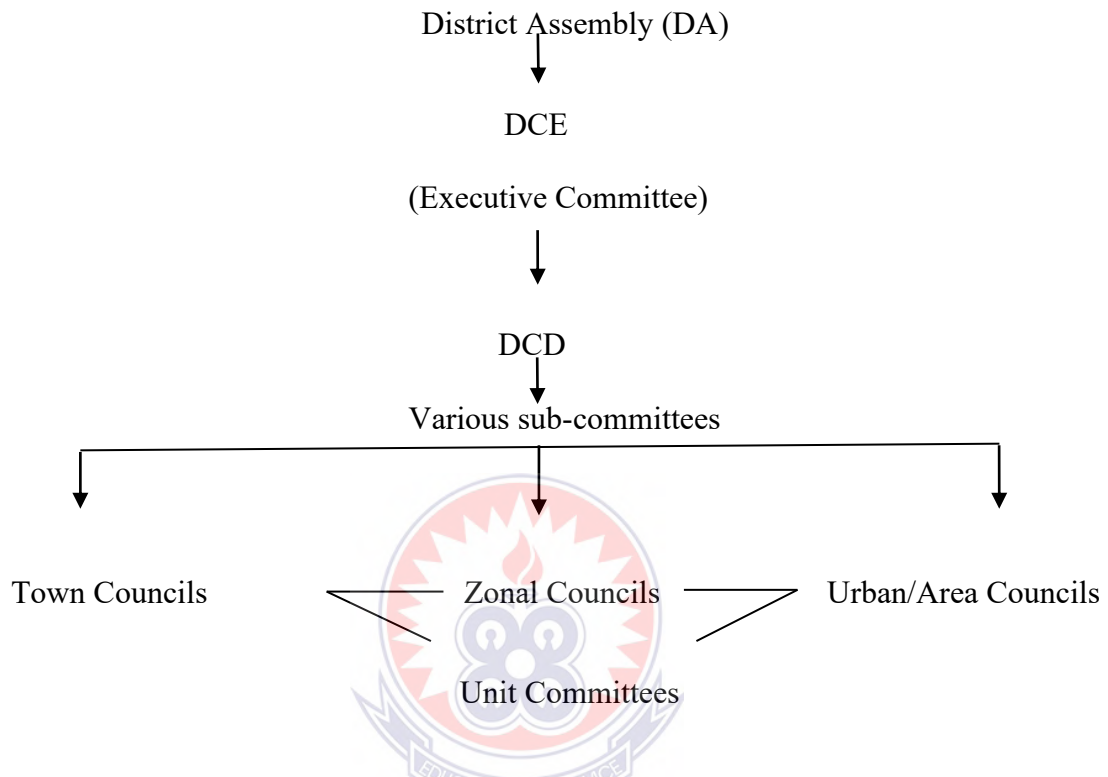
governance. It also created the Regional Coordinating councils as planning authorities. The Act empowered the District Assemblies (DAs) to perform political, administrative, deliberative, legislative and planning functions; a system to ensure participation of the local people to enhance local development (Agyemang, 2010). The DAs according to Agyemang were made responsible for overall development of the district and for the formulation of programmes and strategies for effective mobilization and utilization of all resources at the district level. However, as Ahwoi (2010) observed, Ghana's decentralized system is yet to see a full operationalisation of fiscal and political aspect of the concept as political and fiscal decisions are largely taken by the centre, a situation which makes it difficult for the local authorities to be independent in their planning which can also affect local development as far as people's participation through participatory communication is concerned. This is because if decisions are largely taken at the top (center) this may not create the platform at the local level to engage the local people through dialogue in the decision-making process in matters that affect them.

2.2.2. Structure of the District Assembly

The District Assembly concept has a structure if used, would not only make participatory communication possible but would also ensure, enhance and sustain local development (Agyemang, 2010; Ahwoi, 2010). This structure can also provide the avenue that can aid the realization of the social and economic objective of the International Labour Organization (ILO) as observed by Georgian Trade Unions Confederation (2014). Georgian Trade Unions Confederation (GTUC) observes that as far as local development is concerned, the local people and assembly authorities together have the voice to engage in social dialogue to ensure that views of the local

people who are end beneficiaries of any development projects are reflected in the planning of the Assembly's policies and programs.

Figure 2.1



The above structure of the DA shows that enough platforms are laid out to make participatory communication in local development possible if the authorities are committed to doing so and the various structures are resourced to function as well.

2.3. Local Development

Local Development as Marjorie (2011) postulates was a response to economic downturn in the eighties to rethink the concept of development which was largely focused on industrialization with top-down approach. Marjorie made the point that with no single founding text, local development was defined empirically, with reference to sociology, economics, political science and geography and it has the capacity to strengthen cohesion within certain urban areas, social groups and

peripheral regions. This means that the concept was to respond to the practicality of economic problems to addressing socio-economic problems of the people at the local level using resources available as well as stakeholder consultation at the local level.

Local development therefore is defined by Marjorie as territorial and integrated strategies which mobilise many local actors in the form of a partnership with the short-term aim of improving upon the local living and working conditions, and with its long-term ambition target on structural change. The focus is centered at the local level by maximizing local resources at a lower cost rather than over concentration on industrialization as the way of improving economic condition of the governed.

Local development therefore according to Marjorie has the capacity to solve local problems by “mobilising local resources, both human and financial and available external resources either public or private finance in order to create a path to prosperity and well-being – one which is potentially reproducible and exportable” (Marjorie, 2011, p .2). Marjorie further made the point, that at the micro-economic level, local development allows the local society to overcome market failures that accompany industrialization to improve regional capital and local skills, and to take responsibility with a positive repercussion of improving quality of life, local amenities, local social cohesion, and democracy as the local people who are end beneficiaries are brought on board in addressing the socio-economic problems that affect the local people in the local development process.

This observation made by Marjorie (2011) in the assessment and prospects after the economic crisis experienced by industrialized countries is in line with this study as Yilo Krobo Municipality has lots of economic potentials ranging from lime deposit to

potential in bead production and farming among others. It is obvious, that whereas, the approach in industrialized countries was a response to economic down-turn to rethink development, the concept can be used in the developing countries to forestall such occurrences as local resources can be harnessed from the perspective of local development; using local resources and local people at relatively lower cost. This would have positive repercussion in the lives of the people as development for economic empowerment would be addressed with the bottom-up approach with the local people at the centre. This approach also makes sense of participatory communication which main aim is empowerment as key in the development process. This also sits with The International Labour Organization (2007) observation which postulates that the objective of local development is to “create a participatory environment that strengthens capacities of local institutions to implement socially inclusive and employment-rich interventions” (The International Labour Organization, 2007, p. 3). The International Labour Organization (ILO) made the point that core to the principles of local development is the simultaneous implementation of economic and social interventions to create an environment where social activities support economic objectives and vice versa. Strengthening community capacity to engage in social dialogue according to the ILO for instance strengthens economic development through enhanced communication of local priorities which creates the platform for more timely responses to economic opportunities. Local social dialogue therefore according to the ILO offers an opportunity to translate national rights and employment policy frameworks into action and align them with existing local strategies. Situating this in Ghana’s context where lots of social interventions namely Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty (LEAP), National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS), Youth Enterprise Authority

(YEA) among others are being undertaken by governments, it is obvious that the involvement of local people who are end beneficiaries of these projects through dialogue or participatory communication, would create the platform or the opportunity for them to make inputs and if the need be development interventions can be realigned with local strategies for the desired goal of empowering the local people to improve upon their economic livelihood to be achieved.

The United Nations Human Settlements Programme (2005) also defines Local Economic Development (LED) as a “participatory process in which local people from all sectors work together to stimulate local commercial activity, resulting in a resilient and sustainable economy. It is a way to help create decent jobs and improve the quality of life for everyone, including the poor and marginalized” (p. 2). The process according to the United Nations Human Settlements Programme encourages public, private and civil society to foster partnership and seeks to ensure empowerment of local people through participation to effectively utilise business enterprise, labour, capital and other local resources to achieve local priorities. This also sits with the observation of the ILO, that at the centre of the local development is the creation of public-private partnerships that brings together stakeholders in the local economy, including representatives of regional and local government, employers’ and workers’ organizations to harness the local resources in a participatory approach to the advantage of the local people. And, based on the rational use of local capacities and resources, the stakeholders according to the ILO define common priorities for the development of their region taking into account the social and environmental contexts. Local development strategies which include social dialogue, development planning and the informal economy as active participants and beneficiaries, according

to the ILO, can therefore boost economic regeneration and help address poverty as well as ensuring that the voice of the local people are heard.

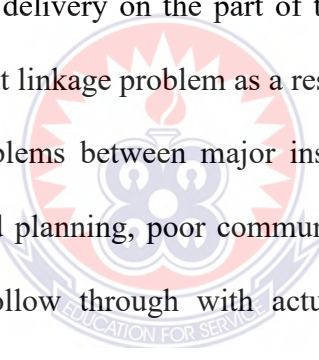
For the purpose of this study and consistent with literature reviewed, I operationally define local development as those constitutionally mandated socio-political and economic activities that ought to be undertaken by the District Assemblies (Yilo Krobo Municipal Assembly inclusive) in all facets of development that intend to improve upon the living condition of people at the local level. This mandate therefore as required by Chapter Twenty of the 1992 Constitution of Ghana (which talks about decentralization and local government) demands for stakeholder participation to provide the platform for dialogue with local people in the definition and solution of problems concerning local development with the focus on empowering the local people in the process.



2.4. Development Communication

Development at the grassroots has to do more of incorporating or integrating human resources in any strategy through the use of communication if such developments are to be sustained through the efforts of the local people who are the end beneficiaries. As has been observed by Castello and Braun (2006) for instance in the area of rural agricultural development, though farm inputs such as seeds and fertilizers among others contribute to improved yields, sustainable agriculture development according to them should be less based on material inputs such as seeds and fertilizer inputs than it should be on people involvement through communication to effectively use those inputs. What it means is that farm inputs only without the appropriate communication strategy cannot achieve the aim of sustainable agriculture development and therefore

the need to make communication key component of any local development of which agriculture development is no exception. Castello and Braun make the point that in many countries where efforts were made through intervention in agriculture development as part of local development, yet low agricultural production has been attributed to many factors among which include poor information packaging and inadequate communication system to ensure that people who are end beneficiaries of project are involved. The focus in most cases was to use the one-way communication strategy referred to as information dissemination or linear model to persuade people to apply farm inputs as it is in other areas of local development and as a result of the one-way communication strategy it often leads to a poor linkage between research from policy initiators and delivery on the part of the farmers. This is what Castello and Braun (2006) say about linkage problem as a result of communication gap;



Many linkage problems between major institutional actors are caused by a lack of coordinated planning, poor communication between linkage partners, and absence of follow through with actual linkage resource planning or implementation. In addition, there is typically little or no involvement at all of representative farmers or their organizations. A lack of appropriate communication structures, methodologies and tools results in poor identification of farmers' needs and priorities, inappropriate research programs, poor or irrelevant extension information and technologies and finally, low farmers' take-up of technology innovations...(p. 3).

The whole concept of communication for development as postulated by Castello and Braun (2006) is to put people at the centre of any given development initiative where development initiators and recipients of such development initiatives see themselves as “communication equals, equally committed to mutual understanding and concerted

action” (p. 3). Communication for development therefore is to ensure people’s participation and community mobilization and involvement in the decision-making and action process of any local development where knowledge are shared to ensure change.

However, though a good communication strategy for development using the diffusion approach can be effective in certain development instances to effect change it may not be that effective as participatory communication would have provided to ensure that people who are end beneficiaries of projects are involved in the definition and solution of their problems. Diffusion, defined as a process by which a new practice or behavior gets communicated through certain channels over time among individuals and groups with the aim of effecting behavioural change can be useful; as Gupta (2015) put it, perceives social change in terms of diffusion of new ideas and practices as crucial component of modernizing process and considers the media as direct force for development for transmission of information to farmers. Communication according to Galway (2009) needs to be understood and used as a process and not simply a collection of print materials, radio commercials and television ads – to change what people think and do (Galway, 2009; Gupta, 2015).

Gupta (2015) also observed that communication, as a stream of study and practice, is imperative for human development. He further argues that many studies have established that communication processes are centrifugal force to self-empowerment practices through which, respective communities are able to arrive at their own understanding of issues, consider and discuss ideas, innovate, negotiate, and engage in public debates at the community as well as the national levels. Communication for Development according to Gupta contributes significantly in human development, as

it prioritizes communication systems and processes which empower people to initiate a dialogue and speak on issues important to their own lives and well-being. Gupta (2015) again made the point that through dialogue and sharing of ideas and knowledge, the process enables participants to develop more positive behavior and practices which is an inherent role of communication for development with the aim to foster empowerment which distinguishes it from other forms of communication.

Butner (2003) for instance argues that innovation of radio and its wide spread use in the beginning of the twentieth century, makes scholars to begin to study the role of communication in development in an attempt to figure out how technology and mass media could be used to advance less developed countries. Butner (2003) further made the point that radio is one of the oldest and most relied upon media used for information exchange by nations and communities as a tool for development. The radio according to Butner has been adopted as a medium for communication as well as for information transfer to incite social change, to impart knowledge, and to exchange ideas. This observation made by Butner about radio as a tool for development shows how important communication is in any process of development especially when it comes to local development; there is the need to get people empowered through communication which makes it easy to get people onboard to help in sustaining any development projects. Butner (2003) remarks as thus:

The broader purpose of communication technology is to enable the sharing of information, knowledge, and to promote greater access to resources to ensure survival and to foster development so that people will be empowered to reach their full capacities as human beings (p. 3).

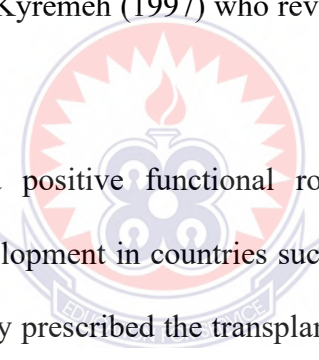
Butner (2003) however indicated that over time, researchers have realized that the introduction of media technology alone was not sufficient to help integrate policy initiatives into everyday life and this changed the focus to the content of the message which brought in the perspective offered by participatory development theories. The perspective of participatory development seeks to ensure that more attention is given to the importance of a bottom-up approach where people in any local developing area are given the opportunity to determine their needs and set project agendas. However, though development communication theory as presented by Butner appears participatory in nature, its reliance on the dominant model (radio) in communicating development initiatives and exchange of ideas and knowledge makes participatory in the real sense where end beneficiaries are expected to partake in the determining and setting development agendas a bit impossible. This is because the emphasis was on the top-down flow of information with little attention paid to the need of the people at the grassroots levels, the marginalized and the disenfranchised and this is the gap participatory communication seeks to close which is the focus of this study; to investigate the communication channels used by the Yilo Krob Municipal Assembly in the process of local development by the Assembly and to assess how the channels help to ensure peoples' participation in the development process.

2.5. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The focus of development communication was to put the people at the center to make them participate in sharing knowledge, skills and ideas in communicating development initiatives, but it's over reliance on the dominant model (radio) lends itself to the top-down flow of communication rather than two-way communication flow which is to educate and empower the people deemed as end beneficiaries of any

development program or initiative. Even though the focus of development communication was to persuade people to change and enhance development processes (Tuftte and Mefalopulos, 2009), the top down approach grounded on the perspective of the Western mass media, paid little attention to the need of the people at the grassroots levels, the marginalized and the disenfranchised (Butner, 2003). A review of this dominant perspective therefore calls for a paradigm shift that provides for room for local participation in a manner that would make people in any given development process to be part of the decision making process where they can have a say in the definition and solution of the problems that affect them (Butner, 2003; Mefalopulos, 2008).

Butner (2003) cited Ansu-Kyremeh (1997) who reviewed the dominant perspective as thus:



They visualized a positive functional role for Western mass media in education and development in countries such as those of Africa. But in doing so, they consistently prescribed the transplantation of Western communication media systems into the developing environment. In fact, from various modernization positions, the pragmatists' definition of media is always in terms of the Western mass media, which exclude indigenous communication systems (p. 6).

What Ansu-Kyremeh sought to underscore in what he described as Pragmatic Modernization perspective is that the dominant model do not pay enough attention to the cultural setting and the indigenous communication practices of the developing countries; a model that did not provide enough platform for participation for local people in local development.

As Tufte and Mefalopulos (2009) postulate, the earlier models of communications were linear where the focus was “understood as a transfer of information leading to foreseeable step-by-step change processes” (p. 1) where the processes usually identified focused on changes in behavior to reflect the development thinking of the modernization paradigm-communication to inform and persuade and not to empower. Tufte and Mefalopulos further argue that the linear communication approach in the seventies and eighties referred to as behavior change communication was closely associated with social marketing-this they said though successful in the areas of health communication including family planning and HIV/AIDS, there were no participatory elements.

2.5.1. Participatory Communication

Participatory communication which has its root in the works of Paulo Freire, according to Tufte and Mefalopulos (2009), emerged to address the shortcomings associated with the linear communication approach used in communicating development initiatives in order to make the process practically participatory. Participatory communication is therefore defined by Mefalopulos (2008) as the theory and practices of communication used to involve ordinary people in the decision-making of the development process leading to change and empowerment. Central to the participatory communication approach by (Paulo Freire) cited by Tufte and Mefalopulos (2009) is the emphasis on “letting the stakeholders get involved in the development process and determine the outcome, rather than imposing a pre-established (i.e already decided by external actors) outcome” (Tufte & Mefalopulos, 2009, p .2) on the local people who are end beneficiaries of a given project.

Therefore, Participatory communication which essence is dialogical from the onset according Tufte and Mefalopulos (2009), seeks to achieve the following;

Participatory and collective processes in research, problem identification, decision making, implementation, evaluation to ensure change and empowerment. In all this, the local people in any development process must be involved in the above processes as end beneficiaries in order to ensure the sustainability of any given project initiated through collective problem identification, decision making, and community-based implementation of solutions to development issues (p. 2).

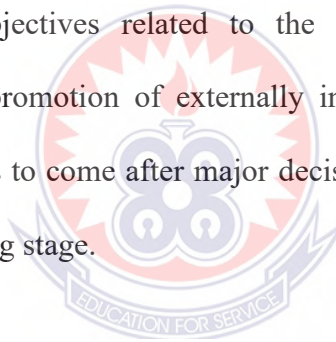
However, as has been argued by Mefalopulos (2008), we have to be clear about the kind of participation required to make the process truly participatory so that we do not have the situation where the local people are merely seen as passive participants just to endorse what has already been decided by external stakeholders or policy initiators. To this end, Tufte and Mefalopulos (2009) have prescribed some defining parameters when looking at participation. In doing so, Tufte and Mefalopulos (2009) postulate that we should have clear understanding of the following; “what is participation to each stakeholder?; why is participation so important in development processes, and for whom is it important?; who is supposed to participate?; when is participation relevant, and for whom?; what are the most common constraints to participation, and according to whom?; how is a successful participatory process evaluated?” (Tufte & Mefalopulos 2009, p. 4)

Even though no consensus exists with regard to what constitute participation according to Tufte and Mefalopulos (2009), the above defining features if addressed in the process of participatory communication in any development engagement would inure to the benefits of all stakeholders with the effect of empowering the local people

who are seen as end beneficiaries in development initiatives. To apply participatory communication to development therefore means that communication must take place among all parties affected in order to ensure that the opportunity is provided for everybody involved to influence the outcome of any development initiative as well as to facilitate empowerment of the local people.

Commenting on interactive participation in communication as key to development and its sustainability, Coldevin (2003) provides a typology of participation with the focus on the bottom-up approach to include the below;

Functional participation – People participate by forming groups to meet predetermined objectives related to the project, which can involve the development or promotion of externally initiated social organization. Such involvement tends to come after major decisions have been made, rather than during the planning stage.



Interactive participation – People participate in joint analysis, which leads to action plans and the formation of new local institutions or the strengthening of existing ones. It tends to involve interdisciplinary methodologies that seek multiple perspectives and make use of systematic and structured learning processes. These groups have control over local decisions, and so people have a stake in maintaining structures or practices.

Self-mobilization – People participate by taking initiatives independent of external institutions to change systems. They develop contacts with external institutions for resources and technical advice they need, but retain control

over how resources are used. Self-initiated mobilization and collective action may or may not challenge existing inequitable distributions of wealth and power (p. 17).

Tufte and Mefalopulos (2009) also put this typology at four levels namely, Passive Participation; Participation by Consultation; Participation by Collaboration; and Empowerment participation.

Passive participation is where stakeholders of a project for instance participate by being informed about what is doing to happen or had already happened. Stakeholders feedback at this level is minimal and this approach is considered the least of the four approaches; Participation by consultation is where stakeholders are consulted to provide answers to some predetermined question posed by external experts but all decision-making powers are in the hands of the external experts; Participation by collaboration on the other hand provides the platform for local stakeholders to participate in discussion and analysis of predetermined objectives. Though this level of participation does not provide for a dramatic change, it provides room for active involvement of local stakeholders in the decision-making process as it “incorporates a component of horizontal communication and capacity building among all stakeholders...” (Tufte & Mefalopulos, 2009, p. 7); and Empowerment participation provides the platform for true participation. Here, local stakeholders are “capable and willing to initiate the process and take part in the analysis. This leads to joint decision making about what should be achieved and how” (Tufte & Mefalopulos, 2009, p. 7) and therefore ensures empowerment since the dialogue process leads to identification and analysis of critical issues and exchange of knowledge and experiences and ensure

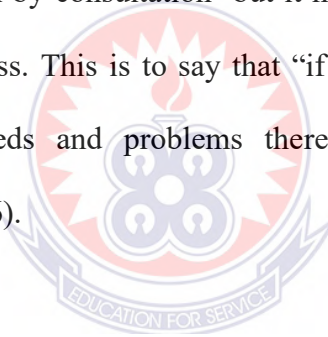
ownership and control in the hands of the local stakeholders also known as primary stakeholder (Tufte & Mefalopulos, 2009).

Servaes and Malikhao (2005) indicate the need for participatory communication in local development much simpler when they argue that “People are ‘voiceless’ not because they have nothing to say, but because nobody cares to listen to them” (p. 91) and stress that participation helps to “reduce the social distance between communicators and receivers, between teachers and learners, between leaders and followers as well as facilitate a more equitable exchange of ideas, knowledge and experiences” (p. 91) needed for sustainable development. There is the need therefore to ensure that the process of listening “is not limited only to those at the receiving end of any policy initiative but must involve the “governments as well as the citizens, the poor as well as the rich, the planners and administrators as well as their targets” (Servaes & Malikhao, 2005, p. 91) in the development process.

Mefalopulos (2003) in his work on participatory communication using the case study of Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) project in Southern Africa indicate that participatory communication is crucial component in project development and it is consistent with any development vision for international development needed in the sustainability of any development project and also to ensure genuine ownership by end-beneficiaries. Mefalopulos (2003) therefore argues that participatory communication has the potential of addressing specific needs and priorities relevant to people and at the same time assisting in their empowerment in the development process because of its horizontal and people-based connotations. Therefore, according to Mefalopulos (2003);

if participatory communication could be used and applied in a genuine and consistent way, decisions that have been traditionally taken by outsiders (i.e. foreign experts) can gradually be made by insiders (i.e. local communities) with the collaboration of other stakeholders (p. 5).

And, to achieve the objective where local people or communities are involved in the decision making process leading to empowering them, participation and communication, Mefalopulos argues, are necessary tools for incorporating the notion and practices of empowerment. This means that participation cannot just be reduced to people's involvement in the implementation of projects, which at best could be described as 'participation by consultation' but it must start from the very beginning of the development process. This is to say that "if people do not have the power to decide their priority needs and problems there can be no true participation" (Mefalopulos, 2003, p. 5-6).



Therefore, in order to ensure openness and balanced flow of information between stakeholders in the communication process as a way of involving and empowering those directly affected by a given policy decision or project referred to as end-beneficiaries and also to ensure sustainability of development projects, Mefalopulos provides for a model referred to as Johari Window (Mefalopulos, 2003, 2008) as a platform for participatory decision making and knowledge sharing.

Johari Window

<p><i>Window 1: Open Knowledge</i></p> <p>What they know</p> <p>What we know</p>	<p><i>Window 2: Our Hidden Knowledge</i></p> <p>What they do not know</p> <p>What we know</p>
<p><i>Window 3: Their Hidden Knowledge</i></p> <p>What they know</p> <p>What we do not know</p>	<p><i>Window 4: The Blind Spot</i></p> <p>What they do not know</p> <p>What we do not know</p>

The Johari Window (shown above) is useful in illustrating the collaborative effort and processes that exist between stakeholders especially relative to the local people in ensuring that the local people who are end-beneficiaries of a given decision making process are not only seen as passive participant in the process. Mefalopulos (2008) put it as thus:

the Johari Window helps to illustrate the collaborative effort illustrated above. This illustration starts by acknowledging that both insiders and outsiders share something in common (e.g. language, certain understandings and perceptions of the situation) and that common knowledge constitutes the starting point. The next two quadrants refer to the specific knowledge of each group. The outsider experts, with their university degrees, their international experiences, etc., surely have some knowledge that the insiders do not have. However, the

latter, having lived in those places for generations have an in depth knowledge and a deep understanding of the implications of the issues at stake that can hardly be matched by outsiders. Therefore, starting from common grounds, both insiders and outsiders must work together, combining their knowledge and experiences to deal with the last quadrant: what neither of them knows. The unknown area represents a major problem or need to be addressed and solved (p. 6-7).

The solution to the unknown area therefore can be made possible through participatory or two-way communication rather than the linear approach.

2.5.2. Stakeholder Theory

Freeman, Wicks and Parmar (2004) state that the stakeholder theory is rooted in the assumption that “values are necessarily and explicitly a part of doing business” (2004, p. 364). This assumption, as they indicate, rejects the separation thesis which seeks to postulate that ethics and economics can be neatly and sharply separated. The stakeholder theory is popularly known and used in the business domain to address issues about how multinational companies should relate to the various stakeholders in order to ensure the smooth progress of business as well as to ensure that stakeholders get the best.

The theory’s popularity was credited to Richard Edward Freeman in the eighties in his work ‘Strategic Management: a stakeholder Approach which was done from the view of the company. Even though the theory is largely known in the business domain, Fontaine, Haarman and Schmid (2006) argue that the stakeholder theory is also used by non-governmental organizations, regulators, the media and policy makers among

others that preoccupy themselves with the concept and try to implement it in some way or the other. I therefore adopt this theory here since the operations of districts assemblies also involve various stakeholders especially the communities and this sits with what Kusi (2012) referred to as “literature in cognate field” (p. 35) which he describes as reviewing literature from other relevant field that is compatible with the conceptual framework of the study.

Freeman (2004) cited by Fontaine, Haarman and Schmid (2006) defined a stakeholder as;

those groups who are vital to the survival and success of corporation... In his earlier work however, Freeman defined a stakeholder as any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievements of the organization’s objectives (p. 3).

Fontain et al (2006) see this definition as redefinition of organization itself and made the point that the general idea of a stakeholder concept is “about what the organization should be and how it should be conceptualized” (2006, p. 3-4). Friedman (2006) as cited by Fontaine et al (2006) also postulates that organization itself is to be conceived as stakeholders which purpose must be to manage or promote the interests, needs and viewpoints of its various stakeholders and to ensure the rights of stakeholders to participate in decision making. Stakeholder participation in decision making therefore is crucial to the stakeholder theory. In essence, the stakeholder theory according to Freeman (2004) was to respond to changing circumstances among workers, students, consumer groups and environmentalists in the 60s arising from the activities of organizations. The stakeholder theory therefore according to Freeman (1984) cited by Fontain et al (2006) provides the framework for responsiveness to the “concerns of

managers who were being confronted with unprecedented levels of environmental turbulence and change” (2006, p. 10) to find common ground through dialogue to resolve such problems in order to ensure sustainability of the corporation or business.

In this light, Freeman writes;

Gone are the good old days of worrying only about taking products and services to the markets, and gone is the usefulness of management theories which concentrate on efficiency and effectiveness within this product-market framework (p. 10)

This quotation from Freeman (1984) underscores the importance of stakeholders in decision making process in an active way rather than passive way if any organization is to make impact in its operation as far as development, empowerment, change and sustainability is concerned. This is especially so because, as Freeman indicates, the traditional strategy framework were no longer helping managers to develop new strategic directions and creating new opportunities to the organizations or businesses. Freeman further argues that it was not enough as part of the traditional strategy to continue to solve the call for “increase productivity using the methods from Japan or Europe...but he believes that business-labor-government cooperation is only part of the solution” (p. 10) and the solution must be both internal and external change. Freeman therefore construes external change as thus;

The emergence of new groups, events, and issues which cannot be readily understood within the framework of an existing model or theory...it makes us uncomfortable because it cannot be readily assimilated into the relatively more comfortable relationships with suppliers, owners, customers and

employees...it originates the murky area labeled 'environment' and affects our ability to cope with internal changes (p. 10).

What Freeman sought to postulate is the fact that even though stakeholders may be external to any given organization, the successful operation of the organization in question is contingent upon how well it provides a framework for positive engagement with its stakeholders especially in the planning process and definition of problems that affect the stakeholders. It is therefore useful that certain ethical guidelines are designed to ensure that stakeholders are constantly engaged in the decision making process and as Freeman put it "managers must formulate and implement processes which satisfy all and not only those groups who have stake in the business" (Fontain et al, 2006, p. 13) in terms of holding shares but the main task according to him must be to manage and integrate the relationship and interests of all groups concerned including the communities.

Fontain et al (2006) indicate that the stakeholder theory in its thoughts and principles can be constructed into three categories as normative, descriptive, and instrumental (stakeholder theory). The Normative stakeholder theory (which is considered as the core of the stakeholder theory) contains theories of how managers or stakeholders should act and should view the purpose of the organization based on some ethical principles and the descriptive stakeholder theory is concerned about how managers and stakeholders actually behave and view their actions and roles. Instrumental stakeholder theory on the other hand according to Fontain et al is concerned about how managers should act if they want to promote their own interests (the organization's interest only). It is worthy to note that the underlining idea in the use of the stakeholder theory which is largely rooted in normative principle according to Fontain et al is "mainly to maximize shareholder value in order to be sustainable"

(2006, p .5). However, in adopting the principle in this study, the idea would be to look for maximization of social utility; a situation which must lead to ensure and promote the welfare of stakeholders (communities) and must help to empower the people through their participation in the decision making process.

For the purposes of this study therefore, I would limit myself to the Normative Theory in examining the findings of the study. Donald and Preston (1995) cited by Fontain et al (2006) defined normative as identification of moral or philosophical guidelines linked to the activities or management of corporations.

As Fontain, Haarman, Schmid (2006) postulate, the objective of the normative theory is to answer the following question;

What are the responsibilities of the company in respect of stakeholders and why companies should take care of other interests than shareholders?

In attempting to address the above question, Evan and Freeman (1990) cited by Fontain et al (2006) propose two principles;

Principle of corporate legitimacy: the company should be managed for the benefit of its stakeholders. Stakeholders must participate in decisions that substantially affect their welfare. The stakeholder fiduciary principle: managers must act in the interests of the stakeholders as their agents in the interests of the corporation to ensure the survival of the firm (p. 16).

The underlining idea of the normative stakeholder theory therefore suggests that the action of a given company or organization relative to its stakeholders should be ethical; a process which can be achieved through effective stakeholder consultation. This is based on the assumption that the organization's decisions affect stakeholder

outcome and therefore its decisions has to be ethical since decisions made without any serious consideration of their impact on stakeholder can be deemed as unethical (Fontain et al, 2006).

It is obvious from the literature reviewed that the concept of participatory communication and stakeholder theory is apt to ensuring sustainable and all inclusive development if applied in the processes of local development and therefore important in this study.



CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

This chapter outlines the research methodology adopted in investigating the communication structure that exists within the governance setting of the Yilo Krobo Municipal Assembly. The chapter highlights in detail, the Research Design, Data Sources, Data Collection Instruments, Study Population, Sample Size and Data analysis procedures. Also included in the discussion are measures adopted to ensure trustworthiness of the study.

3.2. Reason for Using Qualitative Methodology

Participation of people is central to any local development agenda in order to ensure sustainability of such developments. Therefore, as underscored by participatory communication which postulates citizens' participation in the definition and solution of problems in any development process that affects them; qualitative research offers the opportunity to study people in their cultural setting through interaction. Waheduzzaman (2010) states that qualitative methodology is suitable for exploring the research area to obtain a detailed understanding of the problem. Again, in the view of Merriam (1991) cited by Waheduzzaman (2010), qualitative study "is a particularly suitable methodology for dealing with critical problems of practice and extending the knowledge base of various aspects" (p. 107). It also offers the researcher the opportunity to delve into the complexity and context of the study through combination of various data collection instrument referred to as triangulation (Kusi, 2012) to bring credibility and reliability on the outcome of the research. Yin (2003) cited by

Waheduzzaman (2010) also says, that this method of social enquiry leads to using the case study approach by the researcher to assert that a ‘how’ or ‘why’ question being posed renders a case study strategy suitable.

Again, as provided for by the local government Act, 1993, Act 462, which created the Ghana’s local government system, the local government system is to ensure and enhance local development at the grass root and also to ensure citizen participation in holding government officials accountable. Therefore, as Waheduzzaman (2010) observes, one can rightly say that the achievement of this goal envisaged by ACT 462 and the 1992 Constitution involves three players namely; the local people who are the end beneficiaries, the public representatives and government bureaucrats (Agyemang, 2010). The study therefore is focused on the kind of interaction that exists among these players from the perspective of participatory communication and its overall impact on local development. This methodology which provides for interviewing research participants can therefore help ascertain the subjective experiences of the people about the research phenomenon under study.

Therefore, since the interpretations in this research are subjective because the study deals with human interactions, the use of qualitative method which does not lend itself to a scientific or deductive conclusion is preferred. This also sits with the observation of Guba and Lincolne (2000) cited by Waheduzzaman (2010) as thus “qualitative methods are stressed within the naturalistic paradigm not because the paradigm is anti-quantitative but because qualitative methods come more easily to the human-as instrument” (Waheduzzaman 2010, p. 108).

Mayoux (2000) cited by Acquaye (2013) also says that the “purpose of conducting qualitative research is to increase understanding of what is happening, contribute to

understanding of who is affected in which way, analyse why particular impact are occurring and assessing how policy can be improved” (Acquaye 2013, p. 35). These theoretical underpinnings by Mayoux (2000) was crucial in this study since its focus was on improving upon what is already happening through incorporation of participatory communication in the governance of the YKMA to impact positively on the process of local development.

3.3. Research Approach: Qualitative Research

The researcher chose qualitative research method because it provided the opportunity for the researcher to conduct interview to elicit information from participants in their natural setting. This made it possible for the researcher to interact with respondents and also be able to come up with follow ups questions in the course of interview as the situation demanded and hence helped to ensure credibility and reliability of the data in question. According to Verma & Mallick, (1999:27) and cited by (Kusi, 2012), qualitative research “takes place in the socio-cultural context of participants of study and, therefore, it involves an interaction between the researcher and the researched” (Kusi 2012, p. 2). Kusi further states that in qualitative research the focus is on how the researcher would understand the research participants and the socio-cultural context in which they live. This therefore provides the researcher the fair understanding of the participants which is helpful in analyzing his or her research data collected that would help puts issues in their appropriate perspective through semi-structured interview interaction. This is so because, the research participants in a chosen setting may have lived there for long and may have a rich experience and understanding of the phenomena the researcher is seeking to understand. This however may be difficult to address through administration of structured

questionnaire which may not have room for adequate interactions between the researcher and the research participants.

Lindlof and Taylor (2002) also postulate that in qualitative research, researchers “seek to preserve and analyze the situated form, content, and experience of action, rather than subject it to mathematical or other formal transformations” (Lindlof & Taylor 2002, p. 18). This research approach was therefore preferable in studying in social-cultural settings of people where the focus was largely on human experiences.

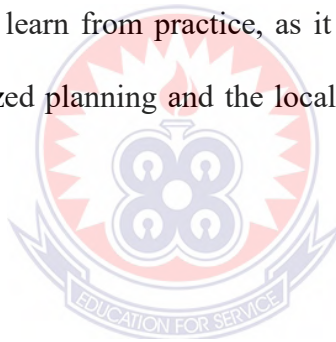
3.4. Research Design: Case Study

Punch (2005) cited by Kusi (2012) says that case study aims to understand the case in-depth, and in its natural setting, recognizing its complexity and its context. It also has a holistic focus, aiming to preserve and understand the wholeness and unity of the case. Bromley (1990) cited by Agyemang (2010) defines case study as a systematic inquiry into an event or a set of related events which aim to describe and explain the phenomenon of interest. Zucker (2001) cited by Agyemang (2010) also defines case study research method as “an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context; when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident; and in which multiple sources of evidence are used” (p. 45). Zucker therefore argues that, with “careful planning, detailed study of the real issues and problems, success can be achieved with the use of case study in a research process” (Agyemang 2010, p. 45).

As De Vaus (2001) cited by Qcquaye (2013) puts it, research design provides the framework or blueprint for conducting a research study as it details the procedures necessary for ascertaining information needed to solve research question. This

includes the research population from which a sample is taken for study (because entire population cannot be studied), data collection instrument and sampling size.

The researcher adopted this approach because it provides the platform for the use of multiple sources of evidence to lend credibility to the quality of data collected as well as validation of one source of data by another source. In this study it afforded the researcher an opportunity to use triangulation to access the communication channel used in the local development of the Yilo Krobo Municipal Assembly. Effectively, as Agyemang (2010) observed, because the researcher has very little control over the phenomenon under investigation, the case study design becomes appropriate method to employ for the study. This approach therefore according to Agyemang (2010), enables the researcher to learn from practice, as it enhances better understanding of the concept of decentralized planning and the local infrastructure provision based on practice.



3.5. Population

Castillo (2009) cited by Acquaye (2013) defines population of study to include all the elements or objects that meet the criteria for the inclusion in the study in question. Kusi (2012) also defines a population as a group of individuals or people with the same characteristics and in whom the researcher is interested in studying. However, factors such as resource constraint make it difficult for a researcher to study a whole population. The researcher in circumstances of resource constraint may zero in on a sample of the population such that with adequate data representation the analysis of the findings can be generalized or transferred in quantitative and qualitative researches respectively (Kusi, 2012). A sample here is defined by Kusi (2012) as a sub-group of the entire population studied by the researcher from which a finding is

generalized only when the sample is representative enough. The process of selecting sample is then referred to as sampling.

In selecting case for study therefore, Denscombe (2003) cited by Kusi (2012) makes the point that four factors are responsible for choosing a case as justification in qualitative study namely: first, because case study is either a extreme one or abnormal one; second, because the case is to serve as an avenue for building theory; third, because the case is to be used to validate existing theory and forth; because the case is a typical one. That is to say if the case is considered normal. Denscombe (2003) cited by Kusi (2012), however argues that:

The most common justification to be offered for selection of a particular case is typical. The logic being invoked is that the particular case is similar in crucial respect with others and might have been chosen, and that the findings from the case study are likely to apply elsewhere (p. 78).

In this study, the researcher dealt with a single case study in assessing the communication approach in local development by the Yilo Krobo Municipal Assembly in the Eastern Region of Ghana which has a population of twenty three (23) districts. The study is to confirm the philosophical underpinning of participatory communication about citizenry participation in local development process of the Yilo Krobo Municipal Assembly with the hope that the findings may apply elsewhere in the Eastern Region or beyond.

The study, however, was limited to the management of the YKMA and selected individuals (through Focus Group Interview in a semi-structured interview format) in the investigation of the communication channels used by the Assembly in the local development process of the municipality. This was informed by the resources and

time constraint faced by the researcher to finish his work as well as the need to manage the study setting, geographical convenience as well as matters relating to accessibility of the setting (Creswell, 2008; Descombe, 2008). With regard to accessibility of the site for instance, Marvasti (2005) cited by Kusi (2012) writes:

You must consider how difficult it is to enter a particular setting, what the emotional and financial cost might be, and so on....In choosing a site for your project always think through what is and is not practically possible (p. 79)

This pragmatic consideration rightly observed by Marvasti (2005) partly informed the choice of site for the study since the researcher works in the Yilo Krobo Municipality and can therefore anticipate a large penetration into the site and hope of getting the necessary cooperation for data collection from the research participants. Notwithstanding this, the researcher was flexible in detaching himself from the system in order to ensure that his biases did not influence the data collected and this was one of the reasons why the researcher also used Focus Group Interview to validate data collected through interview and observation from the management of the Yilo Krobo Municipal Assembly.

3.6. Sampling Technique

Lindlof and Taylor (2002) argue that “no qualitative project can capture every event as it unfold” (Lindlof & Taylor 2002, p. 120). This would take years to code and interpret the data collected and hence there is the need to work with a sample size (Lindlof et al (2002). Kusi (2012) describes a sample as a sub-group of a given population which is studied by the researcher from which a finding is generalized or transferred in quantitative and qualitative studies respectively when the sample size is representative enough.

The purposive sampling approach allows the researcher to intentionally select individuals and site to learn and understand the phenomenon under study with the hope of ascertaining rich information that would be useful to the study which falls within interpretative-qualitative framework (Creswell, 2008). The study adopted the purposive sampling techniques or method to collect data. This approach was chosen because it allowed for flexibility and would be helpful to ascertain answers to the research questions.

3.7. Data Collection

Primary and secondary data were employed for the study. Relevant document, literature or articles were reviewed from secondary sources to support or refute arguments and conclusions about the phenomenon under studied. For instance, the use of journals, publications and internet were employed to understand the concepts of participatory communication and local development and its overall benefits to the local people who are the end beneficiaries of any policy initiative by the decentralized governance system.

3.7.1 Data Collection Instrument

The researcher purposively chose in-depth interview, Focus Group Interview and observation to collect data. However, in order to access multiple perspectives of participants and to bring to bear some kind of simplicity into understanding of the study, the study employed the maximal variation sampling strategy (Creswell, 2005 cited by Kusi, 2012). Here, the researcher purposively interviewed four (4) management staffs of the Yilo Krobo Municipal Assembly and conducted Focus Group Interview (FGI) in five (5) groups comprising of eight (8) participants in each

group who differed on some characteristics. Two Assembly members were also interviewed. The maximal variation sampling according to Kusi (2012) allows researchers to categorize participants using their demographic data or academic and professional qualification. Therefore, a researcher can take for instance an experienced and inexperienced participant that display same characteristics in order to access different perspective of the phenomenon under study. Commenting on maximal variation sampling strategy, Creswell (2005) cited by Kusi (2012) defines maximum variation sampling strategy as:

A purposive sampling strategy in which the researcher samples cases or individuals that differ on some characteristic or trait....The procedure requires that you identify the characteristic and then find sites or individuals that display different dimensions of the characteristics (p. 83).

Lindolf and Taylor (2002) also postulate that the maximum variation strategy provides for the use of range of characteristics with different traits in understanding the perspectives of research participants of the phenomenon understudy. According to Lindolf and Taylor (2002), maximum variation strategy is useful in addressing questions such as “what different forms does this phenomenon take? Do communicative performances vary in terms of settings or time period? What themes emerge when different participants discuss this text, genre, relationship, issue, dilemma?” (Lindolf & Taylor, 2002, p. 123). What this means is that the participants may vary in some traits such as education, gender, religion or age among others and the idea is to determine if the themes that emerged from the data were influenced by participants’ respective traits.

The interview helped the researcher to interact first hand with the interviewees which provided the opportunity to clarify issues that appeared ambiguous. An interview

enables the researchers to get the story behind a participant's experience as the interviewer can pursue in-depth information around the topic. It also provides opportunity for follow-ups to certain responses for clarity (McNamara, 1999 cited by Acquaye, 2013).

Semi-structured interview for instance creates room for much flexibility as the researcher even in a casual manner can obtain information from the research participant who may feel comfortable to freely interact with the researcher. O'Leary (2005:164) cited by Kusi (2012) makes the point that "semi-structured interviews are neither fully fixed nor fully free and are perhaps best seen flexible...interview that may see questions answered in an order natural to the flow of the conversation" (Kusi 2012, p. 46). O'Leary says that this kind of interview may start with some defined questions but may end with the path of any interesting tangents that may develop. Wragg (2002) cited by Acquaye (2013) argues, that this process of interview, provides the room such that after asking the initial question as planned, the researcher has the opportunity to further probe to seek clarification of issues raised as the interviewer intersperse probes in the course of the interview and thereby making the interview process flexible.

Lindlof and Taylor (2002) however made the point that even though we expect people to give us their accounts of event that exist outside the immediate interview context, they may not be neutral in providing such information and can also make mistakes or exaggerate their perspective of the phenomenon under study. Notwithstanding, Lindlof and Taylor (2002) maintain that "qualitative interviewing is predicated on the idea that interview talk is the rhetoric of socially situated speakers ...and therefore interviews are particularly well suited to understand the social actor's experience and perspective" (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002, p. 172-173). What this means is that

researchers must make efforts to speak to research participants who have an idea central in some measure relative to the research problem or phenomenon under study.

Focus Group Interview (FGI) on the other hand according to Kusi (2012) provides the researcher the opportunity to bring together research participants who may be scattered apart and difficult to reach individually. The FGI therefore enables the researcher to bring a number of research participants together at one convenient location to assess their views on the phenomenon under study (Bell, 2008; Denscombe, 2008; Marvasti, 2004 cited by Kusi, 2012, p. 49-50). The researcher in this case therefore only acted as facilitator through question guide and therefore his involvement in the process was minimal. Again, because the researcher works with the Yilo Krobo Assembly, he used observation at management engagement and meetings to assess the participatory nature of management business in its supervisory role of the assembly. As Lindlof and Taylor (2002) postulate, effective participant observation by a researcher gives validity to the data collected and equips researchers to give detailed and theoretically relevant description of the phenomenon under study.

The interview which was the main data collection instrument and was carried out among management of the Yilo Krobo Municipal Assembly took one week while the Focus Group Interview (FGI) among some key selected participants of the municipality including some artisans (bead makers) took three (3) weeks and the interview with the Assembly members took two days. Generally, apart from the fact that it was difficult bringing the participants together, because of time constraint on their parts, the process itself after getting them gathered was cordial which was helpful to the researcher and the phenomenon understudied.

Table 3.1. Selection of Key Participants for Interview

Key Participants	Sample Size	Number Interviewed	Interview Duration
Assembly Officials	4	4	One Week
Assembly Members	2	2	Two Days
5 Focus Groups (with 8 participants in each group=40)	40	40	Three Weeks
Total	46	46	Four Weeks, Two Days

Source: Field Study, March 2016

3.8. Data Analysis

The data analysis approach adopted in this study is qualitative content analysis. Zhang and Wildemuth (2009) define qualitative content analysis as a process where raw data

is condensed into categories of themes based on valid inference and interpretation. In this process of analysis the researcher used inductive reasoning where themes and categories were worked out from the data through careful examination and constant comparison by the researcher. Elo and Kynga (2008) cited by Acquaye (2013) also argue that the “aim of qualitative content analysis is to attain a broad description of the phenomenon in order to give an insight and understanding into occurrences within its context” (Acquaye, 2013, p. 34). Data collected in this study therefore were themed to give inductive interpretation and perspective of the study.

3.9. Unit of Analysis

Zhang and Wildemuth (2009) define unit of analysis as the basic unit of text that is classified during content analysis. Koepsell (2005) defined unit of analysis in a given study as the type of item on which data values are summarized in order to draw statistical inferences. A unit of analysis therefore according to Babbie (2007) cited by Agyemang (2010) is ‘the what’ or ‘whom’ being studied which are usually also the unit of observation. As postulated by Koepsell (2005) therefore, unit of analysis are those items examined in order to create summary descriptions of all such units and to explain differences among them. The unit of analysis in the research included: Assembly officials, Assembly members and the focus groups members.

3.10. Data Processing

Data collected was processed, edited, coded and tabulated for analysis. Editing was carried out in order to ensure errors detected in the data were corrected to ensure its credibility and reliability. Interviews recorded were also transcribed. The analysis of the data employed qualitative techniques. A qualitative technique which involved

descriptive analysis was adopted to analyse information derived and perceptions from the key interview participants. Descriptive analysis was also employed to present observations made by the researcher. Where appropriate, particular individual statements were used as direct quotes to enrich the presentation and the discussion as well as help put issues in their proper context (Agyemang, 2010).

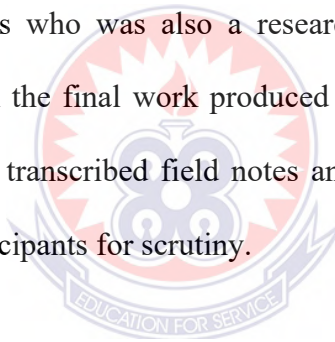
3.11. Trustworthiness

In order to guarantee quality and reliability of the study, the researcher adopted the triangulation data collection instrument in gathering data in the form of methodological triangulation where semi-structured interview, focus group interview and minimal amount of observation were implored (Kusi, 2012) to ensure trustworthiness of the study. According to Lindolf and Taylor (2002), triangulation provides the researcher the opportunity to use multiple sources to seek convergence of meaning from more than one direction that can help cancel out any individual biases and also to ensure that “validation of the claim is enhanced” (2002, p. 240).

Guba (1992) cited by Kusi (2012) propounded the trustworthiness criteria in assessing the quality of study within the interpretative-quality framework of qualitative study. The elements of trustworthiness criteria as propounded by Guba (1992) include credibility or authenticity, transferability of fittingness, dependability or consistency, and conformity. Two elements: credibility and transferability would be relevant in this study and hence the need to adopt the methodological triangulation approach. Triangulation is a data collection approach where several tools are implored to ensure credibility and reliability of the research output. Kusi (2012) for instance argues, that Triangulation serves several purposes including validating of research procedures and findings as well provides avenue to address all possible dimensions. Triangulation

also helps to “address the limitations associated with using single techniques for data collection...as a way of adding complexity and depth to the data and analyses” (Kusi 2012, p. 104) Kusi further argues that triangulation is a useful technique when a phenomenon is studied through a case study approach. In this study therefore, I used observation as a verification check to validate data collected through in-depth interview and focus group interview.

There is therefore no doubt, that the use of triangulation in this research helped the researcher to unravel the various perspectives to the phenomenon under study in order to make its findings credible, dependable and reliable. For instance, to ensure credibility, the researcher conducted the focus group interview with assistance of one of the Assembly officials who was also a research participant in the study. This official also read through the final work produced after the findings were discussed and analysed. Again, the transcribed field notes and recordings were also shown to some of the research participants for scrutiny.



CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

4.1. Introduction

This chapter focuses on analysis of the data obtained from the field. The study sought to investigate the communication channels that are used by the Yilo Krobo Municipal Assembly (YKMA) in its engagement with the communities or people in the Yilo Krobo Municipality (YKM) in its development activities. The findings ascertained by the researcher showed the kind of communication channels used by the YKMA. The findings were then analyzed using qualitative techniques to see whether or not they promote participatory communication with the view of empowering the local people who are end-beneficiaries of development initiatives by the YKMA.

The chapter begins with brief analysis of the decentralized concept and examines the capacity of the Yilo Krobo Municipal Assembly to use Participatory Communication in its Development Planning as a process of empowering the local people. The section further examines the findings of the research.

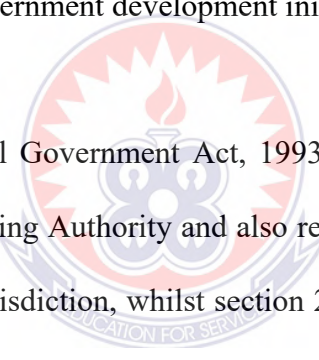
4.2. Brief Analysis of the Decentralized Concept and the Capacity of the YKMA to Use Participatory Communication in its Development Planning

According to Ahwoi (2010), the composition of a District Assembly consists of:

the District Chief Executive, seventy per cent of members elected in election conducted by the Electoral Commission on the basis of universal adult suffrage and thirty per cent appointed by the President acting in consultation with traditional authorities and other interest groups in the district, and the

Member or Members of Parliament from the constituency or constituencies within the district, but without a voting right (p. 79).

As outlined in chapter two (Figure 1) of this study, the District Assembly has structures as provided for by the decentralized concept and if properly used it can deepen participation of the local people in the governance system to promote local development and enhance the living condition of the people. This structure at the top is occupied by the District Chief Executive (as political head) and at the bottom by the Unit Committees where governance is supposed to be brought closer to the people through participation in the decisions making process on matters that affect the people as end-beneficiaries of government development initiatives.



Section 46(1) of the Local Government Act, 1993, Act 462 establishes the District Assembly (DA) as a planning Authority and also responsible for overall development of the areas under their jurisdiction, whilst section 2 (1) of the National Development Planning (System) Act, 1994, Act 480 assigns the local governments planning function including the initiation and coordination of planning process to the DAs. The ACT therefore entails or empowers the district assemblies to undertake preparation and implementation of approved medium term development plans and district budgets which must be done by incorporating the development needs of the people. This entails ascertaining such needs of the people through consultation as required by participatory communication.

However, as observed by Agyemang (2010), the effective execution of these functions depends on the capacity of the Municipal Planning Coordinating Unit (MPCU), stakeholder participation, resource mobilization and implementation of the

plans among others. Tufte and Mefalopolus (2009) argued that true consultation or participation to ascertain the needs of those who are end-beneficiaries of any development initiative is done effectively through activation of what they referred to as the 'Johari Window' which comprises of four windows namely; Window One (Open Knowledge – What we know and what they know; Window Two (Our Hidden Knowledge – What we know and what they do not know); Window Three (Their Hidden Knowledge – What they know and what we do not know); Window Four (The Blind Spot – What neither we nor they know). Tufte and Mefalopolus (2009) explain that:

Window #1 represents the first step of the initiative, starting with dialogue based on the common knowledge shared by all parties involved. "We" broadly refers to outside experts and project staff, while "They" refers to the internal and local stakeholders. Window #3 represents knowledge of They, the local players, which is not known by the outside experts; window #2 is the opposite, knowledge of We, the outside experts, is shared with local stakeholders, covering areas not known to them. The final window represents the end of the exercise and concerns issue/s unknown to both groups (p. 21-22).

The unknown point requires that all stakeholders both external and local come together through knowledge, experiences and skills sharing to find a solution that would lead to the desired change. This process also leads to empowering process of the local people to take charge of development initiatives in order to ensure sustainability of such developments projects.

From the interview with key officials of the YKMA and relative to the Local Government Act, 1993, Act 462 and the National Development Planning (System)

Act, 1994, Act 480, and as also observed by Agyemang (2010), it was established that the Municipal Planning Coordinating Unit (decentralized departments), sub-structures, traditional authorities, communities, Assembly members and civil societies form part of the key stakeholders in the development planning processes at the decentralized level which could facilitate effective participation if the structures are effectively used. It was however established that these stakeholders though are supposed to participate at different levels, their participation were not as effective as required by participatory communication. As an interviewee (Assembly member) put it, 'we are supposed to engage our electorates about issues on development to seek their inputs as required by the concept of decentralization but because of logistic constraint, we do not do that. This is because anytime you try doing that people expect you to refresh them at such meetings and we do not have the resource to do so'.

Ahwoi (2010) postulates that the decentralized system supposed to operate at three levels namely; political, fiscal and administration but at the moment, the system according to Ahwoi is functional only at the administrative level. This assertion by Ahwoi (2010) was confirmed by the study through interview with an Assembly official who cited this as a major constraint on the part of the Assembly to make its operation participatory enough as required by the local government Act, 1993, Act 462 and Article 240 (2e) of the 1992 Constitution of Ghana. The officer made the point, that many at times, decisions about political and fiscal policies are taken by the centre (central government) leaving the District to have little or no control over such decisions that come with expressed directives from the centre. This exposition by the Assembly official was also collaborated by an Assembly member in an interview and

further indicated that notwithstanding the strive they make as stakeholders, he thinks the ‘decentralized concept only exists on paper’, at least at the moment.

Therefore, it can be argued that even though there are clear laws such as section 2 (1) of the National Development Planning (System) Act, 1994, Act 480 which assigns the local governments planning function including initiation and coordination of planning process to the DAs, a process if followed could make the operation of the DAs participatory, the reality on the ground is that the DAs are largely controlled from the centre because of their political dependency-this frustrates a true participation.

4.2.1. Role and Participation of the Sub Structures in the development planning process

The sub-district structures were created by Legislative Instrument (L.I 1589) of the Local Government Act, 1993 Act 462. The Urban, Town and Area councils and the Unit Committees are the lower tiers of the local government system below the District Assembly. They are to provide vital links between the Municipal Assembly and local institutions and resources. Basically, their major function is to assist the District Assembly in the performance of functions such as revenue collection, to prevent outbreaks of bush fires, prepare and implement local action plans among others (Agyemang, 2010).

However, as pointed out above, the study revealed that the sub-structures are very much constrained by a number of challenges especially financially to discharge their mandate. An Assembly member for instance indicated that his electoral area covers about seven communities that are wide spread and he finds it difficult to play that supervisory role as he would have wanted to because of resource constraint. The

inability of these sub-structures to function makes it difficult for development initiatives to see the full process of participation anticipated and therefore leaving the job to the mainstream Assembly with minimal input by local people through their assembly members who are also constrained financially and cannot fully engage their electorates even though they have the willingness to do so.

The study for instance established that at the moment the unit committees which are supposed to be the smallest unit to ensure and enhance participation of the local people in the development process are not functioning as expected. An interaction with a senior management officer and an officer of the District Town Council Planning Department of the Assembly concerning the involvement of the communities in the planning process revealed that, some involvement of the people in the Medium Term Development Planning do take place in order to incorporate the concerns of the governed into the district budget. But, it was also revealed that most of these community involvements have to do with revenue collection than issues relating to the development of the people.

RQ1. What are the communication channels that are used in the development process by the Yilo Krobo Municipal Assembly (YKMA).

The study revealed *letters, gong-gong beating, community durbars and community radio* as the various communication channels used by the Yilo Krobo Municipal Assembly to either communicate development activities to the people or used to implore people to involve in development activities undertaken by the Assembly. These communication channels were disclosed during the field interview by Assembly officials who were also some of the research participants. These

communication channels however were either confirmed or contradicted by the Focus Group Interview.

Table 4.1. Percentage Analysis of Various Communication channels use in either Communicating Development Initiatives (C) or through which Citizens get involved in Development Activities (P)

Communication Channels	Communicating Development Activities (C)		Participating in Development Activities (P)		Yes	No	C (%)	P (%)
	Yes	No	Yes	No				
Community Durbar	13	33	10	36	Yes	No	28.26	21.73
					No	Yes	71.73	78.26
Community Radio	46	-	-	46	Yes	No	100	0
					No	Yes	0	100
Letters	-	46	2	44	Yes	No	0	4.34
					No	Yes	100	95.65
Gong-gong Beating	-	46	31	15	Yes	No	0	67.39
					No	Yes	100	32.60

Source: Researcher's Field Survey, March 2016

In the Table 4.1 above, ‘C’ represents communication channels used to communicate development activities to the people while ‘P’ represents communication channels used to get people involved in development activities undertaken by the Assembly.

4.3. Mode of communication largely one-way – linear/monologic

Table 4.1 above establishes that thirteen (13) research participants interviewed out of a total of 46 representing 28.26% got to know of development activities through community durbars and 10 people representing 21.73% participated in development activities through community durbars. It was also established that the Community Radio called Rite fm (90.10) sited in Somanya seems to give information on development issues to the people as revealed by the data collected. Forty six (46) of them representing 100% said they got to hear of one development project or another on the Community Radio station. However, all the respondents said they were not involved in any development activities through invitation by the radio station.

With regard to letters, even though the management of the Assembly indicated that they used letters as part of its communication channels to either communicate development activities or involve people to participate in development activities, this was not entirely corroborated by the field interview except that the letters were used to invite people to meetings. Only 2 interviewees in the focus group discussion (of 40) representing 5% said they had ever participated in some development activities through invitation of letters but said no letter was used to communicate any development issues or projects to them. What was instructive here was that those who said they had received invitation through letters inviting them to participate in one activity or another were teachers who got to know this through their schools but not as

individuals. The two Assembly members interviewed also confirmed their participation in development activities through letters. Gong-gong beating on the other hand was largely used to get people involved in development activities rather than used to communicate development activities to them. From the table above, thirty one (31) of the interviewees representing 67.39% said they got involved in community activities through gong-gong beating.

However, the gong-gong beating according to the respondents was used to invite them largely to participate in communal labour and not issues relating to their individual businesses that would have enhanced local development. They, however, said that the Assembly members used the occasion to discuss some development issues of their respective electoral areas.

From the interview, it was also established that community radio and gong-gong beating were the dominant communication channels used in communicating development activities and to pursue peoples' participation in communal activities respectively. This in effect represents the linear mode of communication referred to as one-way communication or monologic (Mefalopolus, 2008) and does not create the platform for participation or dialogue even though the gong-gong beating is also used as a means to summons people to attend community durbars. However, participation in the form of community durbars are used effectively by the district health directorate for health education among the local people as confirmed by the study and this represents effective participation that can lead to empowerment.

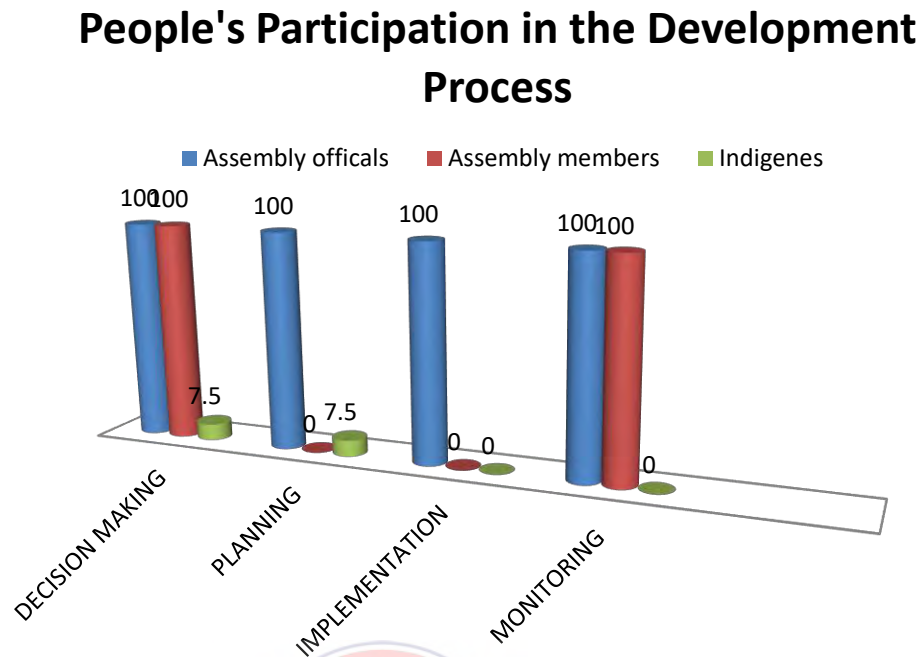
RQ2. How do the communication channels that are used facilitate people's participation in the development process?

Table 4.2. Extent of Participation by both The Assembly and Community Members in development activities at the community level in the Yilo Krobo Municipality (YKM)

		Decision Making		Planning		Implementation		Monitoring	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
		Assembly official	Yes	4	100	4	100	4	100
	No	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Assembly Members	Yes	2	100	0	0	0	0	2	100
	No	0	0	2	100	2	100	0	0
5 Focus group (8 participants in each group)	Yes	3	7.5	3	7.5	0	0	0	0
	No	37	92.5	37	92.5	40	100	40	100

Source: Researcher's Field Survey, March 2016

Chart 4.1. Represents the percentage of participation as captured in Table 4.2 above



The Table 4.2 and Chart 4.1 above show the level of participation of people in the development process of the Yilo Krobo Municipal Assembly. Chart 4.1 for instance shows that even though all the Assembly officials interviewed said that they have participated in the decision-making, planning, implementation and monitoring, the indigenes are not adequately involved in the decision-making process. The chart shows that only three (3) indigenes in all the five focus groups of forty (40) people out a total of 46 interviewees, representing 7.5 percent have participated in some decision-making and planning process of the Assembly. Meanwhile, these indigenes are the end beneficiaries of development projects that are brought to them and the inability of the district assembly to effectively engage them as required by Article 240 (2e) of the 1992 Constitution in the decision-making process undermine stakeholder participation as required by participatory communication and stakeholder theories which underpin this study.

4.4. Management and Community Involvement

The study tried to investigate the extent of citizens' participation in decision making in the local development process of the Yilo Krobo Municipal Assembly (YKMA) as exhibited in the Table 4.3 above. The key informants namely: management staff of the Yilo Krobo Municipal Assembly, Assembly members and people (in focus group interview) were assessed on their involvement in the development initiatives of the YKMA in terms of consultation, decision making, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation in their communities and extent to which such participation helps to empower the citizenry with the overall objective of ensuring project sustainability and promotion of local development. But, as revealed by the study and vividly captured in Chat 4.1 above, the findings show that the development process of the Assembly lacks adequate stakeholder consultation and participation.

4.5. Lack of dialogue

Table 4.3 establishes that with all the four (4) Assembly officials interviewed representing 100%, they said that they have been involved in decision making, planning, implementation and monitoring in respect of development initiatives in the Yilo Krobo Municipality. These initiatives include provision of basic health and education infrastructure, social amenities such as provision of water and decisions regarding some social interventions such as Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty (LEAP) target to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to reduce poverty among others. In a response to a question posed to Assembly official about how effective the local people are involved in the decision making process, this is what he said:

Community members are so much involved. Indeed, as part of the Medium Term Plan, communities must be involved in the planning which is annualized into the Composite Budget and this includes stakeholders such as market women, farmers, chiefs, Heads of Departments, opinion leaders to solicit their input into the plan.

However, upon further probe to find out how management meetings where decisions are taken can be said to be participatory, this is what some management staffs said ... “management meetings are often one-way just to satisfy certain condition with the Coordinating Director serving only as ceremonial figure – the political leader always has his way”.

It, therefore, became clear through the interview that the engagement processes of the Yilo Krobo Municipal Assembly do not provide much room for participation and social accountability as requires by Chapter 20 of the 1992 Constitution that established the decentralized system. Article 240 (1, 2e) for instance of the 1992 Constitution states that:

Ghana shall have a system of local government and administration which shall, as far as practical, be decentralized...to ensure the accountability of the local government authorities, people in particular local government area shall, as far as practicable, be afforded the opportunity to participate effectively in their governance (The 1992 Constitution of Ghana, 2005, p. 150).

Though the interview revealed some accountability measures of the assembly, this is limited only to the annual auditing which is the normal practice by government agencies. The local people therefore have little or no idea about these audits accounts which are only displayed on the assembly’s notice board and never subjected to the

community for discussion even though measures to increase revenue are discussed with the community involvement as revealed by the interview.

4.6. *Lack of Community Participation*

The Assembly members said they have been taking part in some decision making and implementation processes but felt they were not involved that much as required under the decentralized system. One of the Assembly members interviewed confessed that he was unable to engage his electorates as demanded of him by the local government Act, 1993, Act 462. He was, however, quick to add that the constraint was due to lack of financial resources and therefore what he has been doing within his limit was to use communal labour period to communicate development initiatives being undertaken by the Assembly for his people. But, according to this Assembly member, this for him was not enough to get people involved in development activities of the Assembly as expected. Act 462, according to the Assembly member, requires an Assembly member to actively engage his or her electorates in order to know their concerns and channel them to the General Assembly. Unit Committees, on the other hand, that represent the smallest unit to deepen citizenry participation is almost non-existence. The Assembly member also bemoaned the inability of some state institutions such as the National Commission on Civic Education (NCCE) and Information Services Department (ISD) to educate the citizens on their responsibility to demand participation in the decision making process of the Assembly. Further checks with the account department of the YKMA as informed by observation confirmed virtually non-existing functionality of the unit committees. However, an account officer disclosed that the functionality of the Unit Committees has become necessary under the Functional Organization Assessment Tool (FOAT) dispensation and as a result,

this year, the Assembly has been trying to assist the Unit Committees to function. However, the focus according to the account officer has been on revenue generation as required by the criteria of the Functional Organization Assessment Tool (FOAT). By this arrangement, the Unit Committees are supposed to raise revenue for the Assembly and fifty per cent (50%) of the revenue generated under the FOAT arrangement ceded to the generating Unit Committees to enable them function at their respective community levels. FOAT is a system meant to ensure that District Assemblies follow their routine activities religiously in their local development agenda and at the end of a period, the body responsible assesses the respective District Assemblies based on certain criteria and those assemblies that pass the test are rewarded with financial facility to assist the development agenda of the districts in question. However, this restricted use of the Unit Committees as revealed by the study is a clear case of the Unit Committees functioning at a level which Coldevin (2003) describes as ‘functional participation’ within the domain of participatory communication. Functional participation according to Coldevin (2003) is a situation where:

People participate by forming groups to meet predetermined objectives related to project, which can involve the development or promotion of externally initiated social organization. Such involvement tends to come after major decisions have been made, rather than during the planning stage (p. 17).

This is because, from the interview with the account officer it was obvious that the Unit Committees were not involved at the decision making level as it was part of the FOAT assessment (which is an external body). The District Assemblies however have to ensure that this is enforced in order to qualify to access the financial gain involved.

It was also realized from the interview that in some cases Assembly members (except those who are part of Executive Committee) get to hear of meetings few days to meetings dates and invitation letters to such meetings are sometimes served them during the meeting. The requirement of invitation to General Assembly meeting per the Act 462 as an interviewee (an assembly official) said should be twenty one (21) days to the meeting. From Table 4.3, the two (2) assembly members interviewed said that they had been involved in decision making and monitoring of projects, but they had not been involved in planning and implementation. However, further probe revealed that even the decision making process that the Assembly members were involved in, is not the one to lead to empowerment or can be best be put at the level of 'participation by consultation' since their contributions are not often incorporated in final planning process which they were not involved in. However, one of the Assembly members said that when it comes to monitoring of development projects, they are deeply involved and commended the Municipal Chief Executive (MCE) at the time of the field work for allowing assembly members to play that role. The Assembly member further said that anytime electorates go to the MCE to find out about a status of any development projects in their electoral area, the MCE would humbly ask them to first see their assembly member.

The involvement of assembly members in some areas of the participation chain, especially monitoring, shows the importance of the Assembly members who are close to their people and believe to have influence over their people. However, the Assembly uses them when and where it pleases the Assembly and not in strict compliance with the concept of participation. Accordingly, and as revealed by the study, it means that if the assembly members were resourced adequately and involved to perform their roles effectively as required by the local government Act (Act 462),

this would deepen citizens' participation in the local governance system. This revelation also confirms in part what Agyemang (2010) establishes in his work on involvement of communities in the provision of educational and health infrastructures in the New Juabeng Municipal Assembly. He states,

Assembly members are seen to be the hub of information and trust by the citizens and hence, their views are more often than not held in high esteem and so when the Municipal Central Administration is able to win the support of the Assembly Members by explaining to them the rationale behind certain policies and programmes, they buy into the idea and approval is given... (p. 50).

However, this strategy by the Assembly to engage the assembly members without resourcing them to actively involve their people so that whatever decision the assembly members reach with the assembly can be said to be representative enough to reflect the collective interest of the people undermines the concept of participation.

Participation according to Tufte and Mefalopulos (2009) should not be seen only as exchange of information and experiences but it should provide the room for exploration and generation of new knowledge that should aim at addressing the situations that need to be improved. They further argue that for participation to be genuine and truly effective, communication "should occur among all parties affected, ensuring all have similar opportunities to influence the outcome of the initiative" (Tufte & Mefalopulos, 2009, p. 17).

With the Focus Group Interviews (FGI), only one focus group indicated that some of the participants participated in decision making process and planning. However, these people belong to the category that works with the formal sector and some departments in the Yilo Krobo Assembly. The focus groups were purposively constituted to

include; Focus Group One (FGI1) constituting mechanics; Focus Group Two (FGI2) constituting students seeking for job; Focus Group Three (FGI3) constituting Artisans; Focus Group Four (FGI4) constituting mix characteristics and Focus Group Five (FGI5) constituting civil servants.

From Table 4.3 above, the study has established that only three (3) respondents out of the forty (40) in the focus group discussion representing 7.5% said they have been participating in decision making process as well as planning process. But, as has been said earlier, further probe shows that these participations were merely what some interviewees (management staffs of the YKMA) earlier described as ‘cosmetic’. One of these participants who participate in management meetings said that as part of the processes to meet certain requirements in order to benefit from some external monetary facility such as Functional Organization Assessment Tool (FOAT), the assembly needed to have records of certain meetings documented in order to benefit from such a facility. Therefore, for this interviewee, even though they participate in the decision making and planning process which can be verified on paper, in reality it does not have the intended impact since contributions and inputs made at management meetings are often not incorporated into the overall planning output.

Almost all participants in the FGIs said they have never been involved in any decision making with regards to projects that are being undertaken in their electoral areas. To paraphrase one of them, he said;

you are there and you see development projects popping up in your area and then you try to find out. So, you did not have the opportunity to make input into whatever development is brought to your area.

This revelation is also confirmed by an officer who works with the Country Town Planning Department. In a response to a question whether the Assembly involves people adequately in projects that go to them as beneficiary communities, his answer was in the negative. This officer, however, added that if the projects (such schools, health facilities, water) sent to the people coincide with their interest they accept them. He further pointed out that two projects (water closet toilet facilities) built by European Union and sited in two communities in Somanya were not being patronized as expected because, the people were not adequately involved in the designing, planning and implementation process. The people were not educated on the importance of the project, he added. This depicts a of lack of participation which is in line with Tufte and Mefalopulos (2009) who postulate that though people appreciate the essence of participation as replete in literature, “at closer look, however, very few cases meet the standards of genuine participation” (p. 17).

The FGI which comprised of artisans, largely bead makers, lamented their inability to seek assistance from the assembly in terms of skills, knowledge and finance to enhance their businesses. Somanya is noted for bead making and according to these artisans the Assembly knows their existence through their association. This concern by the bead makers was confirmed by one of the Assembly members interviewed who said he has about three groups of bead makers in his electoral area (Flao Electoral Area). The Assembly member further said that the Assembly through its executive meeting had resolved recently to pay attention to the ‘bead makers’ but the policy is yet to be rolled out. However, what was again instructive from the interview with this Assembly member is that the focus to pay attention to these bead makers is for revenue collection purpose rather than to help them develop their skills and give them

financial assistance to promote local development. This represents a weak engagement of people in the promotion of local development.

It is important to note, for instance, that as the world gears toward implementing a plan christened Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) which is a plan to build upon gains made under the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), weak engagement of people involved in small scale businesses would not help achieve that goal within the targeted time frame. This is crucial because, as the United Nations Development Program (2015) acknowledged, in spite of the successes achieved under the MDGs relative to poverty alleviation, more than 800 million people around the world still live on less than \$1.25 a day. The SDG eighth goal for instance is about ‘decent work and economic growth’ where the people are expected to have jobs that pay enough to help them support themselves as well as their families. However, the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) also indicated that notwithstanding the gains made under the MDGs relative to job creation with the middle class growing almost tripling in size in developing countries in the last 25 years, the world still has widening inequalities as job growth is not keeping pace with the growing labour force. This revelation shows that for local development to keep pace and help achieve the target of the SDG 8 for instance (in our case), there is the need for the decentralized governance system to actively engage the local people especially the artisan groups in the decision making process of the District Assemblies in order to know their problems and help them with new knowledge, skills and training and assist them financially to enhance their businesses.

As observed by the International Labour Office (2007), such weak engagement with people in skill training to enhance their businesses undermines local development. As the International Labour Office (ILO) puts it, social dialogue is the central pillar of

local development strategies, which in turn is grounded in strong representative capacities of local stakeholders and must not be overlooked. However, as revealed by this study, the engagement process with skilled businesses or artisans by the Yilo Krobo Municipal Assembly appears to be a weak one and can deepen social inequality. This illustrates the observation made by the ILO that vulnerable groups particularly women and youth are rarely represented and are often without voice at policy level. But as Mountford (2009) rightly postulates, “effective local development requires both good development agencies and a functioning local development system of wider organization” (p. 18) to make the process a participatory one.

However, the FGI confirmed a study on participatory communication in health delivery undertaken by Cabanero-Verzosa (2003) which concluded that participatory communication was helpful in areas of preventive health and antenatal care. In that study, Cabanero-Verzosa (2003) indicated that modern technology alone cannot be sufficient in effective health delivery and argued that if public health programs were to influence behavioural change, then there is the need for health programs to adopt participatory communication particularly to encourage individuals to take preventive measures at the household levels. The focus group discussion therefore revealed that the health directorate in the Yilo Krobo Municipal Assembly has been engaging the citizenry through participatory communication at the community levels where the people especially women are advised to take proactive measures regarding antenatal, maternal and HIV/AIDS health education. Further, checks with the health directorate confirmed that the health directorate has been engaging communities through participation where people are given the opportunity to ask questions on all kinds of health related issues. The participatory process as revealed by the FGI seeks to

empower the people to have control over their health through precaution, education and adoption of regenerative health care.

It was also confirmed that through participatory communication which sought to empower people on lifestyle relative to sexuality, the HIV/AIDS prevalence in the district for instance reduced from 11.6% in 2013 to 6.2% in 2015 according to a Health official. This figure, though on the high side compares to the national prevalence currently at 1.8, the health official believes that the success achieved within the period can also be attributed to conscious efforts to involve people in the health delivery process and their adherence to prescribed health preventive measures.

However, the health official bemoaned the resource constraint of the health directorate and said that the gain made can only be sustained if there are available resources to deepen participation on education as well as supply of medical kits, for instance, for testing, and, the constant supply of drugs for affected HIV/AIDS persons which would in turn contribute to sustaining the gains made relative to the MGD targets in the District in the area of health.

The focus group discussion also noted that pro-poor intervention such as Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty (LEAP) has been designed and implemented from the center (central government) to the beneficiaries without any platform created to seek the opinions of the end-beneficiaries on the impact of the program. Even though participants appreciated the LEAP initiative, some also believe that some assistance through money to undertake some petty businesses can help wean themselves off the meager monthly earnings which are not enough for them to invest in any meaningful petty businesses. What this means is that if a platform of participation is created for appraisal to include the end beneficiaries of these social interventions, policy initiators

(in this case government) would have appraised the program and readjusted it to reflect the concerns of the end-beneficiaries if possible.

Perhaps, the most striking thing that came out during the FGI discussion among those who are mechanics was the lamentation that the Assembly does not do major business with them in order to stimulate their business. Data collected from an officer of the Assembly confirmed this but the officer was quick to add that the mechanics just like many small scale businesses in the municipality are not VAT (value added tax) registered companies and therefore the Assembly per the financial administration law, cannot do business with them beyond certain threshold. This revelation undermines the spirit behind spending of the District Assembly Common fund (DACF) which is to stimulate development within the district. What this means is that, quantum of the common fund finds its way outside the district and therefore does not have direct impact on the local businesses. Strangely, the interview with the mechanics revealed that they had no idea how to position their businesses in a manner that would make them take advantage of doing business with the Assembly. The Assembly too, according to the mechanics, did not take the trouble to educate them on this issue. This shows lack of participation to know the problems of these people and the effect is that local development suffers and poverty deepens as the DACF is largely spent outside the district.

4.7. Lack of ethical guidelines in the engagement of communities

Another issue worthy of note and revealed by the study is that the Assembly does not have its own ethical guidelines to guide its engagement with stakeholders as required by the stakeholder theory to serve as checks on the Assembly to enhance stakeholder participation (Fontaine, Haarman & Schmid,2006). Even though the study revealed,

that there is in existence a broad guideline from the Local Government Ministry referred to as ‘the local government delivery standards’, these guidelines, according to an officer of the Assembly, are not followed religiously.

4.8. Summary

The findings in the study revealed that there is lack of meaningful participation by the local people in the decision making process of the Yilo Krobo Municipal Assembly even though there are meaningful structures to facilitate such participation. The kind of participation that was revealed by the study is what Tufte and Mefalopolus (2009) and Coldevin (2003) refer to as ‘passive’ and ‘functional’ participation or at best, ‘participation by consultation’ in the Assembly’s engagement with its management staff, Assembly members and the people who are end-beneficiaries of the Assembly’s policy initiatives. However, it was also established that the Health Directorate of the District Assembly has been doing well through the use of participation to educate community people and this established positive impact as reflected in reduction of HIV/AIDS prevalence in the district. This shows that if participatory communication is effectively used in the day-to-day administration of the mainstream Yilo Krobo Municipal Assembly, it can have a positive impact relative to change and empowerment of the local people. However, with regard to participation in meetings, some Assembly officials who participate in management meetings expressed the concern that management meetings are often one way as they described it as “cosmetic” because according to them, the political heads always have their ways and they felt that their inputs are often not incorporated into the final outcomes of development initiatives as discussed at such meetings.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION, SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. Introduction

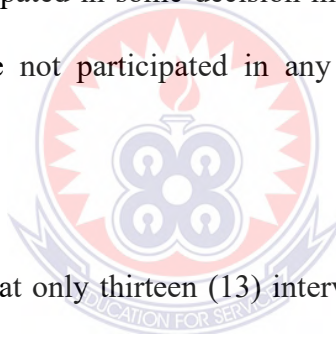
Chapter four provided an insight into the findings obtained from the analysis of the data gathered on the field. This chapter presents a brief summary of the research study and tries to establish whether the research theories used in the analysis have been supported or not. It presents the contribution of the study to improving the operations of the Yilo Krobo Municipal Assembly relative to peoples' participation in the decision-making process and in local development. It also includes the limitation of the study, conclusion drawn from the study and recommendations.

5.2. Summary of Findings

The purpose of the research was to investigate the communication channels used by the Yilo Krobo Municipal Assembly in its governance setting and examine whether the communication channels used facilitate participation, promote local development and lead to empowerment and sustainable change in the living condition of the people. Mefalopulos (2003) indicates that participatory communication is increasingly being considered as key component in development projects especially at the grassroots levels because of its potential to support development and address specific needs of marginalized communities.

The researcher used purposive sampling technique to select the data for the study. The rationale is that the researcher intentionally selected individuals and site to learn and understand the central phenomenon being studied (Creswell, 2008). The researcher also used the thematic approach in analysis.

A total of forty six (46) interviewees comprising of four (4) Assembly officials, two (2) Assembly members and forty (40) Focus Group Interview participants (of eight each in five groups) were interviewed. The interview was to elicit the communication channels used by the Yilo Krobo Municipal Assembly in communicating development activities to the people. The research also investigated how the channels are used to involve the people to participate in the decision making process of the Assembly. The study observed that there was lack of adequate participation by the people in the decision making process of the Assembly. For instance, out of the five (5) focus group discussion comprising of eight participants each in each group, only one group saw three (3) participants out of the total of forty (40) representing 7.5 % who said they had participated in some decision making process. This means 92.5% of the interviewees have not participated in any decision making process of the Assembly.



It was also established that only thirteen (13) interviewees including the Yilo Krobo Municipal management staff representing 28.26% of the total interviewees of 46 got to know of development activities through community durbars and 10 people representing 21.73% participated in development activities through community durbars. This situation shows that the local people were not actively involved in decision making process of the Assembly. This also shows that stakeholders as in the communities were not too much the focus of the Assembly in the decision making process even though in principle, they were conscious of the importance of engagement of stakeholders in the development chain. This is because, as the study revealed, there was not a single project for instance in the electoral area of an Assembly member interviewed where the typology of ‘participation of collaboration’

or ‘empowerment participation’ which is to ensure true participation, change and empowerment was used. Neither were the community members involved in any of the four stages of development project namely, research; design; implementation; and evaluation as required by participatory communication (Mefalopulos, 2008).

One of the interviewees (assembly member), admitted that the stakeholder engagement by the Assembly was not good enough. He, however, indicated that the Assembly was making conscious efforts to engage some vital groups such as beads makers association. An interviewee (assembly official) also indicated that it is only in this year that the Assembly is making efforts to actively engage the unit committees in mobilization of revenue in their respective units.

The study also revealed that the constraints on the Assembly to actively engage various communities as expected is as a result of the fact that the decentralized governance system which is supposed to operate at three levels namely, administration; political; and fiscal is at the moment functional only at the administration level with political and fiscal decisions largely taken at the centre.

Besides, the Assembly does not have its own home-grown ethical guidelines to guide its engagement with communities or stakeholders as required by the stakeholder theory to put the assembly on ties toes (Fontaine, Haarman & Schmid, 2006). And, even though as revealed by the study, there is in existence a broad guideline within the local government setting referred to as ‘the local government delivery standards’ it is not being followed religiously, according to an officer of the Assembly.

5.2.1. Themes

It emerged from the study that the Assembly's engagement of communalities lacks active participation of communities in projects undertaken in their areas; the process lacks stakeholder consultation in defining problems that affect local development. This undermines the importance of stakeholder participation and self-mobilization or self-empowerment as well as interactive participation in the development chain (Coldevin, 2003 & Freeman, 2004). People's participation in the decision-making process of the Assembly is not encouraging; Management meetings of the Assembly itself lack dialogue – a situation referred to as 'passive' or 'functional' participation by Coldevin (2003) and Mefalopulos (2008); and the Assembly also lacks ethical guidelines in its engagement of communities (Fontaine, Haarman & Schmid, 2006). Generally, the mode of communication is largely one-way, linear or monologic.

5.3. Theoretical framework

The two theoretical frameworks within which the study was conducted were relevant to the evidence that emerged from the analysis of the study. The study shows that the operation of the Yilo Krobo Municipal Assembly lacks stakeholder active engagement in the decision making process and at best, the kind of participation that was revealed by the study is what is described as 'participation by consultation' by Mefalopulos (2008) and described as 'cosmetic' by some research participants.

5.4. Limitation of the Study

Even though the purpose of the study was to investigate communication channels used in the decentralized governance setting and to examine how the channels help the local people in the decision making process as well as the processes to empower

them in local development, the study was limited to Yilo Krobo Municipality with a handful sample size interviewed. This was because time was of essence to the researcher. However, this limitation does not take away the representative nature of the findings of the research drawn from various research participants interviewed, especially so because the researcher had no obstacles entering the research field accessing interviewees and believed to have obtained quality data as well.

5.5. Recommendations

The researcher recommends that the Yilo Krobo Municipal Assembly actively involves the local people in the decision making process than it does now. The Assembly members and unit committees should be given the platform and the necessary resources to help them function effectively as required by the Local Government Act, 1993, Act 462.

There must be conscious effort by central government or the state to ensure that the decentralized government as envisaged under Chapter Twenty of the 1992 Constitution of Ghana and the Local Government Act (1993), Act 462 comes to fruition in its logical sense. This way, the Assemblies would be fully autonomous or independent to carry out their functions at the three levels namely, administration; political and fiscal. At the moment and as rightly observed by Ahwoi (2010), there has been partial devolution of administrative authority to the district level. And, as confirmed by the study, the inability of the assemblies to function at these three levels as required under the decentralized governance system affects the operations of the Assembly; a situation Ahwoi (2010) referred to as “real fusion has not yet occurred” (p. 122) and therefore inhibits true participation of the local people in the decision-making process.

There must also be conscious effort to make management meetings of the Assembly truly participatory. The study revealed that the kind of participation that exists at the moment at management level is akin to what Mefalopulos (2008) referred to as ‘passive participation’.

5.6. Conclusions

The study revealed that there was awareness as to the importance of participatory communication in decision making process to ensure sustainable development. However, it was also established that there was lack of active participation in the decision making process used by the assembly in line with what Tufte and Mefalopulos (2009) stated, that though people appreciate the essence of participation as replete in literature, “at closer look, however, very few cases meet the standards of genuine participation” (p. 17).

It was also obvious that the Assembly’s communication channels were largely linear or monologic. As a result, there was no platform created for the local people who are engaged in various businesses to learn new skills, new knowledge and be trained in order to lead to process of empowerment. But, as argued in the preceding chapter, for Ghana to be able to contribute to achieving the SDGs, goal 8 in particular which talks about ‘decent work and economic growth’, there is the need for the decentralized governance system to reassess its engagement with the local people in its development agenda and make the decision making process more participatory. This sits with a contribution made by the Food and Agriculture Organization (2015) of the United Nations towards achieving the SDGs especially relative to achieving zero hunger and ending poverty by 2030 as thus:

a strong entrepreneurial spirit already exists in the rural sector, where small-scale producers invest much more in agriculture than government, donors and private enterprises combined. Policies and public investments must increase smallholders' investment capacity and access to finance, participation in decision-making processes... (p. 4).

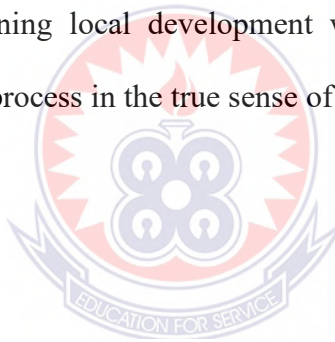
This observation made by the Food and Agriculture Organization (2015) underscores the need for participatory communication in order to assess the capacity of the rural people in local development as signpost to helping them in areas that would be crucial to deepening local development, empowerment, and sustainable change.

Even though the researcher used the maximal variation strategy to see if there could be different views based on the different traits of participants, the themes that emerged from the data did not reflect that. For instance, the respective focus groups which constituted artisans and civil servants agreed that there was no community engagement or community participation in the development projects that are brought to them. This in essence gives credibility to the research findings in terms of authenticity given the fact that participants in these two groups substantially differ in traits for instance on educational qualification, yet there was convergence of view. One would have thought for instance that participants who were not highly educated may not have had understanding of the phenomenon under study but the convergence views expressed by the different traits showed that was not the case. This therefore makes the findings authentic and reliable. Participants who were bead makers for instance expressed this concern:

the district knows of our existence through our association and yet the Assembly does not care to engage us to learn about our problems. We produce

beads here in Somanya and we are well-known for that nationwide and yet we do not have market for our products here in the district but rather the market is created and situated in Koforidua.

It is however important to note that the Health Directorate in the Yilo Krobo Municipality uses participatory communication in a meaningful way in its engagement with the communities on issues related to HIV/AIDS, ante-natal. Maternal health and other health related issues than the mainstream Municipal Assembly. This shows that if the mainstream Municipal Assembly could also engage the communities more actively especially through effective use of Assembly members and Unit Committee members, the decision-making process will be enhanced with overall benefit of deepening local development where the people's concerns are reflected in the planning process in the true sense of participation.



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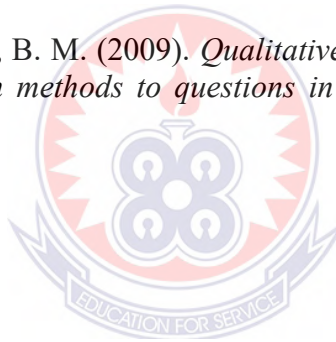
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APPENDIX

RESEARCH INTERVIEW QUESTION GUIDE

Section A (YKMA Management Staff Interview)

1. How do people participate in the decision making process of the Assembly? In other words, how is the participation done?
2. What are various communication channels used by the Assembly in getting people involved in its development activities?
3. How do you describe their level of participation and does this help in sustainability of development initiatives of the Assembly?
4. How are issues resolved or managed by the Assembly?
5. How are decisions of the Assembly reached?
6. What measures are put in place to ensure social accountability process of the Assembly?
7. What is the organizational structure of the Assembly?
8. Does the Assembly has any ethical guidelines that it follows in its engagement with the people to serve as checks to ensure citizenry participation in its decision making process?

Section B (Focus Group Interview)

1. How do you get to know of the development activities of the Assembly?
2. Have you participated in any local development activity by the Assembly?
3. What was your contribution to local development issues, if you have ever participated?

4. If you have made some contribution to any development issues, do you know if your contribution or input was taken on board?
5. Do you feel empowered as per your participation in the decision-making process of the Assembly (if you have ever participated)?
6. What are the communication channels used by the Assembly to get you involved in its development activities?
7. Does the communication channels used provide an avenue for dialogue?

