

An Evaluation Of Rural Development Strategies In The Builsa North District Of Ghana

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Abstract: There have been claims that despite national and local development efforts, rural areas in Ghana have not seen significant development. More specifically, the Builsa North District, a predominantly rural district in the northern Ghana is perceived to be characterized by low agricultural productivity, poor infrastructure, under developed enterprises and inadequate social protection interventions. These issues are of significant implications for development policy and are worth investigating in studies. Using a case study design and an evaluation research approach, this study appraised the Builsa North District's implemented agricultural, infrastructural and enterprises development strategies as well as social protection interventions. The various rural development strategies implemented have been helpful in improving on the living standard of residents in the Builsa North District through job creation, providing income and enhancing infrastructure development notwithstanding certain implementation challenges. It is recommended that a clear-cut national rural development policy or framework to prioritize the needs of rural areas is required. The framework should set out the guiding principles and goals to address the socio-economic and infrastructural needs of the rural areas.

Keywords: Rural, Development, Rural Development, Programmes/ Projects, Ghana

I. INTRODUCTION

The past decade has been a period of remarkable progress in economic growth, human development (health and education) and access to social services in Ghana. The annual average economic growth rate of 7.8 percent between 2005 and 2013 surpasses that of 1985-1994 (4.7 percent) and 1995-2004 (4.5 percent). Indeed, the highest annual growth rate of 15.0 percent recorded in 2011 is the highest since the 1973 (15.3 percent), whilst the rise in per capita income above GH¢1,000.00 in 2007 made Ghana a low-middle income country. Ghana was touted as one of the fastest growing economies in the world. According to the sixth Ghana Living

Standards Survey (GLSS 6), the proportion of people living in poverty declined from 51.7 percent in 1990 to 24.2 percent in 2013 (GSS, 2014).

In terms of access to health care, information from the sixth Ghana Living Standards Survey (GLSS 6) showed that the period between 2006 and 2013 witnessed increased rates of access to a range of health services (GSS, 2014). Nationally, the percentage of ill or injured individuals who did not consult any health personnel declined from 40.6 percent in 2006 to 33.8 in 2013. Due to significant investment in health care in Ghana, maternal mortality decreased from 760 to 380 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births from 1990 to 2013 (UNFPA, 2013).

There has also been a considerable improvement in the education sector. Although quality remains a concern, significant progress has also been made in terms of school enrolment. For instance Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) and Net Enrolment Rate (NER) showed improvement in child school attendance or participation in the education system over the last decade (GSS 2014). The NER in primary school at national level increased from 45.2 percent in the early 1990s to 89.3 percent in 2013/14 (NDPC, 2015). The national GER also reached 107.3 percent in 2013/14 from 72 percent in 1990. In terms of access to other social services, the GLSS VI shows major improvements in the number of households obtaining their drinking water from an improved source, using adequate toilet facilities and having access to electricity (GSS, 2014). For instance, the overall proportion of households that have access to electricity in Ghana increased from 45.3 percent in 2006 to 70.7 percent in 2013 (GSS, 2014).

Despite these compelling development outcomes, the challenge of development is still pronounced in Ghana, with rural people being worse-off. National policies and resource mobilization effort have not always recognized the numerous potentials of rural areas (Anriquez and Stamoulis, 2007). There are significant disparities in income and standards of living between the rural and urban populations in Ghana. The three northern regions in Ghana are predominantly rural, with the level of urbanization below the national average (GSS, 2012). More specifically, the Builsa North District is wholly rural (Gyireh, 2011), with few communities having settlement of 5000 or more inhabitants. The relative underdevelopment of the rural Builsa North District requires the appraisal of the District development strategies, in the wider national development framework.

Rural people have inadequate access to basic social amenities, safe water, all-year roads and electricity (IFAD, 2006). Therefore, understanding the role of development strategies in development of rural areas, particularly the Builsa North District is obviously of utmost importance for development policy. Rural development strategies are strategies expected to improve the economic and social life of the rural deprived (World Bank, 1975). They define the priorities for rural development for a period of time with the aim of increasing agricultural output, improving infrastructure, delivering welfare services, and improving cottage industry and other income/employment generating activities.

There is virtually absence of a clear-cut comprehensive multi sectoral integrated rural development (IRD) strategy to address rural development issues in Ghana and in the Builsa North District. The impact of development interventions on rural life has remained quite marginal because it has failed to make a significant dent minimize persistent rural underdevelopment. Whether these development strategies really address the structural issues of the rural people is still questionable. It is against this background that this study appraises the rural development strategies in the Builsa North District, as a veritable tool for sustainable rural development in Ghana.

II. OVERVIEW OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES IN GHANA

A. THE CONCEPT AND DIMENSIONS OF THE TERM RURAL

The term 'rural' is ambiguous. It is interpreted differently on the basis of location and demography. Nonetheless, across all developmental system, the term 'rural' is conventionally used to signify underdeveloped areas, with high levels of poverty and thin population. On the basis of population, in Ghana, localities with population less than 5,000 persons are classified as rural (GSS, 2012). In 1995, a Republic of Ghana Presidential report asserted that more than two-out of three people lives in settlements of less than five thousand in Ghana, but in recent time the GSS (2012) have estimate that 49.1 percent of people reside in rural areas. Most obviously, rural areas are heterogeneous places where majority of the populates spend a higher time working on farms and where land is plentiful and inexpensive (ODI, 2002). Ezeah (2005) has defined rural areas as ecological parts that lie outside cities and towns, with most inhabitants engaged largely in primary production activities. Generally, rural zones are not like urban areas. They are usually characterized by low density of population with agriculture-centric economic activities.

The European Union distinguishes three types of regional classification of rural areas, namely remote rural areas, intermediate rural areas and integrated rural areas (European Commission, 1988). Integrated rural areas are usually located near an urban centre, and are growing in economic and demographic terms. Intermediate rural areas are spatially relatively far away, but their good infrastructural facilities ensure easy access to urban centres. Remote rural areas are settlements with lowest population density located in border regions, away from urban centres, isolated due to topographical features of the terrain and poor transportation links.

The study area appears to fall in the remote rural category with a population size less than 5,000. However, the state of Ghana's rural economy could simply be described as underdeveloped and unstructured. This is largely explained by the fact that this sector has not evolved from any mainstream development plan. Hence, the experience of the sector in the country's development process has been defined by the programmes and interventions targeted at other sectors such as agriculture, health, education, water and sewerage.

B. RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Development, perhaps a commonly cherished desire of all countries, communities (rural or urban), families and individuals is a complex and highly contested concept, in the sense that there are different views about the best way to define and measure it. In the early development literatures, income per capita was conventionally used as a measure of development with the notion that it will directly improve wellbeing (Nayak, 2013). Economic advancement became the key policy target of less developed newly independent countries. However, the economic approach led to growth in economic terms with benefits not impacting on wellbeing of

many (World Bank, 2001). It also largely ignored socio-cultural, political and environmental issues. This criticism led to the basic needs approach development which emphasized human wellbeing (food, shelter, clothing, social services, standard of health etc.) rather than a state of a national economy.

Allen and Thomas (2000) assert that throughout the world in cases where the term is used in relative to human beings, it is focused on poverty alleviation. Though the term 'development' has no one meaning, no matter how it is measured or defined, it must encompass economic component (creation and equitable distribution of wealth); social welfare (quality education, respectable jobs, good health and housing); political aspect (human rights, democracy, political freedom); cultural dimension (respect for cultures and dignity to individuals); complete-life model (understand systems, symbols and beliefs about the importance of life and antiquity); and reverence for ecology (sound and sustainable development) (Goulet, 2000).

The concept of "rural development" literally means "development" in a specific geographical area known as "rural" area. Rural development as stated by Chambers (1983) is an approach which seeks to assist the rural poor to have access to their needs. The World Bank (1975) observes rural development as a scheme aimed to improve the social and economic life of the people residing in rural areas; it encompasses increasing the development interventions to the rural poor. Rural development entails the process whereby those who reside in rural zones have good living standard and improved quality of life (Singh, 1999). Rural development, in this text, connotes provision of infrastructure; increases in agricultural output, provision of social safety nets for the rural deprived and the development of rural enterprises to enhance the living conditions of rural folks.

C. RURAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

Though there is no unique universal set of rules for development to occur, a diversity of development policies would bring development. Development is an outcome either from deliberate policies and actions of development-oriented organizations or a deliberate effort to reach a higher level in relation to set targets. The objective of every nation is to develop by adopting appropriate strategies. A strategy is a blueprint intended to achieve a specific objective (Elton, 2009). It is a plan that incorporates a society's major aims, policies, choices and series of action into a unified whole (Proctor, 2000). A strategy is considered good according to the results it produces, not by the process that generated it.

Development strategies are "a combination of policies and programmes that affects the form as well as the rate of growth" (Norton, 2010: 122). A development strategy refers essentially to the actions and interventions used to stimulate distinct development goals (Odei-Ajei, 1997). In a broadest sense, development strategies are blueprints for efficient utilization of a nation's resources towards short-term and long-term goals for development, often expressed in terms of economic growth, poverty reduction and structural transformation. A development strategy and the policies within it aim at obtaining maximum output in the form of

development goals from a given input of resources working under various resource constraints (Norton, 2010). Development strategies span from National Development Strategies, spanning the entire economy at the broadest level, to sector and subsector strategies, and local/rural development strategies.

These Development strategies include infrastructural related strategies, enterprises development strategies and agricultural related strategies. In Ghana, there is the need to streamline development strategies in a manner that would ensure rural development at the local levels (Botchie, 2000).

D. GHANA'S RURAL DEVELOPMENT POLICY EXPERIENCE

Ghana's effort towards rural development dates back to 1943 when the idea to establish the Department of Social Welfare and Community Development was first considered. With the creation of the Department of Social Welfare and Housing in 1946, most of its effort was concentrated on the construction of community centres, social clubs and youth centres as the basis of welfare work (Boakye, 2010). The community development approach sought to help rural people nurture civic responsibilities and in use of their potentialities and talents in achieving desirable economic and socio-cultural goals. The main objective was to stimulate the local populace to undertake self-help projects to improve their living standard (Boakye, 2010).

The 1950s ushered in modernization strategy that was generally accepted by most developing countries at that time (Diao, 2010). Nsiah-Gyabaah (1998) points out that sustenance of rural livelihoods through industrialization increased agricultural production and rural infrastructure development received priority attention by the government. This ensured egalitarian development of all areas and narrowed the usual north-south development gap created by the colonial administration (Hess, 2000). The policy framework for "rural development" in the 1960s appears to follow the modernization model. The mainstream developing countries development policy during the 1960s decades attached prominence mostly to economic growth through government initiated industrialization (Takuechi *et al.*, 2000). Ghana's post-independence economic policy was dominated inter alia by the promotion of import substitution industrialization (ISI) which sought to promote local infant industry.

Since 1988 a comprehensive decentralization reforms has been implemented as an alternate strategy for development (MLGRD, 2010). A basic goal of the programme is rural development as a means of reducing the exodus of the youth to towns and cities and generally redirecting population movement from areas of over-concentration to deprived areas (GSS, 1995, p. 12-14). In the 1990s, Ghana embarked on a series of development programmes and strategies geared towards poverty reduction. The Ghana Vision 2020 programme was adopted in 1996 and was to be implemented within the next 25 years (1996-2020). The programme, also known as the National Development Policy Framework was aimed at moving the country from a poor nation into a middle-income country. Since then, the World Bank has tried to

revitalize rural development (Takuechi *et al.*, 2000) through its policy prescription to developing countries. The vision 2020 finally gave way to the IMF-World Bank-supported Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative in March 2001. As a condition for development assistance under the HIPC programme, the Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy (2003-2005) was initiated in 2002 by the Kuffuor government, followed by the Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy (2006-2009). More recently, in 2010, the Ghana Shared Growth and Development Agenda I (2010-2013) was introduced to make growth pro-poor through redistribution and now an inheritor medium-term development policy framework, the GSGDA II (2014- 2017) have been introduced.

Generally, the approach and strategies of national economic management have distinctly changed from dependence on state control of development policy between the 1950s and 1980s to an increased reliance on market oriented orthodoxy and less direct public involvement by the 1990s onwards. Since 1950, almost all governments have implemented policies that were either directly or indirectly linked to rural development, though much of the focus of these policies were geared towards the provision of infrastructure, agricultural development and economic growth whose trickle-down effect was expected to reduce poverty.

E. KEY RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES/ PROJECTS IN GHANA

a. NORTHERN RURAL GROWTH PROGRAMME

The Northern Rural Growth Programme (NRGP) was initiated by the government of Ghana and financed by African Development Bank. The programme was started in 2009 in some piloted district. It was extended to the Builsa North District in 2010. Operated under three distinct but integrated components of product chain development: access to rural finance; rural infrastructure development; and programme coordination, the NRGD aims to address challenges in the agricultural sector in northern Ghana by focusing on specific activities geared towards attaining sustainable agricultural in the northern Ghana. The objectives of the programme are to facilitate input (fertilizer) access and distribution to Farmer Based Organizations (FBOs); facilitate loan access by FBOs and offer training for FBOs. With an overall sector goal to ensure sustainable equitable reduction of poverty and food security among rural households, and specific aim to increase northern Ghana area rural households' income on a sustainable basis, the NRGD is a targeted poverty intervention for food crop/peasant farmers in the savannah area of Ghana. A study by Garba (2013) indicated that the Northern Rural Growth Programme boosted beneficiaries' consumption (house-hold food security) and income levels.

b. RURAL ENTERPRISES PROGRAMME (REP)

The Rural Enterprises Programme (REP) was established in 1996 as part of Government of Ghana's efforts to reduce poverty and improve conditions of living in rural areas by promoting rural small-scale. The Rural Enterprises

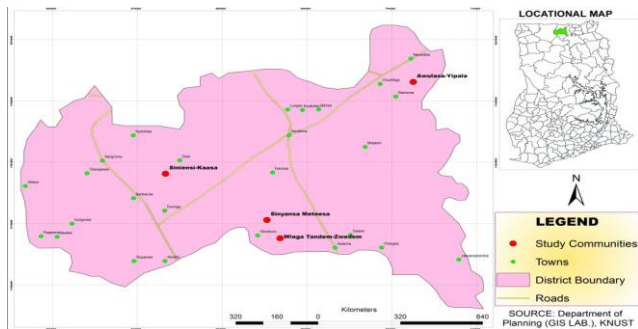
Programme is an upscale of phases I & II of Rural Enterprises Project. The Government of Ghana and its development partners recognize the REP model as an effective instrument for rural Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) development and poverty alleviation. REP is implemented through four integrated components, namely, institutional capacity building (entrepreneurial skills); access to rural finance; business development services; and technology promotion and dissemination. The objective of the project is to increase productivity, employment and income in rural areas. It aims at increasing the number of rural MSMEs that generates profit, growth and employment opportunities. Ayerakwa (2012), in assessing Rural Enterprises Project as a Poverty Reduction Strategy in Asuogyaman District of Ghana reported that REP significantly enhanced the livelihood of about 80 percent of respondents. Ayerakwa (2012) further notes that beneficiaries of REP viewed it as an appropriate strategy for job creation.

c. GHANA SOCIAL OPPORTUNITIES PROJECT (GSOP)

The Ghana Social Opportunities Project (GSOP) is a five year International Development Assistance (IDA) and Government of Ghana funded project under the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development. It commenced in 2008 with the objective to increased access to employment and cash earning opportunities for the rural poor. Specifically, the project seeks to offer social protection and provide income support to poor households through support for the Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty (LEAP), grants and the Labor Intensive Public Works (LIPW) infrastructure in targeted districts (World Bank, 2015). The Labour Intensive Public Works (LIPW) component aims to provide short term employment to the very poor in rural areas who find it difficult to meet their household expenditure particularly during the agricultural off-season. The project has many success stories as reported at the Ghana Social Opportunities Project's (2015) web site. For instance, in the Kamachu and Lamina communities within the Nkwanta North District of the Volta Region, GSOP is reported to have engaged a number of women in tree planting and the construction of a Dam to provide water for the rural people.

III. STUDY AREA

The Builsa North District in the Upper East Region was selected as a case for this study. Builsa North District is located at the Upper East Region of Northern Ghana (see Figure 1). The Builsa North District lies between longitudes 1⁰ 05' West and 1⁰ 35' West and latitudes 10⁰ 20' North and 10⁰ 50' North (GSS, 2014). The Builsa North District covers an estimated land area of 816.44030 km² and constitutes about 12.1 percent of the total land area of the Upper East Region. It is bounded to the North and East by the Kassena-Nankana West District Assembly and Kassena-Nankana Municipal Assembly respectively. The West and South on the other hand are bounded by the Builsa South District Assembly as seen in Figure 1.



Source: Department of Planning KNUST (GIS Lab), 2015

Figure 1: Map of the Builsa North District

Northern Ghana was chosen because it is the part of the country that is predominantly rural, poor and continues to present Ghana with the most formidable development challenge compared to the South. The Builsa North District specifically was selected because the district is one of the most rural in the Upper East Region, with almost ninety percent of population residing in rural areas (GSS, 2012). It is relatively underdeveloped rural economy, with low agricultural productivity, poor social amenities, and less developed enterprise with approximately 75 percent of houses built of mud brick/earth (GSS, 2012).

Surprisingly, the Builsa North District is endowed with very rich natural resources. Preliminary exploratory work carried out in the District indicates that the District abounds in large quantities of several mineral deposits ranging from Gold, Chromites, Rutile Jasper Talc, Lime, Feldspars, Nepheline Syenite and varied types of clay. However, the several mineral deposits have not translated into poverty reduction and development because of inability to extract the minerals. The exploitation of these minerals can help boost the local economy by creating jobs and improving incomes of the people. Presently Sandema, Chuchuliga and Wiaga, Kadema, and some parts of Siniensi are served with electricity from the National Grid while other communities still leave in “darkness”. There is however an on-going rural electrification programmes to extend electricity to most other key settlements in the District. Other communities in the Builsa North District include Sinyansa Moteesa, Wiaga Tandem-Zuedem, Awulansa-Yipala and Siniensi-Kaasa which were purposely selected for the study since they have benefited from the various rural development strategies under consideration.

IV. METHODOLOGY

There appears to be no distinct suitable method of doing research because there are several research designs that researchers could adopt in their research. However, this investigation uses the case study research approach, combined with the evaluation studies research approach to address the research questions. A case study design allows for an in-depth examination of events, phenomena, or an observation within a real-life context. According to Gossaye (2001), case study research involves the collection, recording and analysis of a single case or a number of cases which may be either qualitative or quantitative, or both. The use of the case study approach was therefore deemed appropriate for this work. The case study approach permits the use of multiple sources of

evidence, and this improves the quality of data for the study as it allows for authentication of one data source by another source.

The evaluation research approach enables a researcher to examine the effectiveness of development policies, programmes and projects. Weiss (1998) contends that evaluation is a “systematic assessment of the operation and/ or the outcome of a program or policy, compared to a set of explicit or implicit standards, as a means of contributing to improvement of the programme or policy”. Evaluation involve appraising, judging, or determining the worth or quality of on-going, or completed intervention, generally in terms of its relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and impact. In other words, evaluation is commonly used to label the process of assessing performance against objectives (Riddel *et.al*, 1995).

The key variables for this study are rural development strategies and rural development (infrastructural development, agricultural development, enterprise development and improvement in social protection). The unit of analysis is a critical factor in the case study methodology. According to Babbie (2007), a unit of analysis is what is being studied or the unit of observation. It is the basic unit from which information/data is collected or the basic unit of investigation or the most fundamental part of a phenomenon to be studied. The units of analysis for this study were the Farmer Based Organizations, registered clients of programmes/ projects, the District Assembly and Project staffs.

After identifying the various units of observation, questionnaires were designed to ascertain the effectiveness of the current rural development strategies in the study area. The data collection process employed direct administration of structured and unstructured questionnaire to sample of households (who have benefited from the programmes) and District Assembly to solicit information through interviews. The information sought among others comprised the roles of institutionalized stakeholders (notably, the Builsa North District Assembly) in administering development strategies and the rural people’s assessment of development programmes/projects in delivering development.

To determine the sample size, Slovincs’ sampling method by Yamane (1970; 881-87) was used. The mathematical formula is stated as: $n = \frac{N}{1+N\alpha^2}$

Where: n = the sample size

N = the sampling frame

α = Margin of error (5%) at 95% confidence level

From a preliminary survey at the study area, the sample frame of the various units of observation was obtained from key institutions in the Builsa North District. After applying the mathematical formula, the sample size of each of the units of observation was determined as depicted in Table 1.

Unit of Observation	Sampling Frame	Sample Size
Rural Enterprise Programme	149	109
Ghana Social Opportunities Project	367	191
Total	516	300

Source: Authors’ Construct, 2015

Table 1: Sample Size of the Registered Beneficiaries of Key Projects

In addition to the aforementioned projects, beneficiaries of the Northern Rural Growth Programme were interviewed.

The study purposively selected the leaders of beneficiary Farmer Based Organizations (FBOs) registered with the programme. With the help of the Department of Agricultural Development Unit, researches could easily identify the leaders of beneficiary FBOs. The sample size for NRGP is eighteen (18) (as shown in Table 2). The head of department of the agricultural development unit of the District and one project staff were interviewed.

Key Rural Development Programmes Implemented	Sample Selected
Rural Enterprises Programme	109 Registered clients
Ghana Social Opportunities Project	191 LIPWs Beneficiaries
Northern Rural Growth Programme	18 FBOs leaders
TOTAL	318

Source: Authors' Construct, 2015

Table 2: Summary of Selected Sample Size

V. DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

The analysis and discussion of results were done on the basis of selected key programmes/projects implemented in the Builsa North District over the years. Researchers therefore considered projects such as Rural Enterprises Programme (REP), Northern Rural Growth Program (NRGP) and Ghana Social Opportunities Project. Among other issues discussed under the aforementioned projects include background of the programmes/ projects, implementation mechanism, relevance of programmes/ projects, type of project intervention and programmes/ projects sustainability.

A. RURAL ENTERPRISES PROGRAMME (REP)

The Rural Enterprises Programme is an enterprise development programme that seeks to boost rural SMEs development. The study revealed that the programme mostly targeted the vulnerable in the district. For instance, more women (62.3 percent), generally the vulnerable, were targeted and supported to have a means of livelihood than men (33.3 percent). Again, most clients of REP had either no formal level of education or low educational qualification. Only 11 percent of the clients had attained education to the secondary or technical level while none of them was a tertiary graduate. The study evaluates the programmes' impact and effectiveness and assesses its relevance and sustainability below.

a. IMPLEMENTATION MECHANISM OF THE RURAL ENTERPRISES PROGRAMME

The implementation of REP has been decentralised. The Ministry of Trade and Industry has the overall responsibility for the implementation of the REP and chairs the Programme Steering Committee. The key project implementing agencies for REP are the District Assemblies, the National Board for Small Scale Industries (NBSSI), Ghana Regional Appropriate Technology Industrial Service (GRATIS) Foundation, and PFIs - mostly rural and community banks whose activities are monitored and supervised by the Apex Bank. At the regional level, the RCCs monitor and coordinate the implementation of

MSE development in the Districts. The District Assemblies play a central role in coordinating the services, resources and programmes of the various stakeholders in the implementation of REP. The MSE sub-committees have been created to facilitate the establishment of small businesses in the districts and thus enhance the revenue generation potential of the District Assemblies, promote local economic development and job creation and reduce poverty. NBSSI is responsible for providing support in the delivery of business development services, facilitated by the Business Advisory Centres (BACs). GRATIS provides support to the Rural Technology Facility (RTF) in delivering agricultural commodity processing and infrastructure development services. The Bank of Ghana and the Apex Bank support delivery of access of MSEs to rural financial services.

Considering the communities involvement in programme/project, few beneficiaries (11.2 percent) opined that they are involved in the planning of REP interventions through client fora and meetings, orientation seminars and personal request. 51 percent indicated that REP staff planned the interventions, while 18.3 percent said Assembly Members planned the interventions which they receive. It was established that the implementation of REP was through a collaborative effort by REP staff (37.3 percent), the District Assembly (48.9 percent) and other Collaborative Institutions (13.8 percent) such as the Department of Social Welfare. These stakeholders are involved mostly in needs assessment (44.8 percent), planning and budgeting (31.7 percent), monitoring and evaluation (23.5 percent) of the project.

b. TYPES OF REP INTERVENTION

REP provided a number of interventions to beneficiaries. The specific interventions received included training tours, tools and equipment, financial management and marketing strategies. Data collected indicate that 41 percent of REP clients received business management training while 20.3 percent received advocacy training. Others received business counselling (16.0 percent), community based training (10.7 percent), technology promotion (8.7 percent) and financial support (3.3 percent). It was realized that at least every client received one intervention, though more than half of the respondents had received more than one intervention.

Under the business management training, respondents indicated that they receive training in shea butter processing, soap-making, dressmaking and hair dressing. Others include artisanship, customer care, marketing seminars and as well as records keeping. In terms of technology promotion, it was revealed that respondents had benefited from the Rural Technology facility and other technology promotion services such as technology transfer training, business improvement equipment, field demonstration. Under the Rural Financial Services component, respondents were mostly provided with finance from the Rural Enterprises Development Fund, and other financial services such as credit management and banking culture.

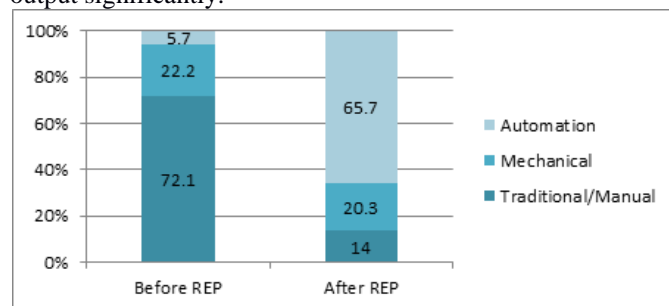
c. RELEVANCE AND IMPACT OF THE RURAL ENTERPRISES PROGRAMME (REP)

About 98 percent of the beneficiaries of the Rural Enterprises Programme remarked it as relevant. This was attributed to the programmes' creation of employment for the clients which has considerably enhanced their livelihoods. The project staff and District Assembly staff interviewed revealed that the goal and objectives of REP are consistent with the Government's development objective of developing a competitive private sector as the engine of growth as outlined in GSGDA II. Nearly 77 percent had enhanced livelihoods as a result of the Rural Enterprises Programme through job creation and income generation. This empirical result largely coalesces with results obtained by Ayerakwa (2012) who in assessing Rural Enterprises Project as a Poverty Reduction Strategy in Asuogyaman District of Ghana reported that REP significantly enhanced the livelihood of about 80 percent of respondents.

With respect to job creation, before enrolling with the REP, 37.6 percent of clients (41 clients) were neither employed nor undergoing apprentice training whilst 62.4 percent of clients (68 clients) indicated they had some form of employment. Although clients who had some form of employment prior to the REP were relatively better-off than those who were not employed, they submitted that their form of employment did not yield the expected income and was not lucrative. On the other hand, those who were not employed prior to enrolling in the programme reported that they did not have any better source of livelihood as most of them depended on their relatives for survival. However, since the inception of the programme, most clients have secured jobs in Shea butter processing (37.6 percent), dressmaking (26.2 percent), hair dressing (19.8 percent), soap-making (9.1 percent) and other many menial jobs (7.3 percent) such as beer (pito) brewing, pottery, artisanship bead manufacturing and leather works. Beneficiaries admitted that they now have a better source of livelihood that yields adequate income levels than when they had not enrolled with the REP. All the REP clients reported that they have employed at least one person as a result of the REP intervention. About 12 percent of clients indicated that they have employed three or more persons. This implies that the programme has had multiplier effect on job creation since their businesses have been able to employ additional people, mostly as assistants while few others were engaged as apprentices.

With reference to Figure 2, 72.1 percent of REP beneficiaries used traditional/manual process to carry out business prior to the REP intervention as compared with 22.2 percent and 5.7 percent for mechanical and automation respectively. According to clients, the used traditional/manual skills process led to low output. However, after the training and financial assistance, most REP clients (65.7 percent) resorted to automation whilst 20.3 percent and 14 percent used mechanical traditional/manual process respectively. Beneficiaries of the technology promotion intervention received business improvement equipment that enhanced productivity, whilst others benefitted from technology transfer training for master craft persons and apprentices. The clients

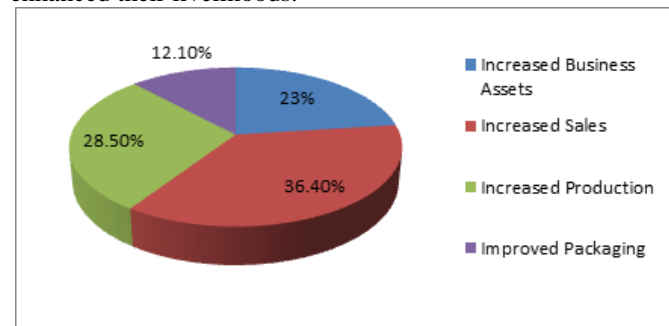
claimed that the reliance on used of automation has boosted output significantly.



Source: Field Survey, 2015

Figure 2: Distribution of Respondents

Before clients enrolled with REP, most (89.4 percent) clients had inadequate entrepreneurial skills because they had not acquired any formal training to enable them increase output. However, many of the active clients now use skills learnt from REP. Data collected indicates that nearly eighty-seven percent (86.6 percent) of the active clients now keep proper records. 67 percent indicated they now get a lot of customers as a result of what they learnt about customer care from REP. 82.9 percent indicated that their punctuality, personal neatness and the neatness of their business premises has changed considerably. They indicated that the interventions have impacted positively on their businesses by contributing to increase in their output. To find out how the REP had boosted clients business growth, majority of the active clients (36.4 percent) were able to increase their sales as a result of REP activities whilst nearly twenty-nine percent (28.5 percent) reported increased in production. 23 percent and 12.1 percent of the active clients increased their business assets and had improved packaging respectively. The clients reported that the increase in productivity and sales has enhanced their livelihoods.



Source: Field Survey, 2015

Figure 3: Percentage distribution of the benefits of REP

However, more than three-fourth (74.7 percent) of respondents were not satisfied with the programme's support for enterprise development because of low start-up capital, inadequate training on businesses development, high lending rate and non-involvement of clients at the planning stage.

d. SUSTAINABILITY OF THE RURAL ENTERPRISES PROGRAMME (REP)

A higher proportion of the clients (85.2 percent) indicated that the effects of the REP would be sustained even after the programme has elapsed. This is because according to respondents, the programme has integrated them into training

and capacity building programmes to equip them with the necessary capability to take charge of the management of their businesses to ensure that the effects of the REP sustains. According to the project staff, the Assembly has been involved to take-up and ensure continuity of the REP, after the programme has ended. The role of BAC, a unit of the District Assembly which oversees enterprise or business development in the implementation of the programme is enormous to ensure project sustainability. It came to light that the recurrent costs of the BACs are cost effective and shared between the Ministry of Trade And Industry through NBSSI and the District Assemblies.

The project's support for BAC operational costs was on a declining basis, gradually transferring responsibility to the District Assembly, with District Assembly providing in-kind support for the first year, 25 percent in the second year, 50 per cent in the third, and 75 per cent in the fourth year of the annual recurrent expenditures of the BACs, and thereafter "weaning-off" from the project. Again, the programme has MSE sub-committees which are now formal institutions and will continue to support MSE development. Few (3.4 percent) of the clients perceive that after the programme has ended the effects would not be sustained since the services provided by the REP would not still be present whilst 11.4 percent were indifferent.

B. NORTHERN RURAL GROWTH PROGRAMME

The Northern Rural Growth Programme is an agricultural development programme which aims at providing essential inputs for Farmer Based Organizations to increase their productivity levels). Majority (90 percent) of the respondents were males. This is because farming particularly in the developing countries where rudimentary tools are the main source of machinery is regarded as a tedious work. Females are most often expected to play supportive roles. The main variables that were analysed included the implementation mechanism, type of project intervention, relevance and impact of the programme, and programme sustainability.

a. IMPLEMENTATION MECHANISM OF NRG

Implementation of NRG is very relevant since various studies have shown that majority of people living in rural areas in Ghana depend on agricultural activities for survival. The study revealed that NRG packages to communities were based on the assessed needs and the demand for intervention packages by the rural people. Again, after assessing the level of participation of stakeholders in the implementation of NRG, it was found out that the District Assembly engaged in all the processes for implementation, which includes needs assessment, planning and budgeting, monitoring and evaluation activities and the provision of office accommodation and utilities.

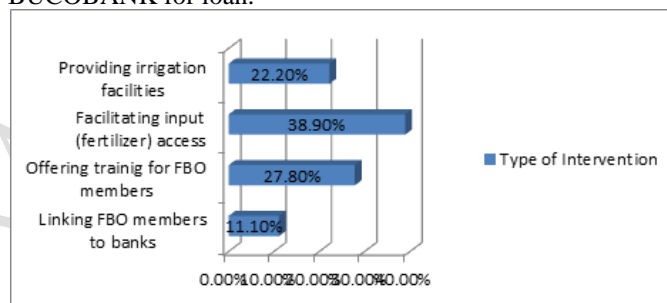
Other collaborating institutions such as input dealers, marketers and Bank (Bucobank) were identified to have contributed in the implementation of REP. The input dealers supplied all the FBOs with the fertilizer, whilst the marketers purchased the produce from farmers at normal market price. The Bucobank provided credit (loan) at favourable terms of

conditions. It is clear from the study that the implementation was through a collaborative effort by the NRG secretariat, District Assembly and institutions such as bank, marketers and input dealers. As posited by Stiglitz (2002), participation accounts much to successes of poverty interventions. This collaborative participation of stakeholders could lead to attainment of the programme objectives.

b. TYPE OF INTERVENTIONS IN NORTHERN RURAL GROWTH PROGRAMME

Researchers found out that the Northern Rural Growth Programme have provided a number of interventions in various forms including linking FBOs members to financial institutions to access loans, providing irrigational facilities to farmers, facilitating farmers' access to inputs such as fertilizers, and training members of the FBOs

Figure 4 shows that, NRG has helped majority (38.9 percent) of the beneficiaries' access to fertilizer than other interventions. 27.8 percent admitted that the NRG offered training for FBOs while 22.2 percent opined that they had been provided with irrigational facilities. Others (11.1 percent) revealed that the programme had linked FBO members to the BUCOBANK for loan.



Source: Field Survey, 2015

Figure 4: Type of NRG intervention

c. RELEVANCE AND IMPACT OF THE NORTHERN RURAL GROWTH PROGRAMME

From the study, an overwhelming (85.7 percent) proportion of respondents perceive the programme as very relevant, whilst 14.3 percent perceives the NRG as relevant. However, none of the beneficiaries of the programme consider it as irrelevant. The relevance of the programme arises from the beneficiaries' assertion that the programme enhanced the livelihoods of the members of their Farmer Based Organizations through the provision of irrigation facilities, input, loans and training which has increased their output considerably.

Considering the impact of the programme, majority of respondents were satisfied with the effectiveness of the programme to: facilitate access to input (fertilizer) for FBOs (83.3 percent); facilitate access to loan by FBOs (72.2 percent); and offer training for FBOs (55.6 percent). The respondents explained that access to these interventions had increased their output considerably. Farmer Based Organization members could not afford fertilizers, did not have adequate start-up capital, had low extension services and inadequate training on agricultural development. However,

about 67 percent of respondents reported that there has been improvement in their productivity as a result of the NRGPs which catered for some of these aforementioned challenges. Most respondents (71.2 percent) also receive extension services from NRGPs which has increased yield significantly.

d. SUSTAINABILITY OF THE NORTHERN RURAL GROWTH PROGRAMME

A higher proportion of respondents (55.3 percent) observed that the effects of the programme would not sustain after the programme has ended. They noted that they will not be able to access facilities that the programme provides for them easily to increase their agricultural output.

C. GHANA SOCIAL OPPORTUNITIES PROJECT (GSOP)

The Ghana Social Opportunities Project (GSOP) is socio-infrastructure intervention which seeks to engage rural people in labour intensive public works to provide or rehabilitate roads and dams/dugout as well as afforestation. The main variables that were analysed included the implementation mechanism, type of project intervention, relevance and impact of GSOP, and sustainability of the project.

a. IMPLEMENTATION MECHANISM OF THE GHANA SOCIAL OPPORTUNITIES PROJECT

The Ghana Social Opportunities Project is managed at policy and technical co-ordination level by a National Project Steering Committee. At the implementation level, the GSOP Regional Coordinating Office at Bolgatanga spearheads the implementation and co-ordination with technical backstopping from the National Office. Sub-project implementation, however, is the responsibility of the Builsa North District with timely and efficient back-stopping provided by the project staff at the regional level. It was realised that the department of Feeder roads has been providing technical support to the project to help provide good roads within beneficiary villages. The department of Social Welfare and Community Development has also been providing technical support to the project to help identify the core poor in the society. The implementation of GSOP is therefore a collaborative effort of project staff and the District Assembly. The aforementioned stakeholders are involved mostly in needs assessment, planning and budgeting, monitoring and evaluation of the project. The project secretariat also develops capacity building programmes for national and local actors to implement the GSOP, particularly Labour Intensive Public Work (LIPW) projects. This capacity building is usually in the form of training recruited workers who are supposed to be the core poor in selected communities.

Beneficiary communities play key role in the implementation of the project aside executing the projects. Participation of the beneficiaries had risen considerably as a result of the incorporation of the beneficiaries in the decision making processes. This is exemplified by the frequent meetings organized with community members to solicit their views and concerns on the project which are taken on board. Project officials interviewed pointed out that, they assist the

beneficiary communities to draw a development plan known as "Community Action Plan" which embodies the projects they wish and this is an effective way of ensuring that communities participate in the project. The community action plans assist the beneficiary to select priority subprojects for implementation. Other responsibilities of the community members in the project implementation process include community mobilisation; assisting in the selection of participants/beneficiaries; monitoring progress and providing feedback on progress to the district authorities.

b. TYPE OF GSOP INTERVENTION

The background of GSOP suggests that the programme is purely infrastructure development inclined. This notwithstanding, the programme is expected to enhance agricultural development, small scale enterprise or business promotion and other socio-economic development avenues in the Builsa North District. The programme intervention in the study area was centred on three main areas: improvement of road to facilitate physical accessibility; provision of dams or dug-outs for agricultural and domestic uses; and planting of tree to mitigate the impact of climate change. The Ghana Social Opportunities Project (GSOP) is socio-infrastructure intervention which seeks to engage rural people in labour intensive public works.

c. RELEVANCE AND EFFECTIVENESS OF THE GHANA SOCIAL OPPORTUNITIES PROJECT (GSOP)

Among the data gathered for the study include the relevance of GSOP to beneficiaries in terms of how the programme has improved their living standards. It was revealed that most respondents (77.6 percent) perceive the GSOP as relevant because it had increased access to jobs and cash earning opportunities. The project staff and District Assembly staff submitted that the goal and objectives of GSOP are consistent with the Government's development objective of providing social safety net and infrastructure for the deprived. In view of this, the achievement of the programme objectives will enhance the realisation of national goals and objectives. The programme is most expected to be supported by the government since they are in line with national priorities.

Nearly three-quarters (75.3 percent) of beneficiaries opined that the GSOP have improved their livelihood. This affirmed the success stories of the project as reported at the Ghana Social Opportunities Project's (2015) web site. For instance, in the Kamachu and Lamina communities within the Nkwanta North District of the Volta Region, GSOP is reported to have engaged a number of women in tree planting and the construction of a Dam to provide water for the rural people. In the Wa West District the project is reported to have engaged beneficiaries in the rehabilitation a dug-out each at Boro and Pole. In the Upper west region, the project has rehabilitated the feeder road from the Oli junction to Oli and rehabilitated a dug out each at Nako, Dorimon and Ladayiri, all of which employed the local people. Similarly, the programme provided three main type of employment by GSOP to the Builsa North

District through Labour Intensive Public Works (LIPWs) for beneficiaries which includes road improvements at Siniensi-Kaasa, rehabilitation of dag-out at the Wiaga Tandem-Zuedem and tree planting in both communities.

Most beneficiaries were engaged in the afforestation or tree plantation (43.4 percent) while the others were employed to rehabilitate and maintain feeder road (35.2 percent) and rehabilitate dams and dugouts (21.4 percent). Though the tree planting component of the project seeks to mitigate climate change, beneficiary employees were paid on rotational basis for a period of time. Researchers found out that, beneficiaries of tree plantation component were paid GH¢6 per day in 2012, GH¢7 per day in 2013 and GH¢8 per day in 2014 and 2015. On the other hand, the employees of the feeder road rehabilitation and maintenance component of the LIPWs were paid GH¢10 per day in 2012, GH¢12 per day in 2013 and GH¢15 per day in 2014 and 2015, whilst workers engaged in the Dam and Dugouts rehabilitation and maintenance earned GH¢8 per day in 2012 and GH¢10 per day in 2013, 2014 and 2015. With regards to the number of days that an employee is engaged to work before another person is engaged to continue, it came to light that a worker was engaged for three (3) months during the agricultural off-season (mainly from January to March) before another person is replaced.

An overwhelming proportion (93.4 percent) of beneficiaries perceives that the programme have increased their access to jobs during agricultural off-season because they would have been “idle”. However, few (6.6 percent) of the beneficiaries thought otherwise due to their assertion that: three (3) months period of employment was not significant to improve their livelihoods during the prolonged dry season; and the short-term nature of the employment and also the temporary nature of income (usually low wage) did not translate into appreciable investment. About 58 percent of the beneficiaries also were dissatisfied with delay in the payment of wages. The main effects of the LIPW on livelihood of beneficiaries are increase in their purchasing power and consumption as a result of the income earned as reported by beneficiaries.

A before and after assessment of road conditions in beneficiary communities was done to ascertain the impact of the project intervention on roads in the study communities. The results are presented in Table 4.

Road Condition	Prior to MVP		Post MVP	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Foothpath-like	43	22.5	7	3.7
Untarred but deplorable	132	69.1	43	22.5
Untarred but accessible	16	8.4	141	73.8
Total	191	100	191	100

Source: Field Survey, 2015

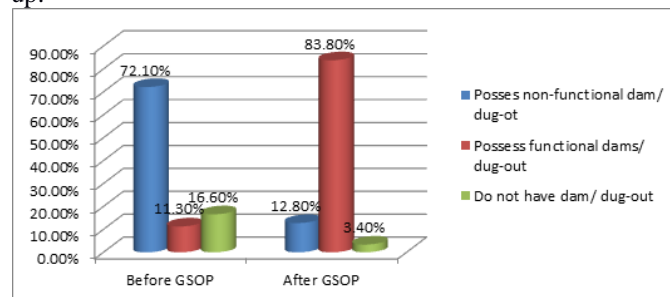
Table 4: Road Condition Prior GSOP and Post GSOP Intervention

Most respondents (69.1 percent) within the selected GSOP communities reported that access to services and facilities in the study communities were through untarred and deplorable roads. According to the respondents, the poor nature of roads affected them adversely as commercial drivers were unwilling to operate in the communities and the few drivers who operated in the area demanded outrageous fares.

The poor condition of roads also affected income level of farmers since they were faced with the difficulty of transporting their produce to the market centres on time. This often led to the spoilage of surplus produce which results to post harvest losses as produce delayed at the farms.

Table 4 further shows that since the inception of GSOP, majority of respondent (73.8 percent) have access to untarred but passable roads as against untarred but deplorable roads. According to respondents, this has reduced post-harvest losses considerably. This is consistent with the observation by Andreas (1997) that road infrastructure brings increase in productivity which helps reduce incidence of poverty in the long run. Improvement in roads condition increases the vehicular fleet by facilitating the transportation of goods and people at a reasonable cost. It also reduces the incidence of food spoilage in the process of transporting them to the market centres and thus increases income level and encourages farmers to increase their output as they know that their foodstuffs could be transported to the market with ease.

Considering the changes and impact that have occurred in beneficiary communities since the maintenance of dag-out, Figure 5 indicates that access to functional dag-out has increased from 11.3 percent to 83.8 percent. 12.8 percent of the respondents reported that they still do not have access to functional dams/dug-out while 3.4 percent did not have dams/dug-out at all. From the study, it was revealed that the dag-out was mainly be used for irrigational farming (58.7 percent). 31.1 percent and 10.2 percent indicated that the project had provided water for their livestock and served as source of household water respectively. The respondents explained that the provision of irrigational dams reduces their vulnerability to the single maxima rainfall regime which is a bottleneck to their output expansion, since local food production is rain-fed. It had reduced their plight of planting only during the rainy season, and remaining mostly idle during the dry season. This is similar to the case of farmers of Sinyangsa who used to farm year-long with water supply from the Sinyangsa dam, a product of GSOP before the water dried up.



Source: Field Survey, 2015

Figure 5: Access to dam/dug-out prior GSOP/post GSOP

d. SUSTAINABILITY OF THE GHANA SOCIAL OPPORTUNITIES PROJECT (GSOP)

53.8 percent of the beneficiaries were of the view that the effects of the project would be sustained because of adequate project sustainability mechanism in place. The study revealed that beneficiaries were deeply involved in the implementation process. In particular, the project has adopted the participatory approach to allow the communities constitute local executives

for the management of the project. These executives are in charge of selecting the rotational participants of the LIPWs under the tree (mangoes) plantation to mitigate climate change and sell the produce to continue to run the project. Again, the beneficiaries have always been given capacity building to enable them have the required capacities to enable them maintain and run the programme after it has elapsed.

D. KEY IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES OF THE PROGRAMMES/ PROJECTS

An assessment of the various rural development strategies implemented in the Builsa North District reveals that they have been a number of success stories which beneficiaries admit have been very helpful in addressing their needs to a large extent. This notwithstanding, the implementation process of the programmes and projects was bedevilled by some challenges. As a result, some beneficiaries expressed their dissatisfaction of the implemented projects. The section outlines implementation challenges that are likely to affect the sustainability of the projects if not addressed.

- ✓ Lack of financial commitment on the part of the District Assembly to support implementing agencies
- ✓ Identifying core poor in the communities to provide them with interventions such as employment
- ✓ Delay in the release of funds agricultural inputs and the payment of wages
- ✓ Identification of project packages that reflect the needs of the beneficiaries

VI. CONCLUSION

Rural development strategies implemented in the Builsa North District have contributed to improving the living conditions of residents notwithstanding implementation challenges. The number of successes achieved could be attributed to a collaborative approach adopted in the programmes/ projects' implementation processes. Generally, there is the need for a clear-cut national rural development policy or framework to prioritize the needs of rural areas. The framework should set out the guiding principles and goals to address the socio-economic and infrastructural needs of the rural areas. This framework can be effectively used to guide, coordinate and direct the implementation of policies for rural development. Such framework should be an embodiment of the perspective, medium and short-term development goals of the rural areas of the country. The national poverty reduction framework should emphasize on rural development. Policy makers at the national level should streamline policies that would enhance growth of output and income at the household level, through redistribution of macroeconomic achievements to especially the rural areas. Moreover, there is the need to emphasis the development of infrastructure, agriculture, enterprise and social protection interventions to promote rural development in Ghana. Thus, rural development policy must prioritize infrastructural development, agricultural development, enterprise development, and the implementation of social intervention in rural areas. The respondents agreed

that the provision of these has the capacity to improve their living conditions.

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