

Full Length Research Paper

Perceptions of Development in the Northern region of Ghana

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Abstract

This study sought to find out beneficiaries' views about development and the qualities of a good development project, among others. The study was carried out in Tamale, Savelugu and Kpalsogu/Dundo in the Northern region of Ghana. The stratified and simple random sampling techniques were used to select the communities and 240 respondents respectively. Data collection techniques consisted of focus group discussions, individual face-to-face questionnaire administration and observations. Respondents' definition for development was; meeting one's welfare goals, such as Peace, Enough food, Good health, High income and Education, in line with the moden definitions of development. In terms of the qualities of development projects, respondents were most concerned about their usefulness, use of local resources, legality as well as conformity to culture and religious beliefs. The two main findings that did not meet our *apriori* expectations were that respondents did not place much importance on the need for their involvement in the planning, design and implementation of projects and programmes and the notion that Governement alone has the responsibility of providing for the people. The community members must be sensitized and educated to appreciate their role in the planning, design and implementaion of development programmes.

Keywords: Development, Evaluation, Northern Ghana, Perceptions.

LIST OF ACRONYMS

ADRA; Adventists Development and Relief Agency, APRM; Africa Peer Review Mechanism, CCFC, Christian Children Fund of Canada, DA; District Assembly, GDP; Gross Domestic Product, GPRS, Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy, GNP; Gross National Product, GSS; Ghana Statistical Service, HDI; Human Development Index, HSU; Human Security Unit, JHS; Junior High School, MDGs; Millennium Development Goals, MiDA; Millennium Development Authority, MoFA; Ministry of Food and Agriculture, MTPs; Medium Term Plans, NDPC; National Development Planning Commission, NGO; Non-governmental Organisation, OCHA ; Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, ODA; Official Development Assistance, OECD; Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, SPSS; Statistical Package for Social Sciences, SHS; Senior High School, UN; United Nations, UNDP; United Nations Development Programme, UNICEF; United Nations Children's Fund, USD; United States Dollar, VRA; Volta River Authority, WFP; World Food Programme

INTRODUCTION

Development has been traditionally defined based on the wealth of a nation, as measured by its Gross National Product (GNP) (Todaro and Smith, 2003). However, from the 1970s, development has been redefined in terms of the reduction or elimination of poverty, inequality and unemployment within the context of a growing economy (Todaro & Smith, 2003). This new paradigm of development was re-echoed when the World Bank in 1991 recommended that development interventions should improve the quality of life. Todaro & smith (2003) observe that there are disparities in the living standards of people. For instance, they assert that while nearly three-fourth of the world population has little or no shelter and also lack adequate access to food, good health, education and employment, the remaining quarter of people are well-to-do and have excesses of food, shelter, health and cash security.

Most of the former live in the developing countries,

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including Africa South of the Sahara. The World Bank (2007a) asserts that in 2005, while about 85% of the world's population lived in developing countries, their residents received just about 46% of global income. The Bank thus advocates that in order to increase the share of global income of developing countries, development activities should be pursued in these nations. Along similar lines Mulwa (2007) observed that Africa has deteriorated over the years from food self-sufficiency to net food importer and depended on food-relief donations from the West. However, he was quick to blame the IMF and the World Bank for this, as he argued that the Bretton Woods Institutions impose their will on Africa Countries, without caring to consult and establish the real needs of millions of the people affected by their policies in these countries. Similarly, the adoption of Modernist Approach to development that was imposed by the colonial masters retards the achievement of better standard of living for the people of Africa (K. Anyidoho, Paper presented at PANAFEST 2003 on Culture and Development in Cape Coast, Ghana). Donor countries continue to attach conditions to Official Development Assistance (ODAs). For instance, in most cases the grants given must be used by the recipient country to buy goods and services from the donor country, which ultimately leads to the transfer of the funds back to the latter. Similarly, the fact that the developing country is supposed to develop along the path of the so called developed country means that the former is likely to throw away its rich culture and adopt that of the developed country. He stressed that several years after independence much of the people's culture and aspirations are not factored into the development plans that are formulated. With this plight, most African countries over the years have been at the receiving end of ODA in order to be able to take care of their people. For instance, Nunnenkamp (2008) noted that the total aid granted by Non-governmental Organisations (NGOs) from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Nations to developing countries amounted to almost US \$15 billion per annum in 2005 and 2006. In general, the World Bank (2007b) reports that total private and official flows to developing countries, including Ghana reached a record \$571 billion in 2006. This represents 19% of the figure in 2005. In the case of Ghana, external assistance has averaged about US\$ 770 million between 2001 and 2007, with the highest amount of US\$ 1.1 billion in 2005 (WFP, 2009). According to a report by WFP (2009) the appropriate agencies that administered this colossal sum of money invested it in the development of people, in which case it was expected to improve the living standard of people. However, as argued by Beace and Tirone (2008) the development interventions by agencies or organisations do not necessarily improve the living standards of people.

The Ghana Statistical Service (GSS) (2007) reports that 18.2% of Ghanaians still live in poverty with an

income of less than GH¢ 288 (\$ 288) per adult per year or GH¢ 0.78 (\$0.78) per day. The Northern region of Ghana is one of the deprived regions of the country with 54.0% of Ghana's extremely poor population living in the region (Ghana Statistical Service, 2007). In Ghana, like in many other developing countries, many have expressed concern over the fact that development projects and programmes extended to the country have not yielded their real impact of improving the standard of living of people in a sustainable manner. While a number of reasons have been given, one that stands out is the fact that intended beneficiaries are not involved in the planning, design and implementation of such projects and programmes. Consequently most of these projects do not only fail to address the real needs of the intended beneficiaries, but they lack sustainability.

Thus, a study to find out the perceptions of beneficiaries about the outcomes of development projects extended to them is deemed a worthwhile exercise. The Specific objectives of this study were to find out: Beneficiaries' views about development and the qualities of a good development project; the development projects that have been extended to the study areas for the past five years and the Community members' perceptions about the outcomes of development projects; and the level of the community members' involvement in the planning, design and implementation of the projects.

In many respects, the study contributes to existing information on development of people by giving insight into what people would often consider as better living conditions. When the development needs of people are known and prioritized, it allows efficient allocation of resources at planning for implementation. The main limitation of the study, however, is the fact that it did not consider specific development projects. Below is an outline of similar studies that have looked at people's perspectives of what development is and who should provide development projects.

Hurley (2004) found that definitions of development vary greatly among Ghanaians, but essentially most of these definitions include a sense that development is positive action in improving people's lives. She stressed that even where people cannot pinpoint a definition, there was always the belief that in development, life will change for the better. On the other hand, Pramanik (2006) observed that the people of Terengganu and Kemaman in Malaysia put emphasis on the provision of social overhead capital comprising an umbrella of services such as education, health, housing, roads, water and electricity as important in bringing about development.

Ahwoi's (1992) asserted that development is provided if people have basic educational facilities, good drinking water, community facilities and services such as improved sanitation, health and roads. Similarly, Thirlwall (1999) argued that a nation can be considered developed if it is able to provide basic needs such as

housing, clothing, food and minimal education to its people. In the studies by Edwards and Hulme (1996) and Miraftab (1997) development interventions had been prompted by the need to improve health delivery systems, sanitation and education. However, Lahai (2009) found that the main focus of development intervention was the improvement of agricultural projects encompassing, crops, livestock and marketing, among others. In addition, her respondents emphasized that the provision of development projects should be the responsibility of all stakeholders including community members, Governmental as well as Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs). Lastly, in Naqvi *et al's* (1996) study, development is synonymous with participation, stressing that both categories of respondents (residential respondents and business respondents) were of the strongest opinion that development projects must be participatory, if it should be sustainable and bring about the needed benefits.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Literature Review

The literature review section is divided into two broad subsections. The first subsection looks at the measurement of development while the second considers the process by which development takes place over time.

Measuring development-The Traditional Economic Approach

Traditionally, the development of a nation has been measured by growth in its Gross National Product (GNP) or Gross Domestic Product (GDP) Todaro and Smith (2003). As expounded by Begg *et al* (2003) GNP is the value of all the economic activities that accrue to the citizens of a nation in a given fiscal year. GDP is similar to GNP, except that in the case of the former the economic activities must necessarily take place within the borders of the country irrespective of whether they were undertaken by the citizens of the country in question or foreigners. Thus to get GNP figures from GDP figures, we must subtract the contributions of foreigners resident in the domestic economy, while we add the contributions of citizens living outside the domestic economy. GNP as a measure of welfare was propounded by Adam Smith, believed to be the father of Economics (Todaro and Smith, 2003). Adam Smith held the view that growth in GNP would result in development because growth increased employment and other goods available for consumption to the community. In order to know an individual's share of the GNP, the GNP figure is divided by the size of the total population to arrive at the per capita income. In this case per capita income is seen

to be sharper in measuring an individual's welfare than the total GNP.

The traditional view of Economic Development has also been seen in terms of a deliberate change of the structure of the economy such that agriculture loses its contribution to GDP to the manufacturing and service sectors (Todaro and Smith (2003)). The view has influenced a lot of governments, including those in the developing world to over-concentrate on the other sectors while neglecting the agricultural sector in which they may have comparative advantage. The Traditional approach to measuring economic development was however, soon to be criticized on grounds of being inadequate in measuring social welfare. The argument raised by the United Nations was that education and health are important social indicators that GNP figures do not automatically translate into, hence, the human development approach to measuring development (UNDP, 1996).

The Human Development Approach

The specific factors that led to the popularity of the Human Development Approach were: (1) the inability of the unseen hand (i.e. the forces of demand and supply) to ensure that growth trickles down to the ordinary man on the street; (2) the increasing human cost of structural adjustment programmes; (3) the increasing levels of social ills (e.g. crime, weakening of social fabric and pollution) despite the sustained economic growth that many countries were experiencing; and (4) a wave of democratisation that gave rise to the desire to have people-centered development approaches (UNDP, 1996). The Human development reports were written by Dr. Mahbub ul Haq from Pakistan in the 1980s, against the backdrop of the aforementioned difficulties associated with the traditional Growth theories.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) (1996, p.49) defined Human development "as a process of enlarging people's choices and building human capabilities (the range of things people can be and do), enabling them to live a long and healthy life, have access to knowledge, have a decent standard of living and participate in the life of their community and the decisions that affect their lives." By implication, and as argued by the UNDP, human development is broad and dynamic in the sense that it has many dimensions which can change at any time for the individual and for the country at large. The choices of individuals, and for that matter, countries, are not only many but they are dynamic over time. Similarly, these choices may differ from an individual or one country to the other.

This brings to fore Sen's (1999) "capabilities" approach, which argues that economic growth cannot be sensibly treated as an end in itself. Development has to be more concerned with enhancing the lives we lead and the freedom we enjoy. Sen's three core values of

development are sustenance (the ability to meet basic needs), self-esteem (a sense of worth and self-respect, of not being used as a tool by others for their own ends) and freedom from servitude (having an expanded range of choices, with minimum external constraints in the pursuit of one's developmental goals). The Human Development Approach brings to the fore a related concept called Human Security, which adds the dimension of peace and security (UN-OCHA HSU, 2009).

Theories of Development

At this stage, we review some of the theories of development as expatiated in Todaro and Smith (2003) and Servaes (2004).

The linear-stages theories

These theories began in the 1950s and early 1960s. They view development as a series of successive stages of economic growth through which all countries must pass. According to these theories, the right quantities and combination of savings, investment and foreign aid are all what it takes to ensure the economic development of a nation. What this means is that when a nation has enough savings, investment and foreign aid, this will lead to increase in the GNP growth rates which would finally bring about development to its people. Rostow's stages of Growth and the Harrod-Domar model are some of the examples of the linear stage models (Todaro and Smith, 2003).

Modernisation theory

We understand from Servaes (2004) that the modernisation theory was dominant in academic circles from around 1945 to 1965. In simple terms the theory holds the view that traditional societies become developed through the transfer of technology as well as other cultural practices from the developed societies to such societies. The conditions in Western Europe were taken as standards and development was defined in terms of economic growth (i.e. growth in GNP or per capita income).

Structural-Change Models

While the Harold Domer Model was built on the growth of GNP figures as a measure of development, the structural-change models, as the name implies, were built on the structural transformation as a measure of development. Structural-Change Models replaced the

linear stages approach in the 1970s. The models focus on the mechanism by which under-developed economies transform their domestic economic structures from a heavy emphasis on traditional subsistence agriculture to a more modern, more urbanised and more industrially diverse manufacturing and service economy. Arthur Lewis' Two-Sector Surplus Labour Approach and The Patterns of Development Approach are well-known representatives of the structural change approach (Todaro and Smith, 2003).

The International-Dependence Revolution

During the 1970s there was growing dissatisfaction, especially among developing country intellectuals with the linear stage models and the structural change models in ensuring development. It was against this backdrop that the International-Dependence revolution emerged.

International dependence revolution focuses on the relationships between developed and less developed countries which are believed to be the reason for the underdeveloped nature of less developed economies. According to this theory, both domestic and international difficulties cause the developing countries to be heavily dependent on, and dominated by the rich developed countries (Todaro and Smith, 2003).

A detailed discussion of the dependency theory is discussed below.

Dependency theory

The Dependency theory was propounded by Hans Singer and Raul Prebisch in 1949. However, it became popular in the 1960s and 70s as a criticism of modernization theory. In simple terms the Dependency theory is about a relationship between two nations; one strong, and the other weak. The weak nation lives to serve the interests of the strong nation, while the strong nation occasionally 'dashes' out some surpluses to the weak nation. Important as the weak nation is to the strong nation, the relationship is such that the weaker nation must depend on the stronger one for virtually all that it needs (Todaro and Smith, 2003).

The Neoclassical Counterrevolution: Market Fundamentalism

The Neoclassical Counterrevolution began in the 1980s. The neo-classical counter revolutionists argue for little or no government intervention in the economy, because they consider the government as inefficient. They argue for freer markets as an approach to solving the development problems that less developed countries are

confronted with. Contrary to the claims of the dependence theorists, the neoclassical counterrevolutionaries argue that the Third world is underdeveloped not because of the exploitation of the developed countries and the international agencies that they control but rather because of too much government interventions in the economy and corruption. The way out, among others therefore, is to promote free markets and laissez-faire with the state providing the enabling environment. They cite the Asian tigers (South Korea, Taiwan and Singapore) as free market examples (Todaro and Smith, 2003).

Traditional Neoclassical Growth Theory

One important dimension of the neoclassical free-market argument is that liberalization of national markets draws additional domestic and foreign investment which goes to augment domestic capital accumulation for economic growth. Thus, this theory is a development of the Harold-Domar models which emphasis domestic savings and the capital output ratio as the determinants of economic growth. The Solow Neoclassical model is an example of the traditional neoclassical growth models. The model introduces labour and technology as additional determinants of long-term growth as opposed to the Harold-Domar which considers only savings and the capital output ratio as GNP determinants (Todaro and Smith, 2003).

The New Approach to Development

"Another Development" has been used by Servaes (2004, p.58) to refer to the new approach to development, which is multifaceted and perhaps, appropriate for the African context. He observes that the central idea about this approach to development is that "there is no universal path to development, and that development must be conceived as an integral, multidimensional, and dialectic process which can differ from one society to another."

The Study Area

The study was carried out in Tamale, Savelugu and Kpalsogu/Dundo in the Tamale Metropolitan, Savelugu-Nanton and Tolon-Kumbungu Districts of the Northern region of Ghana respectively. The Northern region is one of the poorest regions in Ghana, despite the heavy presence of NGOs. Computations by the GSS (2007) indicate that the incidence of poverty levels for the region in 1991/92, 1998/99 and 2005/2006 were 63%, 69% and 52% respectively, far above the national averages of 51.7%, 39.5% and 28.5% respectively for the same period (This is the most current available data

comparing regional poverty levels.). The region lacks most of the social amenities like schools, health facilities, roads and potable water supply, necessary for economic development.

Sampling Procedure

A multi-stage sampling technique was employed in selecting the respondents for the study. While the region and the districts were purposively chosen for economic and convenient reasons, stratified sampling technique was used to select the communities in the districts, so as to ensure that the respondents were picked from urban (Tamale metropolis), peri-urban (Savelugu in the Savelugu/Nanton district) and rural communities (Kpalsogu/Dundo in the Tolon-Kumbungu district). The number of respondents picked from the communities was further stratified by age and sex. In all, a sample of 240 respondents, consisting of 80 from each Metropolitan/District was randomly selected for interview.

Methods of Data collection and analysis

Data collection techniques consisted of focus group discussions, individual (face-to-face) questionnaire administration and observation. The fieldwork lasted for a period of four weeks (June-July, 2010). The questionnaire for the face-to-face interview and the focus group guide for the Focus Group discussions were pre-tested to ensure that they were good instruments for the purpose of the study. Methods of data analysis involved descriptive analysis, frequency distribution, and Kendall's Coefficient of Concordance. SPSS 16.0 software was used for the data entry and analyses. The results are presented in the form of tables and bar charts.

The Kendall's Coefficient of Concordance (W)

The Kendall's Coefficient of Concordance (W) is a non-parametric inferential statistical procedure used to rank (in this context) a given set of indicators from the most important to the least important, and then measures the degree of agreement/concordance between the respondents (Edwards, 1964). In this case, respondents were asked to rank some pre-determined development indicators (such as credible source, legality, usefulness, conformity to culture and making use of local resources) by assigning **1** to the most important; **2** to the second most important, **3** to the third most important, in that order. The least score rank is the most important while the one with the highest score is ranked as the least important. The total rank score computed is then used to calculate for the Coefficient of Concordance (**W**) to

measure the degree of agreement in the rankings. The limits for W cannot exceed 1.00 and cannot be negative. It will be 1.00 when the ranks assigned by each respondent are the same as those assigned by other respondents and it will be 0.00 when there is a maximum disagreement among the respondents.

The formula for the coefficient of concordance (W) is given as:

$$W = \frac{n[\sum T^2 - (\sum T)^2/n]}{nm^2(n^2 - 1)} \text{ or } nT/nm^2(n^2 - 1) \quad (1)$$

Where:

T = sum of ranks for the indicators being ranked;

m = number of respondents; and

n = number of factors being ranked

Note that W is an index that measures the ratio of the observed variance of the sum of ranks and the maximum possible variance of the sum of ranks.

The maximum variance (T) is given by:

$$T = m^2(n^2 - 1)/12 \quad (2)$$

$$VarT = [\sum T^2 - (\sum T)^2/n] \quad (3)$$

RESULTS

Socio-Economic Characteristics of Respondents

In all, about 53%, as opposed to 47% were males. In Savelugu and Kpalsogu/Dundo, the proportions of males were higher with 54% and 55% respectively. The average age of the respondents was 32 years, the minimum and maximum being 14 and 75 respectively. The oldest respondent was 75 years old and was found in Tamale, whilst the youngest (14 years) was located in Savelugu. While the average age in Tamale and Kpalsogu/Dundo was 33 years that of Savelugu was 29 years. The highest percentage of the respondents (43) had no formal education. However, the percentage of respondents who had tertiary education (17) was higher than those with primary (11), JSS (14) or secondary (15). It was quite surprising to find that the percentage of respondents with no formal education in Tamale, an urban community (43.8%), was higher than that of Savelugu, which is a peri-urban (25%). The percentage in Kpalsogu/Dundo was 58.8%. The majority of the respondents (60%) were married while 37% and 3% were single and divorced respectively. In Tamale and Kpalsogu, there were more married respondents; they formed 55% and 80% respectively. The respondents who were single in Tamale constituted 45% and also the same category numbered 18% in Kpalsogu/ Dundo. The percentages of respondents who were divorced in Savelugu and Kpalsogu/Dundo were 5 and 3 respectively, while no divorcee was recorded in Tamale. The mean household size of the study areas was 9, ranging from 4 and 35. GSS (2007) reports that the

average household size for the region is 7, with a spread between 6 and 10. While the average household size in Savelugu is the same as that of the region, Tamale and Kpalsogu/Dundo recorded 8 and 12 respectively. Apart from the student population, which was the highest (30%), majority of the respondents had farming as their major occupation (28%), followed by trading (15%) and other occupations like artisan, hairdressing and tailoring (17%). The three categories were also the minor occupations of 48%, 19% and 33% of the respondents.

Unsurprisingly, the largest farming population came from Kpalsogu/Dundo, where 71.3% and 47.8% mentioned farming as their major and minor occupations respectively. The corresponding figures for Savelugu were 12.5% and 41.7%. In Tamale, even though no respondent had farming as his/her main occupation, as high as 52.9% indicated it was their minor job. Being an urban community the highest percentage of the respondents were into other occupations such as artisan, hairdressing and tailoring (30%) followed by trading (25%). The pattern is not different from that of Savelugu.

For those who were farmers, the mean farm size was 1.7 ranging from 0.4 and 5.3. Being a arural community, Kpalsogu/Dundo recorded the highest mean farm size (1.9) with Tamale and Savelugu each recording 1.5 hectares. The above results confirm the generally existing situations in the northern region of Ghana. For instance, the literacy rate for the region is as low as 22 percent and agricultural work is the predominant occupation of 71.2% of the economically active population. Also, the average size of households for the region is 7.0, with a spread between 6.0 and 10.0 (GSS, 2005).

Definitions of Development and Categories of Development Items

Respondents were asked what the term 'Development' meant to them. The majority of respondents (58%) referred to development as "being able to meet one's welfare goals or well being". The remaining respondents (42%) defined development as "provision of physical structures". Respondents were also asked to mention in order of importance, some items/ indicators of development, which they identified as follows: Utilities (29%), Education (13%), Health (12%) and Transport (7%). The rest were Commerce (3%), Agriculture (3%), Employment (2%), Good governance (2%) and capital/loans (2%). The last four categories were Communication technology (0.8%), industries (0.4%), religion (0.3%), Entertainment (0.3%) and recreation (0.2%).

Development Indicators

To probe further the respondents' views about develop-

Table 1. Respondents' ranking of Development Indicators

Development indicators	Study Area (Mean Ranks)			
	Tamale	Savelugu	Kpalsogu/Dundo	Pooled
High formal education	3.4	3.3	3.4	3.4
Good health	2.7	3.2	3.1	3.0
Enough food	4.1	4.7	3.4	4.1
Peace	3.4	3.6	2.9	3.3
High income	5.8	5.4	4.2	5.1
Enough clothing	7.7	7.3	8.2	7.7
Enough entertainment-playing draught, going to night clubs, etc	10.4	9.0	11.8	10.4
Satisfying the Supreme Being, the gods and the ancestors	12.5	10.3	12.5	11.8
Satisfying politicians	13.1	12.2	11.5	12.2
Satisfying the chiefs and elders	10.3	10.2	10.8	10.4
Satisfying God/Allah	4.9	5.6	7.1	5.9
Many wives/husbands and children/siblings	11.9	11.7	12.1	11.9
Many houses	8.8	9.5	8.0	8.8
Many cars	10.1	11.8	10.0	10.6
Many gadgets(sounds system, T.V, sewing machine, etc	11.2	12.1	11.0	11.4

Source: Field survey, 2010

Table 2. Respondents' view on the Qualities of Development Projects

Qualities	Mean Ranks			
	Tamale	Savelugu	Kpalsogu/Dundo	Pooled
Credible donor/individual/organization	6.3	2.2	5.3	4.6
Conformity to culture	5.7	3.7	3.7	4.4
Conformity to religious belief system	6.0	4.2	5.6	5.2
Use of local resources	7.0	5.7	5.1	5.9
Involvement of beneficiaries in planning and implementation	5.9	5.3	9.8	7.0
Legality	5.7	7.1	4.9	5.9
Suitability	6.8	8.2	5.6	6.9
Usefulness	4.4	6.3	3.0	4.6
Sustainability	5.9	8.2	7.1	7.1
Environmental friendliness	6.6	7.2	9.0	7.6
Affordability, if for sale	8.4	9.1	9.9	9.1
Non-excludability	9.4	10.8	8.9	9.7

Source: Field survey, 2010

ment indicators, they were made to rank some pre-determined development indicators (in Table 1) above by assigning **1** to the most important; **2** to the second most important, **3** to the third most important, in that order. The most important indicator, in the opinion of the respondents, was Good health (3.0), followed by Peace (3.3), High formal education (3.4), enough food (4.1), High income (5.1) and religion (5.9). Tamale being a conflict-prone area, it is not surprising that respondents ranked peace as the number two indicator of development. The overall Kendall's Coefficient of Concordance was 0.81, which means that there was agreement among 81% of the respondents in the ranking.

Qualities of Development Projects/programmes

Development projects must meet some qualities, if they are to serve the purposes for which they are provided. Respondents were asked to rank some pre-determined qualities (listed in Table 2 above) by assigning **1** to the most important; **2** to the second most important, **3** to the third most important, in that order, like they did with the development indicators. The six most important qualities, in the opinion of respondents were Conformity to culture (4.4), Usefulness (4.6), Credible source (4.6), Conformity to religious belief system (5.2), Use of local resources (5.9) and legality (5.9). It was quite surprising that beneficiaries' involvement in planning and implementa-

tion did not come as an important quality.

The side effects of Some Development Projects

Many of the respondents (30%) indicated that they disliked congestions, individualism, noise and conflicts associated with development in the cities. Also, 26% of them disliked night clubs, beaches and swimming pools and the skyscrapers found in the cities. However, a high percentage (44) of the respondents found nothing wrong with development items; to them the merits of development far outweigh the disadvantages.

In terms of location differences, Tamale respondents complained about poor-sanitation and health as well as industrial and vehicular pollutions in towns. They also mentioned that development leads to excessive human rights violations, indecent dressing and disrespect among the youth in society. In Savelugu, respondents did not like the style of housing they find in the big cities on television, such as storey-buildings, sky-scrappers, hotels and guesthouses. They abhorred the activities that go on in some of these places. In Kpalsogu/Dundo, the respondents were concerned about the social vices and crimes such as theft, armed robbery and murder.

Respondents' View on who should provide development Items

The greatest percentage of respondents (38) felt that the Government alone must provide development projects. 'Individuals' came second (23%), followed by 'All stakeholders, including International Development Partners' (17%) and 'Community members' (15%). The rest were 'Government and NGOs' (6%), 'NGO only' (2%), 'Companies and government' (0.1%) and 'Companies only' (0.1%).

Specific Development Project in the study communities

The development projects that were provided within the last five years in the communities included educational facilities (27%), potable water (24%), sanitation (11%) and electricity (11%). In Kpalsogu/Dundo, there was no electricity supply. Almost all the respondents indicated that these projects were functioning.

Donors of Development Projects

The Ghana Government and NGOs were the main providers of the projects in the study communities. While Christian Children Fund of Canada (CCFC) Ghana, New Energy and School for Life were the NGOs most identified with the development projects in Tamale, in

Savelugu, World Vision Ghana, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and Millennium Development Authority (MiDA) (in partnership with District Assembly) were the most popular with regards to the provision of development projects. In Kpalsogu /Dundo, only ADRA had been the NGO associated with development projects.

Community members' level of participation

In terms of the level of involvement of the community members in the projects, a higher percentage of the respondents (64%) indicated they were involved. Out of this percentage, 61% were males. While all the men were involved in the handing over stage, no woman indicated she was involved at this final stage of project design and implementation. The respondents' levels of involvement in development were as follows; planning (40%), implementation (56%) and handing-over (4%). At the community level, the percentage of respondents that were involved in the design and implementation of projects were as follows: Tamale (60); Savelegu (60) and Kpalsogu/Dundo (49).

DISCUSSION

As indicated earlier, the main objective of this present study was to find out beneficiaries' views about development and the qualities of a development project. From the results the majority defined development as being able to meet one's welfare goals. This is confirmed by their ranking of utilities, education and health as the first three most important items of development. Certainly these definitions are in line with that of the World Bank and the UN Human Development Index, namely, food security, education and health (UNDP, 1996). Hurley (2004) finds that even though the definitions of development vary greatly among Ghanaians, essentially most of these definitions give us a sense that development is positive action in improving people's lives. She stresses that even where people cannot pinpoint a definition, there is always the belief that in development, life will change for the better. On the other hand, the view that development is about the provision of infrastructure cannot be swept under the carpet, considering the fact that this was the view of as high as 43% of the population. Pramanik (2006) finds that the people of Terengganu and Kemaman in Malaysia put emphasis on the provision of social overhead capital comprising an umbrella of services such as education, health, housing, roads, water and electricity as important in bringing about development. Thus, while the view of the majority of our respondents is consistent with what Hurley found, the minority's view is in line with the findings by Pramanik (2006).

Contrary to the findings of the present study that the

Government should be the main provider of development projects, in Hurley's (2004) study, the majority felt that development was the responsibility of the Ghanaian people and that the future of Ghana rested in their hands. The majority of Hurley's respondents opined that it is the failure of Ghanaian people, in terms of incompetence and resistance to development, that has kept the nation from developing, stressing that the responsibility lies with the people of Ghana, who should each make some small sacrifices in the form of money, labour and tools to undertake self-help projects which the communities need most.

Unsurprisingly, and consistent with our findings, the heavy presence of NGOs in Ghana, especially in northern Ghana, was criticized by Hurley's interviewees, who felt that NGOs are not making any lasting impact on the development of Ghanaians but are only perpetuating Ghana's dependency on developed countries. Manji and O' Coill (2002) also find that the work of NGOs today contributes marginally to development in Africa. However, in Andiema et al (2002) and Lahai (2009) Christian NGOs, as opposed to non-Christian NGOs, were highly commended for instituting development projects. For instance, in Lahai's (2009) study Christian NGOs were identified as the most active actors of development in Bumboazio in the Northern region of Ghana. Non-Christian NGOs were however, identified as the least valued development actors because they initiated the bulk of projects whose impacts were regarded as negative and unattainable.

In terms of development projects extended to the communities, the fact that educational facilities were identified by the majority of respondents was not surprising, considering the assertion that northern Ghana has had its fair share of infrastructural facilities in recent times. For example, from the Medium Term Plans-Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy (MTPs-GPRS) 2003-2005 report, out of the national total of 685 three-unit classrooms constructed in 2003, 420 of them (61%) were built in the three deprived Northern regions. Similarly, out of the national total of 440 six-unit classroom blocks that were constructed nationwide in the same year, 96 projects (about 22%) were in the three deprived Northern regions.

However, as expected, Tamale and Savelugu were better off than Kpalsogu and Dundo, in terms of these facilities and others, such as sanitation water and electricity supply. The Africa Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) report acknowledges that access to electricity in the rural areas of Ghana was low (16%) as compared with about 75% of their urban counterparts. Also, with the supply of potable water, it was reported that access to pipe-borne water was estimated at about 71% and 16% for the urban and rural populations respectively. Lastly, according to GSS (2007 p.24) "improvement in access to adequate toilet facilities have often been more marked for urban households."

In general, beneficiaries' participation in projects contributes to the achievement of the projects' objectives and outcomes (Prokopy, 2005). Naqvi et al. (1996) find that development is synonymous with participation. In this current study, even though a higher percentage of the respondents were involved in the design and implementation of the projects in their communities, there was gender and location imbalance. The argument has often been made that since women are more than men, by the 2010 Population and Housing Census, women need to participate at all levels of development projects or programmes so that their needs can be well-catered for. Similarly, the low participation in development interventions in rural communities of Kpalsogu and Dundo, affirms Kyei's (1998) assertion that District Assemblies have not been able to create local ownership of development programmes due to lack of involvement of the poor, especially in the rural areas. Our finding is consistent with that of Lahai (2009) and Paul (1987) that there is a high level of beneficiary participation in the implementation stage of projects.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

Among others, this study sought to find out beneficiaries' views about development and the qualities of a good development project in the Northern region. We found that respondents' definition of development was consistent with the modern view, namely, meeting one's welfare goals, such as Peace, Enough food, Good health, High income and Education. Also, in terms of the qualities of development projects, respondents were most concerned about their usefulness, use of local resources, legality as well as conformity to culture and religious beliefs. Contrary to our *apriori* expectations however, they did not place much emphasis on their participation in the planning, design and implementation of the development projects. This notwithstanding, respondents' level of participation in the design and implementation of development projects was quite high, except that this was a bit skewed in favour of men and the urban and peri-urban dwellers. This must be corrected, and above all, the community members should be sensitized on the importance of their involvement in the design and implementation of projects. Lastly, the notion that government alone have the responsibility of providing development projects needs to be corrected. Indeed the government has the greatest responsibility to bring about development, but the community members must be educated to appreciate the fact that they also have a role to play in the development agenda. Finally, this work did not have particular projects in mind, future studies may focus on particular development projects and how beneficiaries perceive their importance in meeting their welfare goals.

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