Gasping for Breath: Women’s Concerns and the Politics of Community Development in Rural Ghana

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Gasping for Breath:

Women’s Concerns and the Politics of Community Development in Rural Ghana

By

Charles Gyan

Bachelor of Arts (Social Work), University of Ghana, 2010
Master of Philosophy (Social Work), University of Ghana, 2013

DISSERTATION

Submitted to the Lyle S. Hallman Faculty of Social Work in partial fulfilment of the requirements for Doctor of Philosophy degree in Social Work

Wilfrid Laurier University
2018

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Abstract

This transnational feminist study described and interpreted the experiences of women within the context of community development in rural Ghana. The purpose of this study was to empirically ascertain the barriers faced by women within the community development processes in rural Ghana. With this goal, women from three randomly selected rural communities in Ghana were sampled and interviewed. A concurrent triangulation mixed method research design was adopted. The main instruments used were a questionnaire and an in-depth interview for the collection of the quantitative and qualitative data respectively. A total of two hundred women participated in the study.

The findings implicate Western influence and structural factors in the low participation of women in community development processes in Ghana. This study found that Western interference in the form of the superimposition of a neoliberal capitalist agenda has had a negative consequence on the level of participation of women in their communities. This ideology has imbued in women individualistic ideals to the detriment of traditional communal life. The women were particularly disadvantaged by the reliance on level of education and fluency in English, as requirements for local government positions since English is the national business language. The existing patriarchal norms and values in rural communities such as traditional gender roles and ‘name calling’ militate against women within the context of community development.

The imperative of policy and practice reforms such as the need for local women to have conversations around constructive patriarchy and global inequalities, raising awareness about the need to get women involved in the community development process, the provision of leadership opportunities for women, setting up structurally transformative policies, and the promotion of
Girl-Child and Adult Literacy Education were highlighted. The usefulness of allowing the ordinary Ghanaian women to keep their spaces, define their priorities within those spaces and control the transformation process is a major contribution of this research.
Acknowledgements

What shall I render to my God

For all His mercy’s store?

I’ll take the gifts He hath bestowed,

And humbly ask for more. (MHB 399)

I am grateful to God Almighty for His grace and mercy throughout my doctoral study. I have received enormous support from several individuals while writing this dissertation and would like to therefore recognise their contributions. First, I wish to express my heartfelt gratitude to my advisors Prof. Magnus Mfoafo-M’Carthy and Prof. Shoshana Pollack for their unfaltering support of my doctoral study and this dissertation. I am profoundly grateful and indebted to them for their tolerance, inspiration, and immense expertise. Their unceasing inspiration and supervision helped me throughout the study and writing of this dissertation. I could not have imagined having better advisors and mentors for my doctoral study. Besides my advisors, I wish to express appreciation for the rest of my Dissertation Advisory Committee (DAC): Prof. Jennifer Lavoie, and Prof. Linda Kreitzer, for their shrewd comments and encouragement. Their feedback provided the incentive I needed to widen my research from various perspectives.

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I thank my colleagues at the Lyle S. Hallman Faculty of Social Work for stimulating in-class discussions, and their support over the last four years. In particular, I am grateful to Bibi
Baksh, Jen Vasic and Julia Reads for assisting in the coding process for the purpose of the trustworthiness of the qualitative data. Last but not the least, I would like to thank my wife for her wise advice, gentle words and emotional support throughout my study and the writing of this dissertation.

Thank you for all your inspiration!
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<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>ALE</td>
<td>Adult Literacy Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BAC</td>
<td>Business Advisory Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CBO</td>
<td>Community-Based Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CDPS</td>
<td>Community Development Participation Scale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEDAW</td>
<td>Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSO</td>
<td>Civil Society Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENOWID</td>
<td>Enhancing Opportunities for Women in Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ERP</td>
<td>Economic Recovery Programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GDP</td>
<td>Gross Domestic Products</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GNA</td>
<td>Ghana News Agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GNP</td>
<td>Gross National Product</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GPRS</td>
<td>Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GSGDA</td>
<td>Ghana’s Shared Growth and Development Agenda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GSS</td>
<td>Ghana Statistical Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INGOs</td>
<td>International Non-Governmental Organizations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IULA</td>
<td>International Union of Local Authorities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MDAs</td>
<td>Ministries, Departments and Agencies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MDGs</td>
<td>Millennium Development Goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MMDAs</td>
<td>Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MoGCSP</td>
<td>Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MOWAC</td>
<td>Ministry of Women and Children’s Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NCWD</td>
<td>National Council on Women and Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGOs</td>
<td>Non-Governmental Organizations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NPP</td>
<td>New Patriotic Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAMSCAD</td>
<td>Programme of Action to Mitigate the Social Cost of Adjustment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRA</td>
<td>Participatory Rural Appraisal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RCC</td>
<td>Regional Coordinating Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REP</td>
<td>Rural Enterprise Project</td>
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<tr>
<td>SAP</td>
<td>Structural Adjustment Programme</td>
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<tr>
<td>Abbreviation</td>
<td>Full Form</td>
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<tr>
<td>SES</td>
<td>Socio-Economic Status</td>
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<tr>
<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNDP</td>
<td>United Nations Development Programme</td>
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<td>UNICEF</td>
<td>United Nations Children’s Emergency Fund</td>
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<td>USAID</td>
<td>United States Agency for International Development</td>
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Chapter One: General Introduction

Background

In recent times, gender equality and the empowerment of women have become accepted as vital components of any country’s quest to achieve sustainable economic, social and political development. This is evident in the promulgation and enactment of a number of international conventions, legislations and agreements, such as the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) (UN, 1979), and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, adopted in 1995 geared towards the protection and promotion of women's rights (UN, 1995).

Despite these substantial efforts towards achieving gender equality, gender inequality continues to be a major challenge confronting many countries across the globe (hooks, 2000; Kurz & Johnson-Welch, 2000; Sai, 1995). After the first United Nations (UN) conference on women in 1987 and the subsequent conferences and reviews on women and gender issues, egregious multiple inequalities based on gender persist. For instance, a study of pay equity at McMaster University in Canada over a two year period from 2012 to 2013, revealed that male faculty earned on average $3,515 more than their female counterparts doing the same job annually (Casey, 2015). In Ghana, it is reported that 49% of females as compared to 67% of males are literate (Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), 2012). Theoretically, women in both developed and developing countries have the legitimate right to the same opportunities as men, however, practically they often do not fully enjoy those rights in virtually all public domains of life (Kabeer et al., 2013; Ridgeway, 2011). They are often relegated to the background when it comes to political participation and decision-making. The absence of
adequate resources or rights and opportunity for women to improve their lives worsens the situation. It is against this background that I conducted this study.

Social Location

In feminist research and critical social science research, "the researcher is seen as an active presence in the research process and the construction of findings" (Neysmith, 1995, p. 106). Absolon and Willett (2005) also re-emphasize the essence of locating the researcher’s self in a study of local people. Situating one’s self in a study helps to emphasize the link between the researcher, research topic and the research processes and provides a means for the critical deconstruction of one’s analysis and findings (Fook, 2002). In line with this, I will start by identifying myself for readers to know the worldview from which I speak.

Local research is strengthened when the researcher is a member of the community to be researched (Minkler & Wallerstein, 2003). My interest in this topic is sparked by my experience growing up in Ghana. It is part of my culture to make relational connections to explain who I am, where I come from and where I am going. I was born in the village of Jansoso in the Brong-Ahafo Region of Ghana. I am a Bono1 and an Akan2. I grew up in my home village of Jansoso where my people lived before, during and after colonization.

My parents (of blessed memory) had seven children. My father abandoned my mother and the seven children when I was a few weeks old. I did not know my father until I completed Junior High School. I never received any support, love or care from him, prior to or after meeting

1 The Bono is an ethnic group in the Brong-Ahafo Region of Ghana.

2 Akans are the largest meta-ethnic group in Ghana.
him. It was my mother, a peasant farmer, who took care of the seven children without support from any man.

My mother was my first teacher who prepared me for hard work and taught me skills such as resilience, equanimity and perspicacity. At an early age, I was groomed, like so many Bono and Akan kids, for hard work. I also learned submissiveness and perseverance. Through my mother’s care, support and training, I realized three important things in life that I cherish: 1) my mother (extended to all women); 2) the act of helping the needy, marginalized, and oppressed; and 3) the defense of the matriarchal roles in Ghanaian culture. Historically, in Ghanaian culture, women were engaged in development processes and their roles given equal weight as that of their male counterparts. For instance, in 1901, Yaa Asantewaa, the Queen Mother of Ejisu led the Asante Königreich to war against the British imperial power in Ghana (Arhin, 2000). This culture is now threatened by the existing patriarchal structures, norms and ideologies that have developed over the years. That is, the current domination of women by men and the associated shackling to men’s whims constitute a great threat to Ghanaian culture, which had previously valued women and their roles in the community.

Notwithstanding the fact that I grew up in a single parent household with gender-sensitive training, I was not living on an island and was influenced by the patriarchal culture developing within the Ghanaian society. From friends and school, I had inbuilt stereotypical beliefs and values concerning what women and men were perceived to be able to do. Some of the stereotyped images I had about women include “women have to serve and be submissive to their husbands, fathers, brothers and any other older person” and “they also have to be equipped with

---

3 One of the major ethnic groups in Ghana which played a key role in Ghana’s resistance to colonial rule
the kinds of skills necessary to make them good wives and mothers, such as being diligent and productive”. Whilst I believe that, what men can do, women can do and do it better, I at times feel there were exceptions and at some point, I tend to favour or accord men a higher status and value than women.

Deep introspection of these stereotypical beliefs about women, my mother and the memories I have of her, have made the rights and representations of women in society an issue that is very close to my heart. My mother’s ability to take care of seven children on her own has made me realize that women have much potential and could be a transformative force in Ghanaian society if given the opportunity. Hence, the exclusion of women in the community development process in Ghana reflects society’s inability to tap the full potential of a sector of society.

Focusing on this area of research was based on my personal and research experience. My Master’s thesis focused primarily on stakeholder relationships and their effects on community development in Ghana. I realized that the broader issues of gender and positional concern were significant factors excluding most women’s groups from engaging in the governance of community development in Ghana. At the same time, my Masters’ study increased my understanding of the role that imperialism and colonialism played in sidelining local people in community development processes in Ghana.

In my quest for a greater understanding of women’s identities formed within a post-colonial context, I decided to narrow my research to study women, especially those in rural communities in Ghana who are sidelined in decision-making processes. The quest to understand the broader issues that support or weaken women’s identities became an important driver for my research. In sum, I assumed, based on my experience and the literature, that women have great
potential in terms of knowledge and skills which needs to be tapped to help develop rural communities in Ghana.

As an outsider (a man) studying the issue of the “other” (women), I anticipate the challenge of perhaps being accused of appropriating women’s issues. My major dilemma with conducting this doctoral research is whether or not I will be perpetuating (and even exacerbating) the binaries I hope to refuse. Regardless of my intent to use my dissertation research as a means of righting the wrong and making the invisible experiences of women visible, I wonder if I will just be perpetuating the gender binaries through the process. I am aware of the fact that my maleness has the potential to influence the study and my lens. As I continue to think about this, I am inclined to consider myself as a ‘feminist ally’. That is, I am committed to ending gender inequality and to taking responsibility for holding men accountable for what they do to exclude or harm women. By taking on the role of an ally, I hope to prevail over my sense of uncertainty and powerlessness about the series of gender inequalities that impinge on women’s lives in Ghana.

**Community Development**

Community development with regards to this study involves the organization and mobilization of local resources, community members, local, national and international organizations, governmental and non-governmental organizations, and other stakeholders. This mobilization can be done either within or/and outside the community to enable them to take collective action on negative social indicators (social problems and issues) that concern them (Botes & van Rensburg, 2000; Matarrita-Cascante, 2010; Matarrita-Cascante & Brennan, 2012). Community development efforts build “the capacity of people to work collectively in addressing their common interests” (Maser, 1997, p. 1). Generally, this model of development stresses on
consensus, compromise, a ‘do-it-yourself’ attitude, and co-operation. This model has tangible advantages such as empowerment and capacity building of the citizenry; ensuring equality and equity (i.e., social justice); increasing productivity; and ensuring project sustainability (Gyan & Baffoe, 2014). All these benefits of community development can be realized whenever stakeholders are given equal opportunity to take part in the process and their roles are equally valued. The involvement of all stakeholders including women and other vulnerable groups with different skills, knowledge, resources, mission, and vision may be very essential in ensuring the success and sustainability of projects. The social and gender diversity dimension of community development was seldom attended to in most developing countries (Guijt & Shah, 1998) until the 1995 Beijing Conference. However, in a number of countries, women still lack independent rights to engage in community development processes without the consent of their husbands. For instance, Kamau (2010) argued that most women’s participation in politics in Kenya is subject to such consent. Most community development participatory approaches such as participatory rural appraisal (PRA) do not explicitly address gender relations (Akerkar, 2001; Elias, Jalonen, Fernandez & Grossete, 2017; Slocum, Wichhart, Rocheleau, & Thomas-Slayter, 1995).

According to Guijt and Shah (1998), gender is generally concealed in ostensibly all-encompassing concepts such as ‘the people’, or ‘the community’. Most often, the concept of ‘community’ actually means ‘male community’ in patriarchal societies. The focus on people’s or community participation without considering the gender dimension of participation in the community development process leads to the poor participation of women (Guijt & Shah, 1998).

Gender inequalities in the community development processes may limit the array of life choices available to women, which overwhelmingly limit their ability to participate in or benefit from development. It is therefore incumbent on community development practitioners and
Project managers to engender community development processes because if community development is not gendered it is endangered (Casey, Glennerster & Miguel, 2012; World Bank, 2015).

Adopting a social and gender sensitive approach to community development implies the acknowledgement that each gender has a stake in the other’s activities (Polonsky, Suchard, & Scott, 1999). Thus, taking into consideration the interests, missions, views and motivations of both men and women is important in effective community development. The power relations between men and women can greatly influence the perspective of men and women concerning community development problems. Gender sensitive community development therefore, should be responsive to the similarities, differences, and specificities of men and women’s experiences and give equal value to each in the community development process.

Community Development within the Ghanaian Context

The sense of community and communal living are greatly prized ideals, principles and beliefs of traditional Ghanaians. Throughout the ages, collective efforts, loyalty to communities, symmetry and harmony and communal life underlie the balance and equilibration in Ghanaian and African societies in general (Nukunya, 2003; Shorter, 1975). These collective efforts and communal living can be seen from the persistent usage of 'we' and 'ours' in the everyday speech of traditional Ghanaians. A Ghanaian believes that: "I am because we are, and since we are, therefore I am. This is a cardinal point in the understanding of the African view of man" (Mbiti, 1990, p. 106).

Communal living and collective effort towards developing communities have always been part of the African culture before colonialism. Hence, the principles behind community
development are not foreign ideologies to the African. Festivals, “nnoboa”⁴ and communal labour are some of the means through which Ghanaians through the ages have initiated, formulated and implemented community development projects. The question is “Are these strategies gender-sensitive?”

**Community Development in Pre-colonial Ghana**

The nature of the community development system in Ghana of centuries ago was not the same today. However, understanding the current state of community development in Ghana will be difficult, if not impossible without reference to community development processes of the past. Therefore, any inquiry of contemporary community development system has to take inspiration from the past and the transformations that have taken place over the years.

During the pre-colonial period, festivals constituted one of the major strategies around which community development and African traditions revolved. Governments and various stakeholders of community development in Ghana and Africa at large have in recent times recognized the importance of incorporating the African traditional community development strategies in the contemporary community development process. Nukunya (2003) indicated that state actors over the years have made efforts to create policies that ensure the use of traditional ceremonies such as festivals as the platforms or strategies to involve local Ghanaians in development process. That is, these occasions give ordinary citizens the opportunity to express their views in the development process of the community. Communities have therefore used these traditional institutions or events as an effective way to draw action plans, hold their leaders accountable and advocate for community development projects (Bonye, 2011; Sriniva, 2005).

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⁴ It is the traditional self-help and mutual aid techniques used by cocoa farmers and their cooperatives during the pre-colonial and colonial period in the preparation of their cocoa beans.
Traditional festivals continue to be one of the main pillars of community development and the sustenance of the Ghanaian community (Bonye, 2011). Therefore, the history of community development in Ghana will not be complete if the roles of festivals are neglected.

Festivals are essential to the development of Ghanaian communities. They are occasions for community development decision-making and fundraising. During festivals, citizens living outside their home villages may either go back or send resources to support various development projects. Boamah (1972) for instance described the “Aluolie festival” of the Sefwi people to have been the main means through which members and residents decided on how the development of the town could be improved. Selase (2013) reiterated that the celebration of festivals has been very useful in the Ghanaian community and continues to serve as an occasion for raising funds for and making community development decisions that meet the felt needs of the people. Bonye (2011) sums up the role of festivals in the community development process by indicating that celebration of traditional festivals over the years in Africa has played two major roles - traditional and contemporary- in development.

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5 It is a festival of harvest of the people of Sefwi Wiawso in the Western region of Ghana

6 An Akan sub-group in the Western region of Ghana.

Legend

C’ty ---- Community TAs ------ Traditional Authorities
GOs ------ Government Organizations SP -------- Service Providers
NGOs ------ Non-Governmental Organizations

From the diagram above, it is evident that festivals are vehicles through which the culture of the people are preserved and maintained. This cultural preservation role is championed by the community members and the elders or traditional authorities. In recent times, the traditional role of festivals (preservation and maintenance of culture) continues to exist side by side with a
contemporary community development role (action plan, accountability and advocacy). With the current role, there are three major activities – drawing of action plans, holding traditional leaders as well local government representatives accountable and advocating for community development projects. The main actors who ensure the fulfilment of the contemporary role include the community members, Government organizations, Non-government organizations, service providers and traditional authorities.\(^7\)

Despite the stated benefits of festivals, women have subordinated experiences in them. They are simultaneously involved (take up subordinated or less-valued roles) and excluded (not involved in major activities), seen and unseen, and empowered and victimized in different ways. Under the guise of tradition, women do not take part in major activities and decision-making processes. For instance, women are made to prepare festival foods, but menstruating women are banned from the palace, shrines, and from handling or touching religious objects or personalities because they are regarded as unclean. These traditional norms and values forbid women from fully participating in the festivals and expressing their full potentials (Ardayfio-Schandorf & Kwafo-Akoto, 1990). Women in traditional Ghanaian communities are not given the same recognition as their male counterparts.

Also, nnoboa – a technique adopted by cocoa farmers’ co-operatives to help members and their communities was a major self-help, mutual aid or community development technique used in Gold Coast before colonialism (Brown, 1986). The colonial administrators recognized these practices to be “a customary obligation to their communities” (Akurang-Parry, 2000, p. 24). Community members joined efforts and pooled their resources together to help improve their living standards. They helped each other by using their strength in a programme of

\(^7\) The traditional authorities include Chiefs and Queen mothers
rotational labour to raise the quality of life and the standard of living. In Ghana, nnoboa has been one of the self-help techniques through which traditional farming communities work together to solve common problems (Amanor & Annan, 1993).

Communal spirit was one of the motivation factors for local Ghanaians to adopt this mutual aid technique of ensuring sustainable development. The use of this technique was also necessitated by the idea that the general good of the communities cannot be realized individually (Chirwa et al., 2005; Hussi, Murphy, Lindberg, & Brenneman, 1993). Afriyie (2015) argued that capitalism and Western civilization have made the local culture of communal sustainable development (nnoboa) system sluggish. He advocates for “sankofa” – the re-adoption and improvement of this system to help propel the contemporary Ghanaian society other than relying exclusively on the Western notion of community development.

Another strategy adopted during the pre-colonial and colonial periods in Ghana for community development was communal labour. The Ghanaian community during these periods used communal labour to ensure the setting up of projects. Okia (2012) argued that the use of communal labour in Africa as a community development technique was instrumental in offsetting the labour cost to the state. Thus, communal labour was the cheapest means of community development in Africa. Most of the villages had community or village farms where residents had to devote a day within the week to work on the village farm. Every adult in the community on a regular circulating schedule provided the necessary labour to build local infrastructure or work on the village farm. Men often did the most physically demanding jobs, while women provided essential support work (Okia, 2012). Women continued to experience disadvantage and oppression given that the supervisory roles were in the hands of men (chiefs

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8 It is a word in the Akan language of Ghana that translates as “Go back and get it”
and the unit committee members). Participation in the Ghanaian system of communal labour was mandatory, but because the men made the decisions, they understood the need to engage in communal labour and the value of projects, and willingly engaged in it. Women on the other hand engage in it because they are supposed to. According to Okia (2012) “in theory, the colonial state construed communal labour as a relic from the ‘tribal’ past that was deemed part of the traditional work obligation of an ethnic group and, hence, a communal responsibility” (p. 2).

The colonial masters adopted the communal labour system and manipulated this communal obligation. Through the revitalized traditions such as communal labour, the colonizers connaturalized and socio-politically put certain indigenes into leadership positions which gave new meaning to their relationship with the colonized (Okia, 2012). Addo-Fening (2008) argues that the imposition of colonial rule on Ghana changed the traditional governance structure from the customary-based political governance to an outlandish ‘remote-controlled’ system. This foreign system and its associated classification of the people and overconcentration of powers such as the power to call for communal labour in the hands of chiefs and headmen by the British led to the misuse of such powers by the chiefs and headmen (Ranger, 1983). Communal labour became exploitative due to the way it was administered (Okia, 2012). The disreputable forced labour policies which emanated from the communal labour system forced the communities to intermittently organize the local people to work on the colonial infrastructure (Tsey & Short, 1995). For instance, the development and expansion of roads and railways in Ghana after the British defeated the Asante confederation led to the promulgation of several road maintenance laws (such as the Roads Ordinance, Native Authority Ordinance, The Road Maintenance Rule) which gave the chiefs’ power to recruit indigenes. Okia (2012) found that several forced labourers were recruited for road maintenance projects in 1910. This was not peculiar to only
anglophone West Africa. In francophone West Africa where the policy of assimilation was the governance structure, the general decree of 1912 instituted the corvée\(^9\) which put the development of infrastructure in the hands of the indigens (Okia, 2012). This labour which was organized by the local authorities was supposed to meet the felt needs of the local communities. Most authors however argued that the reinvented traditions in both francophone (the communal corvée system) and anglophone (communal labour system) West Africa were fraught with a myriad of abuses (Akurang-Parry, 2000; Okia, 2004, 2012). Though I concede that communal labour metamorphosed into forced labour during the colonial period, I still maintain that male Africans were active agents in the reinvention and implementation of the communal forced labour. Women suffered the most under the newly invented communal labour during the colonial period. Okia (2012) argued that the burden on women increased as they had to combine childbearing and caring, and home management with communal labour roles.

Another key strategy of community development which was adopted after the Second World War in Ghana was mass education. During this period mass education became synonymous with community development (Du Sautoy, 1958). The British Colonial Development and Welfare Act of 1945 (Smyth, 2004) and the 1951 Gold Coast Plan for Mass Literacy and Mass Education (Du Sautoy, 1958) legally brought into the landscape of community development this scheme of state-sponsored social welfare initiative. This mass education strategy was geared towards addressing issues such as poverty, apathy, diseases, illiteracy and ignorance. According to Du Sautoy (1958) this strategy was to teach the people how to live as well as how to read. The mass education programme was delivered in four parts –

\(^9\) It is an unpaid labour which was intermittently done by citizens of French colonies during the colonial period
educating women on home management and child care, adult literacy, extension campaigns and self-help project work. The mass education and the idea of educating women on home management and child care emphasized the representation of women as being subservient and having the proclivity for child-rearing and home management. This approach had unfavorable outcomes for women and after colonialism these prejudices and discrimination continued to shape the community development process in Ghana and Africa as a whole.

Community development practice after the Second World War, concentrated mainly on modifying the way of life of the people – beliefs, thoughts and behavior. This was an ideological strategy targeting African psyches to get Africans to accept that their way of life was inferior. This notion was captured by a notable British geographer, James MacQueen, who indicated, “If we really wish to do good in Africa, we must teach her savage sons that white men are their superiors” (Falola, 2007). Community Development practice as introduced by the colonial offices targeted mostly cultural, attitudinal and value change with little or no focus on economic aspects (Dunham, 1970).

The introduction of mass education was perhaps the British’s means of colonizing the minds of their colonies after having much knowledge about the Ghanaian way of life. It is often said that generals never attack their enemies without adequate intelligence of their strength. Said (1978) states that to have knowledge of an object is to control or have power over it. The implementation of this mass education scheme as a community development strategy as well as a means to have authority over the colonies was in an era when the indigenes, particularly the products of the British education system, had a growing sense of consciousness about the

10 The delivery of scientific research and knowledge with regards to agricultural practices to farmers
negative effects of colonialism. Smyth (2004) argued that the implementation of the mass education scheme was constrained by growing African nationalism around the 1950s. Though African nationalism became triumphant over colonialism in Ghana in the late 1950s, the community development thought, and practices used by the colonial masters were not totally abandoned. They were to be transformed to reflect and address the felt needs of Africans and Ghanaians. For instance, two days after independence, Dr. Kwame Nkrumah\textsuperscript{11}, first President of Ghana in his address indicated:

> We must seek an African view to the problems of Africa. This does not mean that Western techniques and methods are not applicable to Africa. It does mean, however, that in Ghana we must look at every problem from the African point of view … (McWilliam & Kwamena-Poh, 1975 as cited in Akyeampong, 2007)

In recent discussions of the roots of community development, a controversial issue has been whether community development is a colonial legacy or not. Some authors argue that community development practice in developing countries is a colonial heirloom (Jones, 1977; Mayo, 1975; Midgley, Hall, Hardiman, & Narine, 1986). From this perspective, the notion of community development was born out of colonialism. That is, the colonial administrators became very concerned about the use of local resources in the various colonies to develop them. On the other hand, some argue that community development has never been a new concept for developing countries before colonialism, it is rather interwoven in the heritage of developing countries’ culture. That is, it has been part of the culture of the developing world before colonialism. As argued by Mapuva (2015) colonial rule and its associated legislations are responsible for the current state of developing countries. He further posited that globalization and

\textsuperscript{11} He led Ghana to independence and became the first president of Ghana (1957 - 1966)
the need to diversify pushed the colonialists, after exploiting the colonies, to transform the traditional rural and community development strategies which were interwoven in the culture of the people. For instance, the transformation in Zimbabwe was from the reliance on agriculture and forestry as means of community development to ‘mining, tourism and manufacturing’ (Jephias, 2015, p. 144). Du Sautoy (1958) also argued that the techniques and principles behind the practice of community development in Ghana are not new but rather it is their concerted and thoughtful execution in terms of policy which is new. These arguments presuppose that community or rural development is not a new concept to the global south because it has been part of the culture of the people.

My own view is that the idea of community development has its roots in the global south and it was embedded in the way of life of the people. Though I concede that the recent notion of community development, the top-down approach to community development and the institutionalization of the practice of community development in Ghana can be considered colonial legacies which date back to the establishment of the Department of Social Welfare and Community Development in the 1940s by British colonial administrators (Abloh & Ameyaw, 1997), I still maintain that Ghanaians used and continue to use local community development strategies such as communal labour, nnoboa and festivals during the pre-colonial, colonial and post-independence periods to meet the felt needs of their communities. That is, the bottom-up approach to community development is deeply rooted in the traditional self-help and mutual aid techniques used in traditional Ghanaian communities both before and during the period of colonialism.
The Modern-Day Community Development Practice in Ghana

The history of community development in Ghana is not a history of stages, in which later forms of community development totally replaced earlier ones, but a history of supplementations, in which early forms and strategies continue to thrive with some transformations alongside later ones. Thus, community development in Ghana has undergone some transformations into what it is today. However, not every community development practice or principle has changed. The nnoboa is still practiced, communal labour is still in practice, and festivals continue to be held. The major changes that have taken place are the critical roles being played by governments, Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs), “Twin towns and Sister cities”12, Individuals from the West, International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs), Civil Society Organization (CSOs), and Community-based organizations (CBOs). Thus, the key actors of community development in contemporary Ghana include the above, along with community members themselves. It can therefore be argued that community development practice in contemporary Ghana has been given assistance from individuals as well as governmental and non-governmental institutions.

Government involvement in community development has a long history, which predates Ghana’s independence. After independence, community development became a major function of Government in Ghana. According to Batten (1957) community development as a key function of governments in tropical countries (including Ghana) before the middle of the 20th century concentrated on developing communication networks and exploiting material resources with

12 They are politically and geographically distinct towns and cities with a formal relationship or agreement geared towards the promotion of cultural and commercial ties between them (Clarke, 2011).
little or no focus on the welfare needs of the local community members. Thus, most community development programmes focused on economic development rather than social development.

Ghana is recognized as one of the more politically stable countries in West Africa, with rich natural resources (Throup, 2011). Despite this, the country is characterized by high levels of poverty. Outside of the main urban centers of Ghana, government institutions and public infrastructure are not well-developed (Twumasi-Ankrah, 1995). Twumasi-Ankrah (1995) posits that most rural communities in Ghana have been sidelined in the provision of infrastructure and basic social amenities. “Facilities for higher education, quality health care, major sports and entertainment facilities, telecommunication, and the modern economy, are all centralized in the regional and national capital cities” (Twumasi-Ankrah, 1995, p. 4). However, community development is part of the overall strategic development plan of Ghana on a broader scale to sustain and increase the inherent development benefits associated with rural development and modernization (Government of Ghana, 2003b).

The rapid increases in the needs and wants of local communities have led to the decentralization of government power to ensure a more effective and efficient mobilization and management of community resources as well as the development and implementation of development projects that meet the felt needs of the local communities (Dejenie, 2003). In the case of Ghana as the literature suggests, the scarcity of resources and the need to involve local people in decisions concerning the development of their communities were the major motivation for the adoption of a decentralised system of government (Boachie-Danquah, 1996; Dejenie, 2003).

After independence, successive governments implemented various forms of decentralization and local government policies. Efforts geared towards a decentralised system
have been introduced over the years, for instance, in 1961, 1983, 1988, 1992 and 1993 different laws and decentralisation policy documents were promulgated (Crawford, 2004; Kuusi, 2009). The Local Government Act 54 of 1961 was the first to establish a local government system that ensures locality development (Ahwoi, 2010). Decision-making under this law was very complex and took an unduly long time thereby slowing the pace of development in local communities.

Another key effort was the Local Government Act (Act 462) of 1993 which strove to facilitate a holistic approach to the decentralization process (Ahwoi, 2010). These policies have cemented the government’s role in promoting locality development through neoliberal structures at the local levels which at times do not create room for Ghanaian women to participate in development process of their localities.

The prevailing decentralisation programme which started in 1961 (Ahwoi, 2010) was sanctioned by Ghana’s fourth republican constitution in 1992 (Kuusi, 2009). The Constitution of Ghana (1992), states that “Ghana shall have a system of local government and administration which as far as practicable be decentralized” (Article 240 (1)). Therefore, the development of the local areas by the local government can be examined in the context of the decentralization principles and practices instigated by the Local Government Act, 1993 (Act 462). The structure and powers of the Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs) are prescribed in the Local Government Act of 1993 (Act 462). The main legal instruments relating to the local government system in Ghana are:

- The Local Government Act 54 of 1961;
- Civil Service Law 1993 (PNDCL 327);
- Local Government Act 462 of 1993;
- National Development Planning Act 480 of 1994;
Yeboah (1987) argued that government’s involvement in community development and the management of local resources in Ghana, and for that matter the involvement of local people in the governance of the state and their communities hinges essentially on the level of decentralization of government machinery. He further contended that any effective government sponsored community development projects can be attributable to the success rate of the central government’s decentralization programme and especially to the level of autonomy granted to the local governments and the citizenry. Thus, the implementation of an effective decentralized system is a catalyst for greater participation of the citizenry, the facilitation of government sponsored community development programmes and ensuring equitable development throughout the country (Ayee, 2003; Offei-Aboagye, 2004a). Offei-Aboagye (2000a) contends that Ghana’s decentralization desired to “provide more responsive, equitable and participatory development, bring government and decision-making nearer to the people as well as quicken the process of decision-making, serve as a training ground for political activity” (p. 2).

At the top of the local government structure in Ghana is the Regional Coordinating Council (RCC). The coordination and facilitation duties are entrusted in the Regional Coordinating Councils. The RCCs monitor, and co-ordinate the performance of the MMDAs (Ayee, 2003). At the Metropolitan, Municipal and District level, the governance
structure consists of the MMDAs. Population, geographical propinquity and economic viability are the major factors that determine the classification of the assemblies as metropolitan, municipal or district (Fosu, Krah, & Obeng, 2013). According to Ayee (2013), the number of MMDAs in Ghana have increased from 65 in 1988 to 215 by 2012. The Local Governance Act 1993 (Act 462) mandates MMDAs to ensure the development of their respective local areas or communities through an authentic participation of their constituents in the development process. The MMDAs have the power to initiate, facilitate and execute development programmes in their respective communities. The level of participation of the local people is paramount in the activities of the MMDAs. Most authors argued that participation in local government is a basic human right and as a result, all citizens by law need to be active participants in decisions that affect their lives (Adams, 2003; Ayee, 2000; Cheema, 2005).

The Metropolitan assemblies have sub-metro district councils, town councils and unit committees under them. The Municipal Assemblies also have Zonal councils and Unit committees under them whilst the District Assemblies have Urban/Area/Town councils under them. The Urban, Zonal and Town/Area Councils are a very important local governance structure since they are the main level where community development planning and actions of the MMDAs are taken. The ideal roles of the Urban, Zonal and Town/Area councils – community development planning and actions- at the grassroot level are constrained by lack of adequate financial resources.

The local government system in Ghana has limited capacity to take many initiatives (Crook, 2003). The MMDAs depend on the national government for both financial and to a large extent human resources. Lentz (2006), states that apart from the Assembly members,
over 30% of the members of the MMDAs are government appointees who are more accountable to the president than the local people. This lack of accountability to the people has recently ignited a debate as to whether the District, Municipal and Metropolitan Chief Executives should be elected or appointed by the president (Debrah, 2016). Nevertheless, the decentralization system in Ghana has reinforced clientelism and neo-patrimonial rule (Lentz, 2006). The figure below shows the local government structure in Ghana:

![Local Government Structure Diagram](image)

**Figure 2.** The Local Government Structure. Adapted from “Introduction to Ghana’s Local Government System”, by ILGS (Institute of Local Government Service), 2008, Accra, Ghana: Institute of Local Government Service.

The introduction of the decentralization system was among other things meant to increase women’s participation in local governance, but this was not achieved in any significant way (Grant, 1993). In 1989, out of 6,907 workers at local government level, only 456 were women and in 1998, only 24% of those in the MMDAs were women (Baah-Ennumh, Owusu, & Korkor, ...
2005). Presently, women constitute only 6.5 per cent of MMD Chief Executives in Ghana. Meanwhile the Gender Studies and Human Rights Documentation Centre (GSHRDC) (2016) argues that a little over 9% of the candidates for the district assembly elections were women. This low level of participation of women in the local governance may be attributed to traditional practices and beliefs, monetization of the electoral process (‘vote buying’) and low level of public awareness about human rights (GSHRDC, 2016). The adoption of colonial gender stereotypes has perhaps influenced men to withhold support or fail to encourage their wives to vie for local government positions. Few men regard women’s participation in local government as developmentally or socially advantageous. The monopolization of socially valued work has made some women doubt their capacity for governance.

A recent development in the community development landscape in Ghana is the introduction of the Twin towns or Sister Cities programme. Town twining is a programme that is often established through a social and legal agreement between geographically and politically distinct cities and towns. Ewen and Hebbert (2007) referred to this as municipal internationalism. These agreements are geared towards the promotion of development, cultural exchange and commercial ties between the cities (Clarke, 2011; Zelinsky, 1991). According to Clarke (2011) there were over 2,500 sister cities partnerships in over 90 countries as at 2011. In Ghana, some of the towns and cities have entered into sister cities ties or agreement with cities in the West. These agreements include Columbia, Maryland and Tema, Ghana (sister city ties established in 2014); Sekondi-Takoradi, Ghana and Boston, Massachusetts (est. 2001), Accra and Columbus, Ohio (est. 2015); Louisville, Kentucky and Tamale, Ghana (est. 1979) among others. However, there is a dearth of literature on the sister city programme in Ghana.
These programmes play a significant role in the development of the communities involved. According to Clarke (2011) sister cities programmes are vehicles through which development and care are extended across borders. Economists argue that cultural differences have the potential of thwarting trade and as a result, city twining is meant to address these differences. Cremer, De Bruin, and DuPuis (2001) found the sister cities programme to be essential to offset or reduce the cultural distance that serves as a barrier to local economic development. For instance, through the cyber sister city programme between Agogo (a rural community in the Ashanti region of Ghana) and Fort Lauderdale (a city in Florida), an Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Training and Access Center has been set up in Agogo to provide the members of the community access to the world of online information. Also, the Louisville sister city committee (known as the Louisville-Tamale Committee) has been a great player in discussions on possible project ideas that fit into achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The programme has resulted in the setting up of an educational campaign in Louisville and Tamale about MDGs (Campbell & Marjanovic, 2004). Despite all these projects, I still believe the Western sister cities may dictate community development initiatives for the sister cities in the global south.

Sister city programmes are ideally supposed to promote relationships of interdependence, mutuality, and concern between people in the global north and global south (Lawson, 2007). There is an ongoing debate on whether proximity counts in actually caring and responding to one another. When it comes to the topic of global north and south relationships and the practicality of caring for one another, most of us will readily agree that no one enters into a relationship without any interest. Where this agreement usually ends, however, is on the question of whether the sister cities programme can foster a relationship of mutuality. Whereas some are convinced that one
can best provide community development support or care in situations of proximity (Friedman, 1991) and that people are more likely not to care much about the other “when distance comes between them, either in absolute space or via the distancing technologies and architectures of modernity” (Bauman 1989 as cited in Clarke, 2011, p. 12), Singer (1972) and other neo-singers maintain that on moral grounds people (sister cities) ought to contribute to the relief of the misery of distant needy strangers around the globe. They further argue that distance should not be a barrier to providing support to the distant stranger. That is, help should rely on both a moral premise, the principle of benevolence (Singer, 1972) and on empirical premises, in the sense that there are global developmental problems and disasters, and the presence of means through which providing support has the potential of providing relief for people (Risse, 2003; Weiner, 2003).

Community development in Ghana continues to see the involvement of the communities and their members. Modernization and social change continue to pose social, political, technological and economic challenges and demands on Ghanaians. The existing cultural values and practices in Ghana have been the vehicles through which people negotiate the complex demands and challenges associated with modernization. Traditionally, communities in Ghana continue to rely on forms of cooperative labour as a means of meeting their needs as well as setting up community development initiatives (Nukunya, 2003). This cooperative labour – communal labour – tradition makes it incumbent on community members both living in or outside the community to take up the responsibility of developing their own community. Due to rural-urban migration most citizens of the rural communities in Ghana are non-resident – live outside the communities. These non-resident members of the communities often provide resources to support community development initiatives in their ancestral communities since they are unable to partake in the communal labour. The community members living outside the
communities at times get exposed to happenings in different communities and different ways of perceiving issues thereby begin to look at the development challenges of their ancestral communities with a different lens. This kind of exposure of these non-resident citizens make them assume the role as initiators of and the main financial contributors to community development in their ancestral communities. Tsey (2010) argues that the value placed on the performance of one’s funeral in their ancestral village regardless of where they reside at the time of their death establishes a social expectation among non-residents to contribute to the development of their village of origin. Thus, community development participation through communal labour reconnects physically disconnected citizens back to their community of origin (Tsey, 2010). On the other hand, all resident members of the communities who are able bodied pool together their resources and labour occasionally under the aegis of the traditional leaders and the Unit committees to initiate, implement and monitor community development projects in their various communities.

Post-independence Ghana has witnessed the adoption of these communal labour principles as the heart of rural and community development policies. These policies and the adoption of the communal labour principles are based on the belief that community development projects’ sustainability and ownership can be ensured when community members commit to the initiation, implementation and monitoring of the projects (Gyan & Baffoe, 2014). Therefore, there has been the institutionalization of a system of division of labour where the government is responsible for the provision of technical expertise while the community members provide labour and resources (Abloh & Ameyaw, 1997; Gyan & Baffoe, 2014; Tsey, Schmitd-Hergeth, & Lubrani, 1995). Ghana’s Labour Act (Government of Ghana, 2003a) recognizes the importance of communal labour when it states “a period during which a worker is absent from
his or her normal duties with the permission of the employer on account of the worker's participation in voluntary communal work … shall not be counted as part of the worker's annual leave” (Act 651, Part IV, section 23).

Participation in community self-help projects continues to be both voluntary and obligatory. Traditionally, the participation of the community members in such projects were considered volitional. Community members, regardless of their job or profession continue to do their part through communal labour to ensure the development of the community. Perhaps, community members have come to the realization of the need to develop their own community rather than relying on governments and as a result, they voluntarily contribute to community development. However, the recent promulgation of by-laws has made it obligatory to some extent. Despite the traditionally voluntary nature of community development participation, the current by-laws of the MMDAs make it obligatory on citizens of communities (with the exception of children, persons with disabilities and the elderly) – more especially residents - to contribute their fair share to community self-help projects. Residents who refuse to engage in the communal labour are often traditionally or legally punished by the community. For instance, the Ghana News Agency (GNA) (2013) reported that a couple were fined by the Shama magistrate’s court for failing to attend communal labour on three consecutive times at “Ohiamadwen”\(^{13}\) in the Western region of Ghana. In sum, it is clear that the community-driven development system in Ghana continues to be conformable because of the promulgation of communal labour by-laws, or strong ties with or love for one’s ancestral communities, “the resiliency and adaptability of the traditional chieftaincy governance systems as well as the existing belief systems and cultural practices” (Tsey, 2010, p. 8). The by-laws, and belief systems and practices have been

\(^{13}\) A community in the Western region of Ghana
instrumental in the maintenance of communal self-help spirit in rural Ghana. Thus, it is the traditional belief that the more one supports their community, the more they get from it which underpins the legal and traditional sanctions associated with citizens’ participation in community self-help projects in Ghana.

Over the years, governments and the communities have not been able to single-handedly meet the needs of their citizens and residents (Mansuri & Rao, 2004). In response to the unmet needs of citizens in Ghana and developing countries, the incorporation of companies, NGOs, INGOs and individuals in community development has risen into prominence as an essential means of complementing the efforts of government and local communities in addressing the concerns of the people (Mansuri & Rao, 2004). NGOs comprise an array of organizations within civil society without a universally accepted definition. However, they are commonly referred to as organizations which are not for-profit and operate independently of government in pursuit of the interest of the vulnerable in society based on the principle of altruism (Adjei, Agyemang, & Afriyie, 2012; Martens, 2002). These organizations can be set up either locally, nationally or internationally.

NGOs, INGOs and companies have seen recent pressure from communities and civil societies to assume even greater responsibilities for revenue generation and distribution, transparency, capacity building and development initiatives in local communities. These responsibilities, when coupled with those of communities, government and civil societies, become powerful drivers and lead to important partnerships (International Alert, 2009; World Bank, 2010).

In the 20th Century, Ghana and Sub-Saharan Africa in general witnessed a massive growth in community or rural development-focused NGOs (Bratton, 1989). Bratton refers to the
1980s as the NGO decade for Africa. In Ghana, the increase in the number of NGOs is significant. In 1996 there were 320 registered NGOs (Bob-Milliar, 2005). By 2009, there were more than 4,463 registered NGOs in Ghana (Ministry of Employment and Social Welfare, 2009). The presence of these NGOs and CSOs has added a new approach to community development in Ghana. Some of the prominent NGOs and INGOs include African Rights Initiative International, World Vision International, Plan International, Compassion International, Catholic Relief Services, Nimbus Foundation, ProNet, ActionAid International, Sun taa Nuntaa, and the Adventist Development and Relief Agency. NGOs in Ghana engage in various community development activities ranging from advocacy, agriculture, public education, food security, micro-finance, extension services, women empowerment, provision of social amenities and education (Bob-Milliar, 2005; Ministry of Employment and Social Welfare, 2009).

There is a growing body of literature that suggests that the involvement of these organizations in community development has been mitigative for poor countries. The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) (2008) posited that the NGOs and CSOs’ approach to community development has been the most effective way of meeting the needs of the “poor or socially excluded” (p. 2). It has become common today to argue that NGOs and CSOs have access to the vulnerable groups at the grassroot level, hence their activities have improved the lives of the poor, women, children and other vulnerable groups (Adjei & Arun, 2008; Arun, Adjei, & Hossain, 2009; Edusei, 1997). For instance, in World Vision International’s quest to empower women and reduce their economic, social and political dependence on men in the Northern part of Ghana, it has been providing women with loans and skills training through its Gender and Development programme (Kyei, 1998). According to Kyei (1998), this programme has built the income generating capacity of women in the Nadowli
district. This in turn has increased access to basic services for themselves and their children. Kannyiri, Bagah, and Kotin (2015) sum this up by indicating:

The NGO activities ensure that rural women who were basically denied access to economic resources that could support both their ability to farm more and their income earning potentials, ensuring better and improved food security at the household and national level. By bringing women together in groups, NGOs empower women because the groups are allowed to own land, access credit, educate women about other rights and privileges, and increase their self-awareness and self-reliance. (p. 157)

As it is right that NGOs in Ghana have been key players in the promotion and advancement of the socio-political and economic lives of the people in rural communities, there is also the need to reassess the popular assumption that they are “top-down” in their approach to community development. According to Seini & Nyanteng (2003) most of the NGOs in Ghana are “urban-based and have little or no contact with the grassroot farmers” (p. 21). “In spite of the community-based character of local NGOs … they are run by local elites and … would rarely challenge the existing social hierarchies” (Crook, 2003, p. 80). Holmen (2010) sums up by arguing that the community development activities of NGOs in rural Africa have not made any meaningful impact. Although I agree up to a point with the idea that most of the NGOs are urban-based, and as a result have not been able to contribute to the development of rural communities in Ghana as expected, it must be admitted that there is no magic bullet to address the developmental challenges of African nations. I maintain that NGOs being urban-based does not necessarily mean they have lost touch with local people. Most of the NGOs may have their headquarters in the cities but their project sites are situated in the villages. For instance, African Rights Initiative International (ARII) has its headquarters in Accra but has its project sites in
rural communities such as Donkorkrom\textsuperscript{14}. It is often easy to raise funds and mobilize resources in the cities to supplement the efforts of the people at the grassroot level, hence most NGOs set up their head offices in the urban areas (P. Oduro personal communication, April 16, 2016).

\textbf{Statement of Problem}

Over the years, African countries have been putting in place measures to ensure sustainable development. These development agendas have made countries within Africa streamline their social, economic and political spheres. These have resulted in the multiplication of forms of social, economic and political actors in the context of development in Africa (Bangura, 1994; Demissie, 2013). One remarkable category of actors in society is women as agents of social change. Since independence, Africa has witnessed a great deal of activity in the development arena, involving campaigns for reform, the reliance on governments, NGOs, and foreign aid from the Bretton woods institutions (the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund - IMF) (Abuzeid, 2009; Brautigam & Knack, 2004). The unreliability and unsustainability of projects that emanate from these sources of funds have championed the emergence of community-driven, community-focused and community-based development initiatives (Mansuri & Rao, 2004).

Locality development efforts play a vital role as a fundamental economic, infrastructural and social building block from which a diverse set of local business activities and projects are derived (Filion, 1998). Similarly, community development is part of the overall strategic development plan of Ghana on a broader scale to sustain and increase the inherent development benefits associated with rural development and modernization (Government of Ghana, 2010; 14 A community in the Eastern Region of Ghana
International Alert, 2009) However, inclusive community development may not easily be achieved if all stakeholders, especially women, are not involved in development decisions.

Despite an increase in the number of women in the economic and political spheres in most countries in Africa including Ghana, there is a growing concern that women’s participation in development decisions remains peripheral (Mehra, 1993; Parpart, 1995). Women’s negligible participation in decision-making in Africa must be seen against the background of the existence and reliance on patriarchal culture (Parpart, 1995). The limited representation of women relative to men in development processes confirms the poor participation of women in the community development process in Africa (Adhiambo-Ochuo, 2002; Nasong’o & Murunga, 2007).

Many gender experts and feminists have lamented that discrimination against women in the community development processes continue to widen the disparity between men and women by having male-centric values entrenched in community activity and at the end impede women’s action (Mensah-Kutin et al. 2000; Nasong’o & Murunga, 2007; Offei-Aboagye, 2000a). Due to the recognized adverse effects of the peripheral participation of women in the development process, the trend in African development discourse including Ghana, over the last decades has been characterized by the rhetoric of gender equality and fairness towards both sexes, especially in making opportunities available for women in decision-making and leadership roles. For instance, Uganda, Democratic Republic of Congo, Burundi, and Egypt among others have instituted quota policies in government membership geared towards making decision-making opportunities accessible to women. Despite this effort, researchers (Ghai, 2002; Khasiani, 2000; Offei-Aboagye, 2000b) found that women continue to be disregarded in the development process in Ghana and Africa in general. According to the Inter-Parliamentary Union (2017) in Ghana, women constitute only 12.73% of the Members of Parliament.
The trajectory of women’s participation in development and political life in Ghana cannot be traced without looking at some of the success stories in Ghana’s path of gender politics. It should be noted that Ghanaian feminists and organizations have resulted in some changes and successes over the years through their advocacy roles. One major landmark in policy after independence was the establishment of the National Council for Women and Development (NCWD) in 1975 (Tsikata, 2000). The establishment of the NCWD and the acceptance and implementation of the Women in Development (WID/GAD) paradigm were great achievements in efforts towards the improvement of the status of women in Ghana (Mama, 2000, Manuh, 1993; Mensah-Kutin et.al, 2000; Tsikata 2000). Other key players (women organizations) in these efforts were the Federation of Ghanaian Women (FEGAWO) formed in 1982 and the 31st December Women’s Movement (DWM) which was launched in May 1982 (Manuh, 1991). These organizations were instrumental in advocating for the group of women (the Makola Market women) who were assaulted during the beginning of the Provincial National Defense Council (PNDC) era and the establishment of the Economic Recovery Programme (Manuh, 1991). Despite all these efforts, women in Ghana continue to face barriers in their efforts towards participating in the development processes in Ghana (Abdul-Razak, Prince, & Eliasu, 2014; Afenyo & Amuquandoh, 2015; Offei-Aboagye, 2000a).

According to the 2010 Population and Housing Census, Ghana has an estimated population of 24,658,823 (Ghana Statistical Service, 2012). Women make up 51.23 per cent of the adult population in Ghana, making them the slight majority, especially in rural areas (Ghana

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15 Makola Market is one of the major markets in Accra, the capital city of Ghana. During the earlier stages of PNDC rule, most women traders were scapegoated, brutally assaulted and accused of being the cause of the economic woes of the country. (see Manuh, 1993)
GASPING FOR BREATH

Statistical Service (GSS), 2012). Due to their numeric advantage, it might be expected that they would play a significant role in community development processes. Yet, their numerical strength does not seem to translate into their participation in development decision-making within even rural communities. For instance, Offei-Aboagye (2000a, 2004a) and Opare (2005) found that women have limited access to community development opportunities in rural communities in Ghana. In 1994 and 1998, women made up only 3% and 5% of appointed membership assemblies in Ghana (Offei-Aboagye, 2000a). Only 6.5% of the District, Municipal and Metropolitan Chief Executives in the local government structure as of 2012 were women (Abdul-Razak, Prince, & Eliasu, 2014). As a result of this limited level of involvement of women, their influence over projects and programmes that affect their well-being may be mitigated.

Despite the fact that women’s access to the community development process in rural Ghana is hampered, these limitations are not well defined by evidence. In fact, only very few studies have examined gender inequalities in this context of community development in rural Ghana (Afenyo & Amuquandoh, 2015; Aryeetey, 1998; Offei-Aboagye, 2000b; Opare, 2005). This present study therefore seeks to explore community development processes and women’s level of, and barriers to, involvement in rural Ghana.

**Objectives of the Study**

The objective of the study was to investigate the intricacies and dynamics of women’s involvement in community development processes in Ghana. From the main objective, the following specific aims were derived:

1. To assess how women’s socio-economic status influences the community development process in rural Ghana.
2. To examine the experiences of women in the community development context in rural Ghana.

3. To examine the obstacles which hinder women’s participation in community development.

**Research Questions**

Based on the main issues raised in the research objectives and the gap identified concerning women’s participation in the community development process in rural areas in Ghana, this mixed-methods study seeks to address the following qualitative questions:

1. What are the barriers to participation of women in community development activities in rural Ghana?

2. What influences have helped Ghanaian women increase their community development activities in rural Ghana?

3. How does the socio-economic position of women affect their level of involvement in community development activities in rural Ghana?

4. How do community-level variables (cultural norms, socio-economic and politico-cultural factors) act as barriers or opportunities for women to engage in community development processes?

**Quantitative Research Questions and Hypotheses**

The following quantitative research questions and hypotheses will be addressed:

1. What is the nature and level of participation of women in community development?

2. What are the barriers to women’s participation in community development?

3. Which factors predict women’s increased participation in community development?
4. What are the most significant barriers to women’s participation in community development?

**Hypotheses.**

Civic engagement refers to the process of influencing and controlling the civic life of one’s community (Malik & Wagle, 2002). Pascarella and Terenzini (2005) delineate that civic engagement encapsulates the competence, adeptness, knowledge, and attitudes that make individuals fecund members of their communities. In fact, a person’s eagerness to engage in public life is determined by variables such as sense of legitimacy, social acquaintance, attitude and confidence. A person is likely to be civicly engaged when they have a high sense of competence with regards to their ability to contribute meaningfully to the community, poise that their actions are valuable, and feels attached to other members of the community (Sherrod, Flanagan, Kassimir & Syvertsen, 2005). It can therefore be argued that civic engagement is an avenue for people to learn participatory skills, develop an understanding of their commitments to their communities, and gain a strong sense of community (Wang, Li & Cooper, 2017).

Several researchers have found civic engagement to be associated with positive developmental outcomes (Einfield & Collins, 2008; Ludden, 2011; Schmidt, Shumow, & Kacker, 2007). However, its effects on women’s level of participation in community development have been examined by few researchers. For instance, Lear (2013) interviewed 6 women regarding their civic engagement and the functions and roles they play within the community. It was found that the rural women who engaged in civic life joined a local bank board; assumed leadership and administrative positions in local government and community development committees. She argues that the more civicly engaged a woman is the more likely she would be proactive to improving social-wellbeing and reversing the community’s sense of inequality. Other researchers
posit that the civic opportunity gap exists in disadvantaged communities and hence the limited opportunity from residents to engage in community development activities (Flanagan, 2009; Hart & Atkins, 2002; Kahne & Middaugh, 2009). Therefore, civic engagement is a potentially more important topic for disadvantaged groups than is recognized. Given that it has been shown that, the more a person engages in public life the more likely that person will engage in community development processes, the following is hypothesized:

**H1:** Women’s civic engagement is positively related to higher levels of women’s participation in community development activities.

The literature on women’s participation in development processes advances the argument that women’s roles are hindered by several micro and macro-levels variables. Panday (2008) contended that these variables vary in consonance with socio-cultural and economic situations, location, and political context. That is, gender imbalances in development processes can be associated with locational, social, personal and cultural forces. The generally identified forces mitigating against women’s participation include male resistance, gender discourses and stereotypes, idiosyncratic variables such as lack of confidence, gender roles, the socio-economic status of women, and the challenges associated with balancing family and public life (Abbas, 2014; Frankl, 2004; Manuh, 2014; Tadros, 2014).

As shown in the literature above, women face economic, social and political restrictions in their quest to participate in community development process. As such, the following are hypothesized:

**H2:** Community level variables including perceived constraining/restrictive local cultural norms and societal development are predictive of women’s level of participation in community development processes.
H3: Region of residence is not associated with the levels of women’s participation in community development activities.

H4: There are identifiable/significant barriers to women’s participation in community development processes.

These hypotheses are relevant to members of the community itself, community development practitioners and local government officials in that fostering and placing value on a gender sensitive community development approach may result in initiating, developing and implementing need-based and sustainable community development projects and programmes.

**Significance of the Study**

Several studies have been conducted on gender inequality in areas such as politics, education, health, and religion in Ghana and have collectively found that women have limited access to opportunities in these areas of development (Allah-Mensah, 2005; Fuseini & Kalule-Sabiti, 2015; Kyei, 2014; Lambert, Perrino, & Barreras, 2012; Odame, 2010). However, a limited number have explored the place of women in the community development process in Ghana and none has adopted mixed research methods for their studies. This study departs from previous studies to explore the intricacies of women’s involvement in community development process in Ghana using mixed research methods. The significance of the proposed study is projected in three domains which include its contribution to research, policy, and professional practice (Creswell, 1994). It is anticipated that the findings from this study will have significance along these domains.

**Policy.** It is anticipated that results of a study of this nature would contribute to the development and formulation of policy and programmes. This would be achieved by shedding light on factors underlying the discrimination faced by women in Ghana and the contribution
women can and do make to the development of their communities. By providing evidence of the usefulness of women’s roles in the community development process, it can also lead to reflection on policies and practices that will initiate discussions surrounding the inclusion of a national policy and programme on gender sensitive community development practice in Ghana. I am also hopeful that this study will generate interest and debate among politicians, community development practitioners, and social workers and become a tool for advocacy and social action. Policy makers may also make direct reference to information from this research to aid them in planning community development related programmes.

**Research.** It is expected that the findings will extend the literature on gender inequality and community development practice in Ghana. There are few studies on gender inequality and community development in Ghana (Baah-Ennumh, Owusu, & Korkor, 2005; Offei-Aboagye, 2000b, 2004b; Opare, 2005). Evidence from the few studies available suggests that, despite the challenges faced by women within the context of community development, their ‘less valued’ roles contribute tremendously to the total development of their communities (Gyan & Baffoe, 2014; Offei-Aboagye, 2000a, 2004a). Although these findings make a positive connection between women’s participation and community development in Ghana, a gap exists with regard to the generative ‘mechanisms’ behind the discriminations faced by women. The findings would also provide evidence to support the need for further investigation into issues relating to women’s agency and community development practice in Ghana.

Apart from filling the gaps in literature, the study will provide evidence that critical realism (a philosophical position that distinguishes itself as a middle way between positivism and interpretivism) offers an amalgamation of different perspectives as alternative means of approaching challenges faced by women in communities. This will contribute to further
understanding and the promotion of a theory of women’s agency whilst considering the implications of social structures. The use of mixed research methods will ensure an enriched and comprehensive set of data to generate informed recommendations to stakeholders. This research will contribute to knowledge and relevant literature and will serve as a reference point for further studies.

**Practice.** Even though the Department of Community Development and the School of Social Work were set up in the 1940s, the training of professional community development practitioners and social workers in Ghana began in the late 1950s (Kreitzer, 2012). Since then, community development practice and social work have been bedeviled with inadequate financial support, lack of recognition, and research for the improvement of services. Given that this study will add to the few studies that explored the gender sensitive nature of community development practice in Ghana, findings may lead to a higher recognition of the profession. The study specifically, sheds light on the forces behind discrimination faced by women and ways to enhance their agency and comprehensively address the social and economic challenges faced by their communities as a whole. It is expected that the findings can be used to project a positive image of community development and the social work profession in Ghana. This would go a long way to help Ghanaians understand and recognize social work practice. This acknowledgement may generate support from the state and other stakeholders to create space for social workers and community development practitioners.

Again, this study will help community organizers and community development practitioners to gain a broader understanding of the context and dynamics of community development decisions. Thus, it will help community organizers in tracking and having a holistic
understanding of factors such as culture, class and gender and their implications on women’s participation in community development processes.

**Organization of the Study**

This study is structured into nine chapters. The first chapter comprises the introduction of the study - which gives a brief recap on the major key issues that form the core objectives of the study. This chapter presents the background to the study, the concept of community development, statement of problem, research questions, study objectives, and hypotheses. This chapter is concluded with an overview of the structure of the study.

Chapter two covers the theoretical perspective and empirical literature that is, the theoretical framework for the study and a comprehensive review of relevant empirical literature on women’s involvement in community development processes and other related literature.

The third chapter covers the profile of the study area. The fourth chapter covers the methodology employed in carrying out the study. This chapter encompasses the research framework, research design, population and sample size, sampling design, methods of data collection, data collection instruments, reliability and validity, translation, data handling and analysis, significance of study, and ethical considerations.

Chapter five is the analysis and presentation of the quantitative data. The sixth chapter covers the analysis and presentation of the qualitative data. Chapter seven presents the findings of the study and a discussion of the major findings. The eighth chapter encompasses my reflections of the qualitative research process. The final chapter covers the conclusions based on the findings. It also present recommendations, based on the conclusions arrived at.
Chapter Two: Theoretical Perspective and Empirical Literature Review

Introduction

The local governance of development is becoming a dominant issue in both developed and developing countries in response to the privatization of public services, economic dislocations, and cuts in social spending (Guttal, 2000; McEwan, 2003). Thus, community development has become a reaction to the perceived disintegration of society and the negligence of governments in terms of social services due to their capitalist ideologies (Carey, 1979). Community development is therefore done from the community first perspective while counterbalancing expectations for indefinite growth with the urgent need for a community-owned, and sustainable development at the local levels. Consequently, the responsibility of promoting local socio-economic development and facilitating community participation tends to fall on local governments, the local communities, CSOs, NGOs and CBOs (McEwan, 2003).

An appreciation for the value of the need to actively involve every sector of the community in development initiatives is not novel. Community development programmes and rural development initiatives, have historically included the concepts of local involvement as integral aspects of programmes and projects. In fact, the notion that all forms of community-driven programmes should offer the opportunity for the local people to actively participate as well as equitably benefit from development efforts dates back to the social reform movement in Britain and North America in the 18th century (Carey, 1979; Smith, 1979). Although the projects and programmes may have differing drives, they all aim at meeting the needs of the people through local collective effort.
Goulet (1971) recognized three significant tenets of community development as: 1) improving the living standard of the local people, 2) the promotion of human dignity, respect and self-worth, and 3) amassing the local people’s freedom and providing them with an array of choice by increasing varieties of consumer goods and services. Dundley (1987) echoed Goulet’s point by querying about the essence of community development in three questions: 1) what has been happening to poverty? 2) what has been happening to unemployment?, and 3) what has been happening to inequality?. Dundley’s queries emphasize the fact that community development should be geared towards poverty and unemployment reduction, as well as increase in equity and equality. This presupposes that in an environment of gender inequality it is extremely difficult for community development to be achieved. The lack of mobilization and equal participation in the community development process may make majority of the people reluctant to participate in the process. The question that baffles my mind is how can a community development process help the community strengthen itself and develop towards its full potential if a section of the population is discriminated against? This question has sparked my curiosity in researching into the level of participation of women in community development.

This chapter covers the theoretical perspective and the review of relevant empirical literature in relation to community development and women participation in Ghana and Africa in general. It places much emphasis on women’s participation and the way this impacts on women’s empowerment, women’s agency as citizens and the development of the community at large. Definitions and various approaches to community development and the rationale for these approaches are explored in this Chapter. Two sections are used to present this discussion to assist in dealing with the breadth of literature that form the basis for this enquiry. The first section encompasses the theoretical perspective that takes into consideration the theoretical framework
and the concept of community development. In terms of theories, I discuss theories such as transnational feminism, gender mainstreaming, and gender discourses in Ghana to explain the place of women in the community development process in Ghana.

The second section is a review of empirical literature on the participation challenges for women in the community development process in Ghana and their implications for the development of communities. Relevant documents and published books written by prominent authors or experts within the field of community development, transnational feminism, gender mainstreaming and gender discourses in Ghana were considered in the review of literature under the theoretical perspectives. With respect to the empirical literature review, any study that focuses on gender inequality and its impact on community development qualified to be reviewed.

**Theoretical Perspective**

*The concept of community development.*

Two ants do not fail to pull one grasshopper. ~ **Tanzanian proverb**

A single bracelet does not jingle. ~ **Congolese proverb**

We are called to be strong companions and clear mirrors to one another, to seek those who reflect with compassion and a keen eye how we are doing, whether we seem centered or off course … we need the nourishing company of others to create the circle needed for growth, freedom and healing – **Wayne Muller**

*Introduction.* Community development is a concept that geographers, social workers, politicians, and others have used frequently in the 21st century (Conradie, 2011; Ife, 2002). The concept, however, has been in existence for centuries. Locality development, rural development, and especially self-help are concepts people have used while discussing community development (Batten, 1957; Bonye, Thaddeus, & Owusu-sekyere, 2013; Dongier & Domelen, 2003; Mohan &
The idea of community development is not self-evident or transparent. It is highly contested and, depending on how it is defined, the practices of inclusion and exclusion that are relevant shift. The review of the literature on community development in this section will be done with the focus on having an in-depth understanding of their implications on gender inequality. The complexity, with regards to gender inequality in the definition of this concept, is heightened by the complexities in the meaning of its constituent concepts – “community” and “development”. To clearly define and locate the concept of community development in theory, it is important to theorize or conceptualize the constituent concepts of “community” and “development” with an eye to understanding what they can make possible in terms of gender inequality.

**Definitions of ‘Community’ and ‘Development’**. A sense of community plays an important role in the life of individuals, families and groups. It has been found by most authors that communities offer comradeship and act as a social, economic and political support system for their members (Cohen, Gottlieb, & Underwood, 2000; Lakey & Cohen, 2000; Shields, 2004; Taylor, 2011). The absence of this support system and the detachment from others in both developed and developing countries may result in social isolation which in turn leads to depression, an increase in violence, substance use and mental illness (Blazer, 2003; Shields, 2004). That is, the sense of community and its associated support system leads to better physical and mental health (Cohen, Gottlieb, & Underwood, 2000; Lakey & Cohen, 2000; Taylor, 2011). High level of cohesion and bonds among members of communities make individuals feel more powerful (Brown & Hannis, 2008; Lee, 1992). Thus, through social support and relationships, problems are diagnosed and treated in communities (Brown & Hannis, 2008). While the sense of community is essentially linked with improved quality of life for members, there is much proof
to suggest its positive impact on other community dynamics. For instance, a sense of community can help in reducing crime and social disorder. That is, wherever organisational and mobilisation capacities are strong, residents and the community’s capacity for community social control increases because they are better positioned to guard against victimization and prevent deterioration and disorder (Skogan, 1986, p. 218). Community may be appealing for members and society at large, but it has challenges and disadvantages. Strict adherence to certain traditional communal values and practices in order to ensure a sense of belonging in patriarchal communities may perpetuate sexism, misogyny and homophobia. Despite the challenges associated with communities, community is essential in Ghana due to the culture and lifestyle of the people.

Community as a concept has a variety of definitions. There is no universally accepted definition of community just like any other concept in the social sciences. Due to this, there is confusion about what constitutes a community. The confusion rests on whether social interaction and relationship, sense of identity, common connection, shared physical space or location alone can vividly describe what constitutes a community. According to Galbraith (1990), community is “the combination and interrelationships of geographic, locational, and non-locational units, systems, and characteristics that provide relevance and growth to individuals, groups and organizations” (p. 5). Galbraith conceptualizes community as a geographically bounded place, a system and with a myriad of specific relational variables and subsystems. Kirst-Ashman and Grafton (2006) state that a community must occupy space, be made up of people who interact socially and have a sense of shared identity. These definitions concur on the fact that relational variables are important in the definition of communities. That is, community constitutes relationships among a group of individuals. They however differ on their emphasis on the
locational variables in the definition of communities. Thus, while Grafton allude to the fact that a community ‘must’ occupy space, Galbraith emphasizes on the intersection between both locational and non-locational variables. The most applicable definition of community to the Ghanaian context is a territorial place where members share common characteristics and elements such as traditional or religious beliefs and/or ethnic origins (Smith, 2013).

Just as the definition of community is contested theoretically and conceptually, the concept of ‘development’ is also controversial, contested, and unstable. Thomas (2004) argues that development is “contested ... complex, and ambiguous” (p.1). Development is conceptualized differently by almost every author. Some authors conceptualize development as a process while others see it as a product and an outcome (Elaine, 1998; Thomas, 2004). Notwithstanding all these contentions, the continuous positive change and growth in a variety of aspects of human society be it economic, political, technological, social, legal or institutional structures constitutes development (Thomas, 2004). Elaine (1998) augments this idea by equating the concept of “development” to concepts such as advancement, betterment, capacity building, empowerment, enhancement, and nurturing (p. 45).

Development as a broad concept has been categorized into two parts - economic and social development (Mohan & Stokke, 2000; Todaro & Smith, 2009). According to Todaro, (1999) development is a process of ensuring structural, attitudinal, and institutional modifications, as well as the increment in the total value of goods and services produced, and addressing social deprivation. The social transformation aspect of development is not determined by economic development but rather the enhancement of the lives of people in the society irrespective of their social location (Edwards, 1993). This brings into the theorization of development the concept of local ‘participation’ and ‘empowerment’ (Mohan & Stokke, 2000;
Thus, the process of enriching or enhancing the quality of the lives of the people—development—must be controlled by the people.

The cynosure of development cannot be only income, industrialization, infrastructure, increase in Gross National Product (GNP) or technological advancement but other factors such as removing all barriers to freedom, and addressing issues of social deprivation which impact negatively on the functional capabilities of individuals (Sen, 1999). The thesis of Sen’s argument is that development can be considered as a process of enhancing the freedoms enjoyed by people. Thus, freedom is both the end as well as the means of development. Todaro (1999) concurs with this by indicating that development should not be considered entirely as an economic phenomenon but rather a multidimensional process encompassing the restructuring of both economic and social systems. Development needs to be geared towards raising the quality of life of the people, promoting human dignity and respect as well as increasing peoples’ freedom (Todaro, 1999). I agree with Sen and Todaro. In my view, development should be the process of expanding the socio-economic choices of people—both men and women—in order to enhance their freedom, human welfare, quality of life, and social well-being. The satisfaction of and provision for the needs of the people, particularly vulnerable populations, should be the main indicators of development.

**Definition of community development.** Different authors who write about community development provide varied definitions (Biddle & Biddle, 1965; Brown & Hannis, 2008; Kamath, 1961), because it is difficult to offer a universal definition for community development. The variations in the definition of community development are based on either the goals or the approach. In terms of definitions based on approach, they have great variations. Brown and Hanis (2008), claim that the variation in community development definitions center on whether
the focus is on the top-down or bottom-up approach. The top-down approach to community development concerns development projects implemented in communities without the active involvement of beneficiaries in the design, implementation and management of projects (Mansuri & Rao, 2004). This approach implies that the community does not engage in the determination, initiation and the goal setting process of the project but rather the project managers organize the local people to support the project. This is achieved by convincing community members of the long-term benefits associated with the project to be implemented.

The bottom-up approach on the other hand constitutes “an umbrella term for projects that actively include beneficiaries in their design and management” (Mansuri & Rao, 2004, p. 1). That is, communities have direct control over the design, implementation and evaluation of projects. This approach respects the voice of the local people and the principle of partnership and which are then reflected in the initiation, design and implementation of projects. Notwithstanding the variations based on the different approaches to community development, many authors believe that the main goal of community development is to address problems and issues confronting communities (Biddle & Biddle, 1965; Kamath, 1961; Mansuri & Rao, 2004). The partnership principle of community development is one major and most underestimated principle of community development by activists who believe in the top-down approach to community development. These people believe that community development should be paternalistic and projects should be superimposed on the local communities since “poor communities have little to offer besides cheap land and labour and social problems” (Perkins, Crim, Silberman, & Brown, 2004, p. 325). Notwithstanding the arguments raised by those who believe in the top-down approach, it is vital to incorporate the local people and institutions in the development process.
such as the bottom-up approach, community-focused approach and community-based approach requiring local planning; partnerships between business, government, and community organizations; and local hiring requirements (Perkins, Crim, Silberman, & Brown, 2004).

Generally, community development can be defined as “a social process by which human beings can become more competent to live with and gain some control over local aspects of a frustrating and changing world” (Biddle & Biddle, 1965, p. 78). Thus, community development involves the organization of community members for the planning, initiation and design of projects geared towards addressing their common and individual needs and problems. The execution of these plans is often based on available community resources with supplementary efforts from governmental and non-governmental organizations within and outside the community (Miniclier, 1956). I therefore agree that community development within the context of developing countries such as Ghana should be bottom up. It should be conceived as a systematic and an interactive process of conjoining the efforts of community members and governmental authorities to transform communities. However, I argue that this bottom up approach to community development in most developing countries is discriminatory in disguise. The patriarchal culture and its structures in such communities influence the idea of ‘community development’ and support injustice against women. The hierarchical form of leadership in community development process which has developed from ‘the rule of the father’ – favours men to the detriment of women – needs to be replaced by collective decision-making, and shared leadership (Kokopeli & Lakey, 1986). Community development must also be focused on empowering women to be able to be effectively involved in development decisions in their various communities. Thus, it should be geared towards encouraging women to be involved in the planning, organizing, implementing, and influencing development activities in their
communities. This will make community development in traditional societies such as Ghana more transformative and democratic.

The central means of community development is “a people’s programme with government aid” and not “a government programme with people’s aid” that is doing things for people (Kamath, 1961, p. 4). As such community development can be conceived as development for the people, by the people and of the people (Mansuri & Rao, 2004). In this sense, the individual community members must assess and determine their needs; and initiate, design and implement projects with little or no support from individuals, groups, institutions and organizations outside the community. Basic to community development is the ability to mobilize people for involvement through participation (Mansuri & Rao, 2004). People of the community should actively participate in community change. This paradigm greatly emphasizes the socio-cultural facets of community development’s ends, means, and processes. It should however be noted that this participatory approach to community development and its focus on the direct involvement of people in identifying solutions to their problems is a great departure from the general development discourses in Ghana which put the emphasis on the role of government in the development processes of communities. This engrossment with people as the central focus of community development leads to a burgeoning disconnection from technical, skills, experience and merit. Despite this disconnection, there is also the need to pay attention to the socio-cultural forces that underlie this approach. These forces have the potential to bolster the existing biases with regards to power relations based on gender. Men and women are impacted differently by this paradigm of community development hence the need to critically consider gender and gender relations as an important element in participatory community development.
The equal participation of both men and women throughout a community development process is surmised to ensure that community development is even-handed, all-inclusive and sustainable (Hamilton, 1992). Unfortunately, the general inclination is that the concepts of 'participation' and 'people' are misused and subject to cultural interpretation. The idea of people in most rural communities in Ghana is synonymous to men. This can be attested to a fact that when a woman gives birth, the question often asked is “did she give birth to a human being or what?” Here, human being is synonymous to a boy. Hence the idea of the active participation of people within the rural context in Ghana represents men’s participation. I therefore argue that the definition of community development as a people-centered process and concept needs to recognize the equal participation of both men and women in the improvement of the socio-cultural and economic conditions of their communities. That idea of participation can be conceived as a means of ensuring the cooperation/collaboration of both men and women with externally introduced programmes. This facilitates the effective implementation of initiatives and ensures the attainment of set of objectives. Participation as an “end” ensures the empowerment of the vulnerable population such as women and persons with disability to take greater responsibility for their development through their acquisition of skills, knowledge, and experience (Hamilton, 1992).

The main goal of community development is to address community problems based on the concept of ‘the good for all’ (Cavaye, 2004). That is, community development can be conceived as an organizational means of ensuring individual member’s growth through collective action and group work (Hamilton, 1992). In line with this, Biddle & Biddle (1965) indicate that community development involves cooperation, group work, consensus building and collective action. They further indicate that individual development and growth as the secondary
focus of community development can only be achieved through ‘group responsibility’ for the common good of the local community. That is, without group responsibility and collective action, there will be no personality growth.

The explicit as well as the implicit goal of community development - people to achieve development through collective effort - has occurred throughout history. Some authors see community development as old as community itself (Sanders, 1958; Witte, 1957). Witte (1957) postulated that community development is an old concept which has undergone several changes in the course of its application in rural and underdeveloped areas. Notwithstanding these changes, most of the original assumptions and philosophy behind its application exist. Thus, community development is focused on and has grown out of the experiences of the past. On the other hand, Miniclier (1956) indicates that community development is a recent social invention and has no strict historical antecedents. Despite these different arguments with respect to the origin of community development, most authors of community development agree that the concept of community development as a recent “social invention” has a rich historical trend that cannot be underestimated on any grounds (Kumaran, 2009; Mansuri & Rao, 2004; O’Donnell, 2010). It is worth noting that community development originated from the shadow of the top-down approach embodied in the urban renewal and public housing bureaucracies in the United States in the 19th century (von Hoffman, 2012) and was implemented in underdeveloped countries. This has resulted in concerns about colonialism, imperialism and Western control (Kothari, 2006, Smyth, 2004)

Several sporadic attempts have been made to reconstruct communities in developing and tropical countries throughout history. Batten (1957) traces the origin of community development in tropical and developing countries to periods before the Second World War. Before the Second
World War, the colonial powers initiated several activities in most of their colonies with similar if not the same philosophy like contemporary community development (Batten, 1957). Sills (1968), claims that African colonies such as Kenya, Uganda and Gold Coast (eventually became known as Ghana) in Africa witnessed and benefited from the initiation and implementation of mass education programmes. The rural reconstruction and mass education programmes which were started by the colonial masters in the early 20th century predated large-scale community development programme in India and most Asian countries (Sills, 1968). The colonial administration saw community development as a mechanism to control anti-colonialism forces during colonial times. Thus, the contemporary community development efforts in most tropical and developing countries are tools of colonialism rather than tools to empower the ‘people’ as well as help them to recognize and harness the opportunity for development. For instance, Harvey (2003), Lumumba-Kasongo (2011), and Maswana (2007) argue that the current ideas and practices of community development are neo-colonial projects emphasizing structures of inequality, which therefore maintains the superiority of the West rather than empowering the vulnerable population of developing and underdeveloped countries.

Although principles may change, be discarded or upgraded, substantial change is usually triggered by a significant event or experience. Despite the key changes and differences in ideologies and perspectives that have influenced community development across history, several authors of community development argue that its key and original principles still persist (Mansuri & Rao, 2004; O’Donnell, 2010; Perkins, Crim, Silberman, & Brown, 2004). One major principle of community development is the effective consultation and involvement of the local community members in local development. Community development projects are expected to be culturally appropriate and meet the felt needs of community members. This can only be achieved
through community consultation in the initiation, design and implementation of projects (Dongier et al., 2001).

Consultation and the availability of participatory approaches in the governance of community development projects are vital in ensuring that they address the needs of the people (Breuer, 2002). Mansuri and Rao (2004) support this by arguing that well thought through and planned projects are likely to be more responsive to the felt needs of the citizenry. Conversely, when community development projects are superimposed on local residents, they often do not conform to their cultural values and norms (Breuer, 2002). Therefore in order to “strengthen networks and identify common concerns and support people in taking actions related to the networks” (Breuer, 2002, p. 11) community organizers and community project management have the responsibility to ensure the participation of the local population in project initiation, design and implementation. In sum, community participation forms a basis of trust and helps identify community needs, define the community development responsibilities of stakeholders, and manage expectations among community members and other stakeholders.

Conversely, O’Donnell’s (2010) literature review on the exploration of the history of user involvement initiatives as a way of vitalizing mental health collective advocacy found that beneficiaries’ participation in community development initiatives most often keep important structural issues off the agenda and thus make the outcome of these initiatives non-reflective of national development agenda and goals. Property rights theorists further argue in support of O’Donnell’s finding by arguing that partnership and the overemphasis on community participation will lead to the overexploitation of community resources as the development projects and the processes may fall outside the national agenda and with little or no control from state regulations (North, 1990).
As indicated by Mansuri and Rao (2004) project implementers must form effective and strategic partnerships with local government, NGOs, CSOs, CBOs and all other stakeholders with goals, objectives and visions that are similar to that of the project. They further indicated that:

project implementers, whose incentives are often poorly aligned with the needs of the project, may choose to gloss over differences within target groups that underscore local power structures and to short-change the more difficult task of institution building in favour of more easily deliverable and measurable outcomes.

(p2)

Another key principle of community development is the establishment of trust among key stakeholders (community members, community leaders, CSOs, NGOS, and the government) (Swastik, 2010). The building of trust according to Swastik (2010) is essential to the success of community development projects. He further indicated that the level of participation of the local population is very important in establishing and maintaining trust, and on the other side of the coin, the level of trust built among the stakeholders determines their level of participation as well as their eagerness to participate in any community development effort. The passion and trust of the beneficiary of projects drive action. “Belief, motivation and commitment are the ‘fuel in the tank’ of community development” (Cavaye, 2004, p. 4).

Moreover, management of expectations by clearly defining roles and responsibilities of stakeholders is one of the original principles of community development (Jeanetta, 2009). Stakeholders have different kinds and levels of expectations for any community development project at any level of its development process hence the need to manage these expectations to ensure the successful implementation of these projects. Jeanetta (2009) indicates that community
development projects will be successful when management incorporates the diverse
expectations, interests and cultures of various stakeholders in the process and disengages from
any effort likely to adversely affect minority and disadvantaged stakeholders. Perhaps, a clear
definition of stakeholders’ commitment to the initiated project(s) is more likely to help design
and implement project(s) that meet their expectations. Project management must define clear
roles for stakeholders.

Most literature on community development argues that community-based, community-
driven or community-focused development has potential gains (Bjorkman & Svensson, 2009;
Bruhn & McKenzie, 2009; Mansuri & Rao, 2004). Equality and equity, an increase in
productivity, the sustainability of projects, and capacity building are the major benefits of
community development (Perkins et al., 2004; UNDP, 1995). Community development has a
great connection with the concept of empowerment of community members and with the
effectiveness of addressing local concerns. Indeed, a body of evidence exists in support of
community development initiatives and strategies and how they lead to the empowerment of the
local people. Escobar (1995) and Scott (1998) argue that community development can be
ineffective and disempowering depending on the approach. That is, top-down approaches to
community development are often ineffective and disempowering while participatory
community development helps build the capacity of community members.

Kasmel and Andersen’s (2011) three-year study on three community programmes in
Rapla, Estonia found that the programmes helped provide the opportunity for community
members to gain knowledge and experiences locally, nationally and internationally. The
programmes developed their capacity to effectively network, partner, and collaborate with other
stakeholders, and to sustain such partnerships for subsequent development projects. There was a
tremendous increase in the community’s awareness and knowledge of safety issues. Perhaps, community development initiatives empower communities by improving upon their networking ability, competence and building their capacity to a sustainable supportive and conducive environment for local development. An empowered community is mostly confident, inclusive, organized, co-operative and influential (Kasmel & Andersen, 2011).

The Services Research and Evaluation Team (2011) found that the involvement of beneficiary communities in the setting up of project goals and objectives was key in ensuring the sustainability of projects. The review revealed that community development projects are sustainable since they address certain specific issues that elicit and sustain commitment as well as uphold the dignity and strength of community members. The specific issues revealed include:

- cultural competence of the projects, its goals and the project management,
- respecting the self-determination, values and diversity of the beneficiary communities,
- applying a holistic approach to development,
- nurturing and ensuring innovation,
- reducing barriers to access,
- bringing a bi-partisan approach,
- facilitating participation and empowerment, and
- working in an integrated way across stakeholders (Services Research and Evaluation, 2011, p. 6).

It is believed that when an enabling environment is created for the involvement of the local community – both men and women- by project managers, it supports and cultivates sustainability (Ife, 2002). This presupposes that community development ensures the
sustainability of projects when its interventional focus is not on just the delivery of services but rather on; unearthing the untapped strengths of community members, effectively mobilising local resources, and the level of participation and commitment of the local community.

Silapapun’s (2002) resource paper on the implementation of agro-based green productivity integrated community development in Thailand, shows that the project has increased farmers’ capacity to be self-reliant, ensured an increase in the quantity and quality of their produce, and equipped them with sustainable environmental conservation practices within one year of implementation. It was further demonstrated that the project helped farmers increase their income stability. That is, there was over 76% increment in average monthly income due to their participation in the project (Silapapun, 2002). Community development projects do not only make beneficiaries self-reliant but also increase their production and their standard of living.

**Transnational Feminism**

Transnational Feminism is a retort to “Western” or “global” feminism which is problematized to interpret the world of women from a universal, Eurocentric and colonialist frame of reference (Grewal & Kaplan, 1994; Mohanty, 2003). Transnational feminists argue that Western feminism disregards Third World women’s unique experiences and perspectives on gender inequality and factors such as race, colonial experience, class, and culture. It dismisses the universalization of subjectivities and experiences with gender inequality across nations. It stresses that colonialism and its legacies, and capitalism have shaped and continue to shape the oppression of women (Grewal & Kaplan, 1994).

Grewal and Kaplan (1994) challenge imperial Western feminism and suggest transnational feminism that embraces the diversity of women’s agency. According to Grewal and Kaplan, (1994) a universal conceptualization of the struggle of women replicates the ideals of the
West without acknowledging the geographical, historical and cultural differences among nations and how they impact women’s lives in their local contexts. Factors affecting the well-being of women differ between countries and as such Western feminism’s assumption of a homogeneous understanding of women’s well-being and means of addressing the challenges faced by women across different cultures is problematic. The diversity of experiences of women due to differences in history, geography and culture needs to be recognized by feminist and race, and class and sexuality movements (Mohanty, 2003; Robertson, 1992). Mohanty sums these up by indicating that “Western feminist” universalizing methodologies, and Eurocentric ideologies and scholarship on women of the global south portray a sense of discursive colonization of global south women’s struggles. Grewal and Kaplan (1994) add that:

If feminist political practices do not acknowledge transnational cultural flows, feminist movements will fail to understand the material conditions that structure women’s lives in diverse locations. If feminist movements cannot understand the dynamics of these material conditions, they will be unable to construct an effective opposition to current economic and cultural hegemonies that are taking new global forms. Without an analysis of transnational scattered hegemonies that reveal themselves in gender relations, feminist movements will remain isolated and prone to reproducing the universalizing gestures of dominant Western cultures. (p. 17)

Gunew (2013) argues that universal narratives hegemonize patriarchal values that serve the narrow self-interest of Western feminism. There is therefore the need to interrogate ideas or actions “masquerading as universal truths” (Bromley, 2014, p. 94). Some of the universal truths promoted by white Western feminism include the “assumptions of universal female dependence
and confinement to domestic sphere” (Frazer & Nicholson, 1990, p. 33). The response to the interrogation of the universal narrative of Western feminism brought to light the transnational feminist movement.

Transnational Feminism is an anti-universalist approach to feminism. It is intended to make visible and contest the gendered impacts and meanings of an array of global issues and forces (Reilly, 2011). According to Grewal and Kaplan (1994) the use of the concept “Transnational” is to problematize a purely locational politics of global-local or center-periphery in favor of … the lines cutting across them. As feminists who note the absence of gender issues in all of these world system theories, we have no choice but to challenge what we see as inadequate and inaccurate binary divisions. (p.13)

Location with regards to transnationalism includes gender positionings, topography and “dimensions of power and identity that contribute to the very constitution of people and places as subjects” (Hyndman, 2004, p. 9). Hyndman (1996) posits that transnational feminist practices engross and connect in lieu of individualization and disassociation based on locations. Looking at African communities based on this frame of reference, it can be argued that women’s experiences of patriarchy being it their bodies, family life or community life are “neither universal subjects nor unrelated subjects in their locations” (Hyndman, 1996). That is, African women’s experiences of gender inequality are unique to the African context and influenced by locational variables such as culture.

Transnational feminism is the movement across geographic and socially constructed national borders, and focus on spaces of people, relationship, capital, labour, culture, ideas and knowledge (Grewal & Kaplan, 1994; Razack, 2000). Transnational feminism seeks to speak
from various locations of linkage and confront the familiar patterns of divisive global socio-economic policies that have devastated women’s lives and most world social systems, economies, and societies (Grewal & Kaplan, 1994). It critiques Western feminism and argues for ways in which feminism may be practiced differently in diverse socio-political and cultural contexts. Thus, it inveighs against Western liberal feminism on grounds of its attribution of women’s subjugation exclusively to gender roles. According to Desai (2015)

It introduced a radical geography of historically specific relational processes across borders as opposed to the ahistorical and bounded notions of local, national, global; a theoretical framework that decentered gender in feminist theorizing even as it centered it in postmodern social theory; and a praxis based on reflexive, transversal solidarities as both means to and goals of women’s emancipation. (p. 116)

Transnational feminists call for learning feminism from diverse cultures, thus questioning the notion of a universal “global sisterhood”. Additionally, they call for the necessity of articulating the relationships of gender to scattered hegemonies such as global economic structures, patriarchal nationalism, ‘authentic forms’ of traditions, local structures of domination and legal-juridical oppression on multiple levels (Grewal & Kaplan, 1994). There are sharp differences in the needs, desires, wishes and experiences of women from different locations hence they cannot be understood as all ‘the same” women (Mohanty, 2003). Therefore “cross-cultural feminist work must be attentive to the micro-politics of context, subjectivity, and struggle, as well as to the macro-politics of global economic and political systems and processes” (Mohanty, 2003, p. 501).

For the deconstruction of traditional borders, Grewal and Kaplan (1994) advocate for the engagement with postmodernity. They however argue that while postmodernism serves as a
powerful tool to criticize modern global capitalism, it does not explore gender. In a postmodern world, it is not worthwhile to tell a unified narrative of experiences and a history of women. This challenges the homogenizing perspective of modernity which is considered to be prejudiced by imperialist logic. This unifying (as well as homogenizing) view associated with modernity is the brain behind the hegemony of Western feminism, and its creation and dependence on binaries (Grewal & Kaplan, 1994). They further argue that “postmodernity is an immensely powerful and useful conception that gives us an opportunity to analyze the way that a culture of modernity is produced in diverse locations and how these cultural productions are circulated, distributed, received, and even commodified” (p. 5). That is, according to Grewal and Kaplan, cross-cultural feminists’ adoption of postmodernity as a means of demystifying the imperial Western feminism is paramount in their practice but cautions against “postmodern practice as a utopian theoretical methodology” (p. 5). There should therefore be a more culturally sensitive discursive space accustomed to postmodernist analysis of disparities among women.

Transnational feminism advocates for solidarity rather than the “universal” Western feminist approach as the major solution to the challenges women face across borders (Mohanty, 2003). Salem (2014) argues that

Transnational solidarity among feminists has often been a difficult goal to achieve because of the continued dominance of Western feminism, the lack of self-reflexivity on the part of feminists, and the lack of an approach that addresses both the complexities and nuances of lived gender experiences as well as the ways in which imperialism continues to structure the lives of millions around the world. (p. 1)

She further suggests that the merging of intersectionality and decolonial approaches has the potential of assisting in the development of a “non-exclusionary transnational solidarity” (p. 1).
Although women in Africa and the other third world countries have uniquely conveyed feminist mindfulness, their narratives, struggles and peculiarities are not taken into consideration by western feminist organizations (Collins, 1990). The African feminist movement has been influenced and shaped by activities against the colonial rule and racist ideologies. Some African scholars and activists have denounced Western feminism. For instance, Aidoo (1998), a Ghanaian novelist, rejects the utility of Western feminism in Africa when she stated “Feminism. You know how we feel about that embarrassing Western philosophy? The destroyer of homes. Imported mainly from America to ruin nice African women” (p. 22). This implies that Western feminist ideas and practices are foreign to the African woman. Feminism, more especially radical feminism, disconnects, divides and dismantles the two main components – man and woman - of the African family. That is, it wrecks the male-female dynamic that are fundamental to the African family.

The general idea of transnational feminism and the challenges with Western feminism have resulted in the adoption or establishment of a variant form of feminism dubbed womanism by African scholars. African women and scholars such as Mikell (1997), Hudson-Weems (1994) among others have identified with womanism and consider it as the best means of delineating the agency, struggles, experiences and worldviews of indigenous African women. According to Ogunyemi (1985) womanism “embraces racial, gender, class and the African women consciousness”(p. 67). African womanism:

… is for grounded in African culture, and therefore, it necessarily focuses on the unique experiences, struggles, need and desires of African women. It critically addresses the dynamics of the conflict between mainstream feminist, the black feminist, the African feminist and the Africana womanist. (Hudson-Weems, 1994, p. 24)
African womanists and their theoretical lenses have caught the attention of feminist scholars in Africa, who argue that an African variant of feminism has a great potential of “re-capturing and re-valorising African traditions and cultures” (Gaidzanwa, 2013, p. 7). Mikell (1997) discusses feminism in its African articulation and explores the emergence of feminism and what it means to those who espouse it. The author argues that African feminism (womanism) differs radically from Western feminism. While Western feminists are more anxious with issues such as female control over reproduction, variation and choice within human sexuality, as well as debates about essentialism, the female body, or the discourse of patriarchy, African feminism is distinctly heterosexual, pro-natal, and concerned with "bread, butter, and power" issues (Mikell, 1997). The case studies in Mikel’s edited book reveal that African women create a powerful and specifically African feminism through their fight for access to land, for the right to own property, for control of food distribution, for living wages and safe working conditions, for health care, and for election reform. These liberatory efforts are peculiar to the specific dynamics and socio-political-cultural context of Africa. Hudson-Weems (1994) asserts:

The African womanist names and define herself and her movement … she is family centered. The African womanist is more concerned with her entire family than just herself and her sisters even though genuine sisterhood is also very important to her reality. (p. 58)

African womanism “brings to the forefront the role of African mothers as leaders in the struggle to regain, reconstruct, and create a cultural integrity that espouses the … principles of reciprocity, balance, harmony, justice, truth, righteousness, order, and so forth” (Dove, 1998, p. 535). In her theorizing, Verner (1994) outlined the core values of African Womanism:

- African womanist
- love men and like being women
- Love children, want families and harmonious relationships. Their primary obligation is to the progress of their cultural way of life through the stability of family and the commitment to community.
- Are not at war with men seeking money, power and influence through confrontation.
- Do not redefine themselves nor their history to meet some politically correct image of a popular cultural movement, which demands the right to speak for and redefine the morals and mores of all racial, cultural and ethnic groups.
- Reject the status of victim. They view African women as victors, sisters in charge of their own destiny.

Mikell (1985) adds another dimension to the discussion by attributing the state of women in Africa to colonialism and its associated structures. African women’s activism is part of the larger context of gender subjugation and exploitation. This activism is targeted at transforming socio-cultural and political conditions. Mikell (1985) argues that the roles of African women predominated and were valued through a long tradition of female integration in collective structures and the traditional system of division of labour. Mikell maintains that this traditional African setup was disrupted by the colonization process through which the colonizers intentionally unsettled the normal tradition in the society. The introduction of churches, governance, artificial borders of nation-states and trade disrupted traditional social influences. According to Mikell (1985), the offshoot of colonialism that have influenced the development of inequality in Africa, include

- Catholicism with the introduction of monogamy
Suppression of women

Western education giving more opportunities to men

Legal system which recognized the independence of African women.

It can therefore be argued that these forces have influenced the unequal standard of the men and women in the society. Imperialist structures and capitalist principles have been entrenched in religion, legal, economic and educational arrangements. These institutions birthed a new social order of classism and racism which have been detrimental to the wellbeing of most African women (Mikell, 1985). Mikell contends that the colonial rule led to more and more gender inequality in Africa. Womanism is an activist effort geared towards personal, cultural, political and social transformations that are considered desirable.

The question percolating in my mind is, does womanism have a place in modern Ghana’s community development process? According to the 1992 constitution of Ghana, women have equal right as their male counterparts to fully participate in the development process of their communities and the country as a whole, challenge the status quo where power has been the male domain. The imperialist structures and capitalist principles that inform the community development process in Ghana offer men the opportunity to dominate women in community development process. hooks’ (2000) idea about the issue of power is useful in understanding the situation of women in Ghana. She contends that women need to pursue power in a positive sense. Thus, the pursuit of power should be geared towards transforming socio-political and economic structures. This kind of power within the context of community development in Ghana emphasizes the rotation of tasks, gives equal value to the roles of both men and women, promotes consensus, and emphasizes internal democracy.
Most of the challenges Ghanaian women face can be attributed to the latent structures of patriarchy – the offshoot of colonialism and capitalist principles and structures. These structures fundamentally have underlying multiple meanings but are not fixed (Hughes, 2002). This argument disputes the notion of a natural social order. The existence of gender inequality in the community development process in Ghana is socially constructed and regulated through discourse and institutionalized through neoliberal and capitalist structures and ideologies (Warner, 2001). This lens problematizes the idea of automatic privileging of the dominant group (men) and other dominant discourses and moves towards multiple voices, multiple perspectives and multiple ways of seeing the world (Davies, 1997). This implies that the situation of Ghanaian women cannot only be explained through the Western feminist lens. Thus, in understanding and addressing the situation of Ghanaian women, the social, cultural, economic and political context and perspective need to be taken into consideration. The existing male dominated socio-economic and political structures must be transformed and also the different issues that affect Ghanaian women need to be viewed as having multiple perspectives depending on who is looking at the situation, the context and the time in question. As indicated by Verner (1994), Ghanaian women have to be in charge of their own destiny and use culturally appropriate means of addressing their challenges.

In community development, it is indispensable to appreciate and include in community development policy and programming the differences between men and women in order to achieve gender equality. This is a position that needs to be clarified to community development practitioners, community leaders and the various stakeholders so that they can see womanism’s alignment with African values and culture other than a Western imposition.
In conclusion, Ghanaian women need to appreciate the fact that both men and women are all accomplices in the institutionalization of the prevailing unjust system and as a result, the movement towards the transformation of the system should not be left only for the elites (hooks, 2000). As indicated by Oduol and Kabira (2000) continuous efforts towards addressing the “negative challenges posed by state, tribal, class, ideological and cultural mechanisms that perpetuate the marginalized positions” (p. 12) of women have the potential to achieve equality and equity.

**Gender Discourses in Ghana**

In Ghana, more especially within the rural communities, men are often viewed as virile, strong, intelligent, good for leadership positions, and could offer protection and sustenance, intelligence and wisdom. Females are socialized to believe that males are wiser, and more responsible to lead. By this, males amass power. Men exercise this power by making various decisions throughout community development process – initiation, designing, implementation and evaluation.

Drawing on the work of Foucault (1995), this power is not something men have and the ‘other’ (women) do not possess. This ‘power is everywhere’, diffused and embodied in discourse, knowledge and ‘regimes of truth’ (Foucault, 1995). This implies that decision-making power in Ghana is “diffused rather than concentrated, embodied and enacted rather than possessed, discursive rather than purely coercive, and constitutes agents rather than being deployed” (Gaventa, 2003, p. 1) by men. This power wielded by men is neither “an agency nor a structure” (Foucault, 1998, p. 63) but rather it is a ‘regime of truth’ that permeates the Ghanaian society, and which is in relentless fluidity and compromise. The “regime of truth” and the kind of discourse which is portrayed as the truth in community development decision-making favours
men. These regimes and politics are reinforced (and redefined) relentlessly through the
socialization process, the media, and even the educational system.

The process of socialisation, and the various agents and agencies of socialisation
reinforce the idea of femininity and masculinity in the Ghanaian society and Africa as a whole.
According to Umorem (1995):

The African child is born female or male. The girl child grows up as an African girl and
later becomes a woman through the said process of enculturation. This enculturation
process has both cognitive and emotional elements. The girl child who later becomes a
woman learns and internalizes both. This learning-to-become is comprehensive in the
sense that one learns and internalizes both the derogatory and positive concepts,
judgements and attitudes towards womanhood. This learning takes place through
example, direct teaching and in patterns of behavior, in songs, proverbs, wise sayings and
folktales. What is learnt directs towards corresponding patterns of behavior. (p. 2)
This implies that the actions, inactions, words, oral traditions can have great implications on
gender roles. The Ghanaian society and the African continent need to be cognizant and restrained
about its oral traditions and discourses due to their repercussions on gender construction and
stereotyping.

Discourses govern the phenomenological interpretation of our everyday existence and
these discourses umpire the way we think, relate to and act towards one another in the world.
Gyekye (1996) argues that the practical and theoretical dimensions of wisdom and knowledge
are relevant in addressing problems in traditional African societies. African oral traditions and
discourses are envisioned to express truths and how the society is expected to be organized.
According to Gyekye (1996), the influence of proverbs and wise sayings (oral traditions) is
pervasive in the Ghanaian society. Proverbs and discourses have power in mediating life in Africa.

Linguistic resources such as proverbs are considered sacred and absolute truth in Africa, and in the Ghanaian culture, they convey distinctive sacred messages (Addo-Fening, 2001), which are expected to be conformed to other than challenging them. According to Ssetuba (2002), “the proverb is regarded as a noble genre of African oral tradition that enjoys the prestige of a custodian of a people’s wisdom and philosophy of life.” (p. 1). Awedoba (2000) further argues:

The truth of the proverb is...of an order that cannot be challenged. ‘Ghanaians’ seem by their attitudes to accept tacitly that it is unseemly to call into question the proverb and its tenets. To do so would appear to amount to a challenging of the wise ancestors, an exercise not only in arrogance, but also in itself a sacrilege. (p. 34)

These sacred proverbs which Achebe (1994) describes as “the palm-oil with which words are eaten” (p. 2) have made it difficult if not impossible to challenge gender stereotypes embraced in them.

The discourse in the Ghanaian society undermines the capabilities of women and portrays women as people who need to rely on men to survive. It portrays a hierarchical arrangement based on gender and reinforces certain already established identities or subjectivities. For instance, Anderson (2012) argues that “the gender conceptions found in the proverbs form a system of gender hegemony that supports masculine superiority and feminine subordination” (p. 10). Thus, the linguistic resources such as proverbs and wise sayings are systematically used to perpetuate patriarchal culture and gender inequality in Ghana and Africa as a whole. They
express and reinforce the traditional values among Ghanaians and Africans in general. Geest (1975) adds that these proverbs represent make-believe values, male ideals which prescribe rules of deferential behaviour for women and validate these rules by pointing to allegedly inferior female qualities. In reality, however, women often correspond more to the picture of manliness than the men themselves. (p. 51)

The proverbs constitute the foundation of gender construction, Africans’ way of thinking, and show the position and role of women within the African context. These linguistic resources depict women as foolish, flirtatious, weak, covetous, evil, dependent, and puerile (Hussein, 2005). One of the proverbs that portray women as dependent on men is “ɔbɑa tɔ tuo a ɛtwere ɔbarima dan mu” (meaning “Even if a woman buys a gun, it is kept in a man’s room”). (Dogbevi, 2007) explains that the possession of a gun is the privilege of a man, therefore no matter how great a woman is she is dependent on a man. The proverb further portrays women as incapable of managing valuable properties and making decision in major situations. This throws more light on the subordinate roles of women with regards to decision-making and property management. Other proverbs with analogous tenor are “ɔbɑa tɔ nyaadewa na ɔntɔn atuduro” (‘A woman sells garden eggs but she doesn’t sell gunpowder’), “ɔbɑa te sɛ ohuriiɛ; ɔnom mogya na ɔmma mogya” (which literally means ‘A woman is like the tsetsefly; she drinks blood but she doesn’t give blood’), “ɔbɑa se ɔbehyɛ tɔrɔsa a, momma ɔnhye, na ɛβɛto ne dwonsɛ” (If a woman says she is going to put on trousers, let her put them on, and she will have problems urinating), and “ɔbɑa da ɔbarima akyi” (“A woman lies behind a man”) (Dogbevi, 2007). These proverbs depict the roles of men and women and portray women as subordinate to men.
There are other proverbs which portray women as being foolish, dumb or unintelligent. One of such proverbs is “ɔbaa te sɛ abɔfra” (A woman is like a child, she must be guided always) (Appiah, Appiah, & Agyeman-Duah, 2001). This proverb undermines the agency of both women and children. It indicates that women are not intelligent and require the guidance of a man in decision-making. Other proverbs with similar meaning are “ɔbaa adwene akyikyim sɛ ne nofo” (The mind of the woman is as twisted as her breasts), “Odwan ɔsradɔm a ɔsebɔ di wɔn anim ɛtumi di nkunim ɛwɔ ɔsebɔ ɔsradɔm a odwan di wɔn anim” (An army of sheep led by a lion can defeat an army of lions led by a sheep) and “ɔbaa ennwene ɛntera ɛmpa a ɔdaso” (A woman never thinks beyond the bed she sleeps on) (Appiah, Appiah, & Agyeman-Duah, 2001). These proverbs create the impression that men are more intelligent than women. Women are assumed mainly to have no foresight and lack the ability to make good decisions. As a result of this, men assume most of the decision-making roles in most traditional communities. It is generally assumed that if a woman assumes a leadership or decision-making role, she would possibly not make a far-sighted decision (Oboler, 1985). The application of proverbs such as these in traditional Ghanaian societies serves as a means of consolidating men’s position and undermines the socio-economic, and political roles of women in the development process (Collins, 1996). Thus, the devaluation of the roles of women that results from the use of these proverbs may influence and limit their participation in community development processes.

Incongruously, despite the supposed ‘weakness’, women are theoretically expected to be hardworking. Some of the proverbs create a positive impression about the roles of women, an indication of them being fundamental in the family. For instance, to show the importance of women in the community to that of men, the Akans have this proverb “ɔbaa yɛ kwadu dua ɛna ɔbarima yɛ aburo dua” (‘The woman is a banana tree (which multiplies itself); the man however,
is a cornstalk (which stands alone’). This proverb metaphorically shows the importance of women using the banana tree which has several uses in Ghanaian communities. It should however be noted that this proverb overemphasizes the reproductive roles of women neglecting their productive roles in society. Other proverbs with the same intent include ‘ɔbaa mmɔademɔfoɔ/ɔbaasima na ne ba hyɛ n’akyiri a, ɔsoa ɔomoa.’ (‘While the hardworking/ideal woman puts her child on her back, she carries a load at the same time’), “ɔbaa pa na ntɛtia nam n’apakyie aseɛ” (Small red ants crawl over the back of the gourd of a good woman) and “ɔbaa ahoɔden wɔ n’atofo mu.” (‘A woman’s strength is in her bustle’) (Appiah, Appiah, & Agyeman-Duah, 2001). The images of women as portrayed by these proverbs do not ineludibly relate to what they are but relatively what they should be. This indicates the socially constructed, entrenched and enforced labels that shape society’s expectations of woman as well as women’s perception about themselves (Ssetuba, 2002).

**Gender Mainstreaming in Ghana**

Gender mainstreaming as a major comprehensive approach for the advancement of gender equality was established at the Beijing conference in 1995. It is geared towards essentially securing human rights and social justice for women as well as men. It looks at the incorporation of gender perspectives in different areas of development. Gender mainstreaming reveals the need for changes in goals, strategies and actions to ensure that both genders influence, participate in and benefit from development processes. It further promotes changes in attitudes, relationship, institutions and socio-economic and political structures as the means of achieving greater equality between women and men. This idea has been part of development programming and policy making in Ghana before its popularization by the Beijing Conference.
The Beijing conference has however resulted in an increase in awareness of the need to include gender concerns in development planning.

For over three decades, successive governments have made numerous efforts at national and community development geared towards the reduction of poverty, gender inequality and promoting growth (Nikoi, 1998). Recently, organizational activism and advocacy have been instrumental in putting gender concerns in development. As a result of these global and national activism, gender equity and equality has become the focus of development planners and policy makers in order to be able to meet the needs of every section of the society. Thus, the growing insight into the negative consequences of gender insensitive policy making and programming has ignited the need to mainstream gender in development processes. Factoring gender concerns in development projects and policies is indispensable in developing as well as developed countries (Government of Ghana, 2003b; Nikoi, 1998).

The feminization of poverty in Ghana has called for gender mainstreaming in the country’s poverty reduction efforts (Aboagye-Offei, 1999). One of the poverty reduction efforts was the implementation of the Economic Recovery Programme (ERP) in 1983. In the late 20th century, Ghana witnessed momentous progress in the economic sector as a result of the ERP (Apusigah, 2002). The International Monetary Fund (IMF) (1998.) in celebrating the success of the ERP reported that:

The ERP, which adopted a market-oriented approach, made considerable progress in reducing macroeconomic imbalances and liberalizing the external sector. Inflation was lowered from 142 percent in 1983 to 10 percent by the end of 1991. The highly distorted exchange and trade system was liberalized. The balance of payments registered sizable
overall surpluses throughout the period. Real GDP growth averaged about 5 percent a year, resulting in appreciable increases in real per capita incomes. (para. 2)

Apusigah (2006) adds that the macroeconomic growth led to significant improvement in infrastructure development and social services. However, this economic reverberation and infrastructural development was a cataclysm for social justice (Apusigah, 2002; Nikoi, 1998), and was characterized by severe gender inequalities. The system could not meet the desire and basic human needs of most Ghanaians (Konadu-Agyemang, 2001). Critics contend that the ERP failed to address the gender concerns within the system and different sections of the Ghanaian population hardly benefited (Konadu-Agyemang, 2001). The ERP and the Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) could not reduce poverty among the poor as anticipated due to the absence of well-thought through productivity enhancement strategies (Konadu-Agyeman, 2001).

Confirming this, Dei (1993) indicates that:

In its eighth year of SAPs, Ghana has been presented as a showcase for the “success” of World Bank/IMF policies in Africa because of the gains in GDP… Despite the optimistic view of some World Bank economists, SAP has meant a high cost of living for many ordinary Ghanaians. Prices of basic necessities of food, health, clothing, transportation, and fuel have soared considerably beyond the reach of many citizens, and urban wages and household farm incomes have not kept pace with the rate of inflation. Cuts in government spending on social services have hit the rural population, particularly women. (p. 45)

Apusiga (2006) describes the soaring poverty rate and equity gaps amid assurances of better standard of living as “the ‘doublespeak’ of planned development” (p. 1). Apusigah
concludes that the lack of knowledge of gender questions in development planning by the policy makers led to the misapplication and the doom of the ERP and SAP.

The criticism against the stringent economic reforms associated with ERP and SAP led to the initiation of several poverty reduction programmes which were meant to address the gender concerns and humanize development planning. The move to ensure social equity includes the Programme of Action to Mitigate the Social Cost of Adjustment (PAMSCAD) and the Ghana Vision 2020 (Government of Ghana, 1995). The PAMSCAD as a social safety net was meant to be a “transitory and counter-cyclical programme targeted on the adjustment of the poor and … the non-poor affected by the adjustment. The main objective was to transfer resources to the above vulnerable groups during the implementation of the adjustment programmes” (Cornia, 2001, p. 8). This multi-sectoral programme encompasses empowerment projects and social services (Cornia, 2001). Thus, it was an immediate effort to the pressing social concerns that resulted from the ERP and SAP. Kopits (1993) sums this up by indicating that “the underlying rationale of social safety nets was the necessity to buttress the social and political acceptance of the adjustment effort” (p. 107).

In terms of gender mainstreaming, it was through the Ghana Vision 2020 that the issues of women were given much attention in development plan as part of the human development agenda. This programme was designed to address gender predisposition as well as promote the acknowledgment of women as ‘equal societal and productive assets’ (Government of Ghana, 1995, p. 43). Critics however argue that there have not been any significant impacts of the Vision 2020 and the Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategies (GPRS I & II) on the plight of women (Apusigah, 2006; Mensa-Bonsu, 2008). Writing on the challenges of PAMSCAD, Ghana Vision
2020 and GPRS, Apusigah (2006) contends that the goal of this human development agenda - to promote social equity - was only on paper.

The Beijing conference and the subsequent enactment of various conventions on gender equality at the international level such as the Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) have precipitated national level efforts towards mainstreaming gender (Apusigah, 2006; Mensa-Bonsu, 2008). The Government of Ghana set-up the National Council on Women and Development (NCWD) as an advisory machine to the government on the promotion of gender equality. The International online resource center on disability and inclusion (2017) indicates that:

NCWD's objectives are to advise the government on all matters relating to the full integration of women into national development; to serve as the official national body liaising with national and international organizations on matters relating to the status of women; and to collect and disseminate information relating to gender and development and to undertake and encourage intervention work regarding gender issues. (para. 1)

NCWD in its attempt to fulfil its mandate assisted the government in the initiation of various programmes and projects to empower women in ways that support poverty reduction and the inclusion of women in development (Anyidoho & Manuh, 2010; Apusigah, 2006). For instance, the implementation of the Enhancing Opportunities for Women in Development (ENOWID) programme was to address women’s vulnerabilities, empower and integrate them into development (O’ barracks & Firmin-Sellers, 1995). Kessey (2005), states that the ENOWID programme focused on the participation of women in development notwithstanding their reproductive and traditional caring roles.
Apart from NCWD, government Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) were tasked to set up gender desks to help in mainstreaming gender in policy and practice. As an affirmation of the government’s zeal to mainstream gender in policy and development planning, it issued a White Paper on Affirmative Action in 1998. The White Paper on Affirmative Action in public service provides “a policy framework that sets out the mandatory requirements and steps that national departments and provincial administration should take to develop and implement their affirmative action programmes” (Government of Ghana, 1998). Since the issuance of the White Paper on Affirmative Action, Gender issues in Ghana have still not received the attention needed. Torto (2013) contends that “Ghana is yet to meet any international standard of enhancing women’s participation in governance, leadership and decision-making processes” (p. 42). Gender mainstreaming programmes geared towards the promotion of women’s causes, have not entirely met their objectives (Adusah-Karikari & Ohemeng, 2014).

In 2000, the plight of women and their inability to get into public life incited the New Patriotic Party (NPP) government to establish the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs (MOWAC) as a replacement for NCWD. MOWAC is mandated to facilitate and create a conducive environment for gender equity and women’s empowerment in the public sector. The scope of MOWAC encompasses the initiation, coordination, evaluation and monitoring of gender issues (Allah-Mensah, 2005). In 2013, MOWAC was renamed the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection (MoGCSP). In order to mainstream gender in Ghana’s development process, the ministry enacted a National Gender and Children’s policy in 2004. This policy was to advance “the social, legal/civic, political, economic and cultural conditions of the people of Ghana, particularly women and children” (African Development Fund, 2008, p. vi)
The main constraints to Ghana’s efforts to mainstream gender are “the social constructions of womanhood centered on reproductive roles, whose constructions restrict women’s access to productive resources such as credit, land, training and education, and also to decision-making structures and processes” (Anyidoho & Manuh, 2010, p. 268). Rodenberg (2001) adds that the deficit approach to gender planning and the grouping of women’s issues under issues of vulnerability and exclusion constitute the major challenges of gender mainstreaming strategies in Ghana. This categorization does not acknowledge women’s roles in community and national development. Rodenberg therefore recommends that “[t]he mainstreaming of gender and gender projects at a higher level of political dialogue and development-policy programme activities (‘scaling-up’) is urgently required” (p. vii). Anyidoho and Manuh (2010) also suggest the clarification of the conceptual and theoretical framing of issues as another means of enhancing gender projects in Ghana.

**Empirical Literature Review**

Members of a community irrespective of sex or age are given the opportunity to participate actively in the development of their community in participatory community development (Cahn & Camper, 1968). This essentially actuates local people to address their problems through concerted efforts rather than relying on external organizations, institutions and bodies. Participation in community development is the catalyst for easy expression and prioritization of local needs and addressing those needs in order to empower the community members and ensure the sustainability of projects. I believe community development must incorporate participatory approaches geared towards greater equality, freedom and advancement of local community members. As indicated by several scholars, it continues to essentially perpetuate the principles and phenomenon it seeks to address as it encourages inequality.
Globally, rural women predominate among the poor (Kaka, 2013). As indicated by Kaka (2013), feminization of poverty continues to widen the gender gap between men and women and puts women at a disadvantaged and subordinate position in communities. This has further led to their marginalization in the accessibility, utilization, and control of community development resources and processes. It can therefore be argued that they become caught up in the cycle of underprivilege and vulnerability.

The effects of gender inequality in community development are so profound that the stark reality in Ghana reflects the continued marginalization of women in development processes. Capitalism and its associated forces continue to perpetuate a vicious circle in which a small minority most especially men control the development processes and resources leaving the majority, mostly women, living in abject poverty with little or no access to development opportunities (Fairshare, 2001). The greatest challenge of tracing and fully understanding the ways in which women are discriminated against and affected by this is the limited sex-disaggregated indicators and data in key development sectors (Phalane, 2004). In areas such as community development, agricultural, employment, and the informal sector, there are few sex disaggregated data that reflect gender relations and inequalities (Mehta, 2001; Phalane, 2004). While some scholars and organisations such as the UN are researching into the issue of women in aspects of development, many of their methods and indicators are not gender sensitive (Mehta 2001).

As a matter of fact, experiences of women in development process can be uneven and contradictory, frequently demonstrating the divergence of human thoughts and experiences. To further unpack these processes, the UN (2015) found that there has been progress in the level of female participation in education, decision-making and work in some countries. However, in
developing regions such as Sub-Saharan Africa and Southern Asia, more than 21 million girls are out of school. In terms of work,

women work longer hours than men—an average of 30 minutes a day longer in developed countries and 50 minutes in developing countries … Only 50 per cent of women of working age are in the labour force, compared to 77 per cent of men … Women’s representation in decision-making is low meaning that the “glass ceiling” remains a reality for the vast majority of the world’s women. (UN, 2015, p. XI-XII)

These problems have smashed the sureness in the equitable and equal access to the benefits of development irrespective of sex and demonstrate some of the key deficiencies in the development arena. The gains of community development are not equitably distributed and the gap between men and women is widening.

CBOs constitute a very important element in community development. Mutongu (2012) sought to examine women’s participation as a means of poverty reduction in Kenya. He found that most women participate in CBOs as a means to increase their purchasing power and reduce spatial, diplomatic, project and professional biases (Mutongu, 2012, p. 11). He concluded that despite the aforementioned pull factors, women are faced with several constraining forces in their efforts to participate in development activities such as CBO-initiated projects. He recommends the acquisition of authentic participation of women in development activities in order for them to have control over their own lives.

In her qualitative study, Ajala (2016) found that the gender stereotypes about women as being unequal to men are the key determinants of the constructed gender roles between men and women. She further found that men are favoured and continue to dominate in all spheres of life, with women relegated to the domestic front. This gender discrimination fueled by the
constructed gender roles are the cause of the feminization of poverty in Africa. She concluded that the feminization of poverty in Nigeria is not attributable to gender discrimination but rather the culture and traditions of the people. She therefore recommended the eradication of the gender insensitive beliefs and values as the means of ensuring the development of Nigerian women.

In the same manner, Agarwal (1992) also found that discrimination against women in all spheres of life impoverishes them. She concluded that patriarchy is the main cause of women’s oppression, subordination and abuse. Mutongu (2012) concurs with Agarwal when he argues that the patriarchal structure of most African countries victimizes women. He further argues that the other constraints to women’s participation include sociocultural forces, religious bias against women leadership, low educational level and women reproductive role in the family.

Again, Wiafe and Arku (2014) qualitatively researched into the level of participation of women in the management and utilization of natural mountain resources in Afadjato, Ghana. They found that women were more involved in the development, management and sustainable utilization of natural resources in Afadjato. They also found strong competition between men and women in the harvesting of the resources. With regard to barriers to women, they found that men do not resist women’s involvement, however women were limited physically (difficulty in climbing) and lacked environmental resource management knowledge.

Guiriba (2013), in his qualitative case study research on the perspectives of ecofeminism and the roles of women in environmental protection and conservation, found that women are directly affected by the state of environment because of the traditionally assigned roles enforced by the patriarchal system. These multiple roles of women overburden them because of the existing patriarchal, sexist and discriminatory practices. He concludes that the link between women and the environment accentuates the position and victimization of women.
Using 2005 Afrobarometer data, Coffe and Bolzendahl (2011) investigated the gender gap in political participation in 18 sub-Saharan African nations. They found that gender gaps in Sub-Saharan countries are not generally different from that of Western democracies. The only difference among Sub-Saharan African countries and Western democracies is that the existing gender gaps in the former cannot be attributed to socio-economic status and political attitudes. They finally concluded that the higher the level of income inequality, the more likely women will take part in collective actions. Thus, across Sub-Saharan African nations gender gaps in participation is negatively related to gender inequality in income.

Offei-Aboagye (2000b) investigated initiatives in Ghana to promote the participation of women in local governance. She focused on efforts to increase the participation of women and women’s groups in decision-making and accessing support from local governments. She argued that women’s lower socio-economic status or lack of finances, multi-faceted roles and lack of free time constrain their level of participation in local government and access to overall development. With relatively little or no education, women in many parts of Ghana are vulnerable. She concluded that the multiple roles of women as wives, mothers, workers and income-generators severely limit their time for engaging in community activities.

A survey of 200 women was conducted by Aroge (2016) on the socioeconomic effects of women’s participation in adult and non-formal education in Nigeria. Women’s level of education is considered crucial in the development of any community (Aroge, 2016). The study reveals a strong positive relationship between the level of education of women and their level of self-reliance. The study found substantial influences of education on the meaningful involvement of women in education, health, agriculture, and other vital sectors of the community’s economy.
Orege concluded that, in order to harness the full potential of women in the development of every community, there is the need to empower them.

Esidene and Abdul (2013) explored the role of women in politics in Nigeria. They found that the feeling of inferiority among women relative to men concerning their ability to actively participate and effectively represent their constituents was the major barrier to women’s participation in politics in Nigeria. They argued that the inferior nature of women is a function of the bigoted nature of men striving to maintain their authority and position in all corollaries. Other factors found to stand the way of women include colonialism, domination and control by men, cultural beliefs, Virility Deficiency Syndrome, lack of finance, and lack of effective means of implementing affirmative action. They recommend equality in the sharing of political offices on the basis of a quota system in order for both men and women to have equal chances of controlling political spaces.

Using a mixed method, Braimah, Dukuh, Oppong-Sekyere, and Momori (2014) assess the socio-cultural factors that hinder the contribution of women to food security in the Kasena Nankana municipality of the Upper East Region of Ghana. They found that the constraints facing women include their non-involvement in traditional rituals, corruption of women leaders and non-inclusion in the decision-making process. Oguonu (2008) adds that lack of access to needed resources for the execution of projects, discrimination against women, corruption of women leaders and poor education background. All these, apart from corruption of women leaders inhibit women’s efforts.

**Conclusion**

Despite the national, regional and international efforts of governments, institutions, agencies, and bodies towards ensuring gender equality, women continue to be sidelined in
various sectors of development in Ghana and Africa as a whole. Allah-Mensah (2005) and Bishaw (2014) reported that notwithstanding the fact that women constitute the majority of the population of Ghana, there are few women participating in local governance and decision-making structures. The literature revealed that although women in Africa are gradually gaining some leadership positions after long years of discriminatory practices, they are still faced with inequities in community development and discrimination based on their gender (Allah-Mensah, 2005). In Ghana, even though there have been affirmative action directives (such as ensuring that 50% of government appointees are women), little change has occurred in terms of women’s representation over the years. The limited involvement of women in community development sends a signal that women may be marginalized and have limited or unequal access to development resources, management and benefits relative to their male counterparts.

It is evident from the literature reviewed that few studies are available on women’s involvement in community development in Ghana and other parts of Africa. These studies reveal that gender inequality within this context was the result of various forces, including men’s dominance, low level of education, the virility syndrome, lack of confidence, low capacities, cultural belief system and lack of time (Aroge, 2016; Braimah et al., 2014; Esidene & Abdul, 2013; Guiriba, 2013; Ofei-Aboagye, 2000c). These forces largely originate from the structure of the society, and, with accompanying presumptions such as physical and intellectual inadequacy of women and lack of leadership capability. There may be many opportunities for communities to be encouraged to make the cultural shifts necessary to overcome and address the key barriers women face in their efforts to participate in the development agenda of their communities.

Other gaps include a limited number of exploration on the attractiveness of the community development field to women. Some women may be discouraged from being fully
involved in these activities because of their traditional motherly roles. Women may therefore be pushed away from community development activities leaving them to men who may not have any major household commitments apart from regular employment. Furthermore, little mixed method research has been conducted into women’s involvement in community development in Ghana and Africa as a whole. The few available studies were done using either qualitative or quantitative methodology and not mixed methods. A mixed-method investigation of women’s level of participation in community development therefore filled this methodological gap. The next chapter describes the study settings.
Chapter Three: Study Setting

Introduction

This chapter presents the profile of the areas of study. It encompasses issues of physical, demographic, political and economic of the areas of study. Each of these elements is critical in understanding the context within which the investigation was undertaken. It also helps to appreciate the various influences likely to play out with regards to women’s involvement in community development. The study was conducted in Ghana, specifically in the communities of Bolni, Yawhimakrom and Mayera Faase.

Profile of Ghana

Geographically, Ghana is located in Sub-Saharan Africa along the Gulf of Guinea. It shares borders with Burkina Faso to the north, La Cote D’Ivoire to the west, and Togo to the east. It is bounded to the south by the Gulf of Guinea. It is located between latitude 4º and 11º north of the equator. Its climate is warm and humid with an average annual temperature ranging between 26.1ºc and 28.9ºc (MoFA, 2010). It occupies a land area of a little over 238,500 square kilometres (MoFA, 2010). Ghana’s economy is agrarian. Agriculture constitutes about 19% of its GDP and employs about half of the labour force (GSS, 2015). The country is divided into 10 administrative regions.

Historically, Ghana gained independence from British colonial rule in 1957. Before independence, it was known as the Gold Coast (Opoku-Mensah, 2016). The British and other European powers such as the Portuguese, the Danes, and the Dutch, administrated it for over a century. It was proclaimed a British colony in 1874 (Miller, Vandome & McBrewster, 2009). During the colonial period, there were series of fierce physical and intellectual resistances from local communities which resulted in a series of wars including the Sagrenti War of 1874 and the Yaa Asantewaa War of 1901. These wars and nationalist movements led by people like Dr. Kwame Nkrumah led to Ghana’s independence from the British (Miller, Vandome & McBrewster, 2009).

According to the 2010 Population and Housing Census, Ghana has an estimated population of 24,658,823 (Ghana Statistical Service, 2012). With regards to gender distribution, about 51% (12,633,978) of the population is female. The proportion of the population living in rural areas decreased from 56.2% in 2000 to 49.1% in 2010 (GSS, 2012). In the Ghanaian context, most rural residents are poor and to some extent isolated with limited access to services
like health care, education and markets (Atuoye et al., 2015). Ghana is a multi-ethnic nation with a profusion of religious, linguistic and ethnic groups.

Globally, women are underrepresented in both local and national leadership, governance and development (Stevens, 2010; UN Women, 2014) and Ghana is no exception. Women in Ghana have low levels of participation in politics and decision-making roles (Offei-Aboagye, 2000b). The status of women in Ghana is reflected in the number of women in leadership positions as shown in figure 4 below.

![Figure 4. Participation in Local and National Political Positions. Designed by the Author based on data from Government of Ghana, 2017.](image-url)
With regard to this study, Ghana was divided into three zones. These zones include:

- The Northern zone (Northern region, Upper West region and Upper East region).
- Central zone (Brong-Ahafo, Eastern, Ashanti and Volta regions)
- Southern zone (Western, Central and Greater Accra regions).

A region was selected using a simple random sampling technique – the lottery method - from each zone and from each of the selected regions, a community was simple randomly selected. The communities selected for the study were Bolni (Nanumba North district, Northern Region), Yawhimakrom (Sunyani Municipality, Brong-Ahafo Region) and Mayera Faase (Ga West district, Greater Accra region).

**Profile of the Bolni Community**

Bolni is a small community in the Nanumba North District of the Northern Region of Ghana. It is located at the North-Eastern part of Bimbilla, the District capital. The community shares boundaries with four (4) villages: Pusiga to the North, Kariga to the south, Joukamonando to the east and Ganguyili to the west. Bolni was established by Gnansiin Toonja, a great hunter in the 1950s, who migrated with his family from Kpasanjolbu, a rural community in the Saboba District.

The Bolni community is made up of the Kukutiib, Bichamob, Bikutulb and Nankpantiib clans of the Kokomba ethnic group. The village is made up of smaller settlements based on the different constituent clans. The population of the Bolni community is about 1,100 people. The community is made up of Bikpakpaam, the Konkomba people and few Fulanis who serve as herdsmen for the indigenes. The people generally speak Likpakpaln, the Kokomba language.

The community experience a rainfall season from April to October. Rainfall is seasonal and unreliable. Temperature ranges between 21°C - 39°C giving rise to high temperature range.
Bolni is a subsistence farming community with over 95% of the labour force working on farms. They involve in subsistence farming. There is a gender-informed division of labour where crops such as cassava and yam are mostly cultivated by men whilst women mostly cultivate vegetables.

This community is underdeveloped and poor. The standard of living in the community is generally low with no basic amenities. There is no health facility and most of the residents depend on traditional herbal medicines and doulas.

It is societal expectation that members of the community exhibit a high sense of hospitality, cooperation and communal spirit. The people see themselves as one and offer help to one another in times of need and trouble. As a patriarchal society, the men own lands and head all the households. In Bolni, polygyny is acceptable whilst polyandry is objectionable. Formerly, women had no say in decision-making but through modernization and education this has relaxed. However, women are obliged to be submissive and respectful to their husbands.

The Bitindaans (land owners), leaders of the settlements and the family heads constitute the elders and decision-makers of the community. These elders usually make decisions on the developmental concerns of the community. There is an Assembly member and a Unit Committee responsible for liaison between the local community members and the local government unit, the Nanumba North District Assembly.

The main NGO working with women in the community is Grameen Ghana, which seeks to reduce poverty and promote social justice. The main areas of focus of the NGO include micro-credit, food security and nutrition and education. Figure 5 below shows the location of Bolni on the map of the Nanumba North District.
Figure 5. Map of the Nanumba North District Showing the Bolni Community
Profile of Yawhimakrom

Yawhimakrom is a rural community in the Sunyani municipality of the Brong-Ahafo region, lying between latitude 7° 05'N and 7° 20'N, and longitude 2°10'W and 2°30'W. The community shares borders with major settlements such as Kotokrom, Opaniapiakrom, Oldabesim and Mensakrom. The 2010 Population and Housing Census conducted by the Ghana Statistical Service (GSS) estimated the population at 1,554 constituting 1.3% of the Sunyani Municipality’s total population (GSS, 2012). Unlike the national, regional and municipal compositions, the male population is substantially larger than the female population; that is, 810 (52.1%) and 744 (47.9%) respectively in the community (GSS, 2012). The inhabitants of the community are predominantly Akans with the minority ethnic groups being Dagaaba, Wangara, Frafra and Dagomba as well as others. Christianity, Islam and Traditional religion are present in the community with the largest percentage of the population being Christians and the least amount of people following the Traditional religion (GSS, 2012). The Yawhimakrom community was randomly selected for the study out of a list of rural communities in the middle zone. Figure 6 below displays the location of Yawhimakrom in the Sunyani Municipality.
Figure 6. A Map of Yawhimakrom in the Sunyani Municipality
Profile of Mayera Faase

Mayera Faase is a rural community in the Ga West municipality of the Greater Accra region of Ghana. According to oral tradition, during the Bame War of 1829 between the Akwuamus and the Pekis, a member of the Akwamus called Obeng (who was a hunter) went missing. After a thorough search, he was later found settled behind the Nsaki river (the present location of Mayera Faase). The present day Mayera Faase community was named based on this incident. Mayera Faase means “I am lost behind the river”.

The community shares borders with major settlements such as Afiaman to the south, Katapor to the east, Mayera to the north-west, and Edusa to the north-east. It has an estimated population of 813. About 55.3% (453) of the estimated population is female and the rest 44.7% (350) is male. This gives a sex ratio of 1:1.3 males to females. The imbalance is a reflection of a nationwide trend. The need to target women in any development programme in the community can therefore not be over-emphasized.

The community is characterized by semi-equatorial and tropical climates. There are two main seasons - dry and rainy seasons – within a year. Relative humidity is generally high throughout the year (personal conversation). A large proportion of the people in the community are engaged in subsistence farming with the rest engaged in retail and transport operation (“Okada”). Some of the crops they produce are cassava, plantain, sugar cane, garden eggs, cocoyam and palm fruits. However, due to a paradigm shift, farming is in decline, with more youth becoming artisans such as carpenters, masons and welders.

Politically, Mayera Faase falls within the Mayera Zonal council in the Ga West municipality. The community is not left out in the decentralization process. The community therefore enjoys the services of a unit committee, an assembly member, a chief, and a member of
parliament. With regards to the decentralization system, there have been five (5) assembly members in the community and six (6) members of parliament from the constituency since 1994. Of these, only two have been women. Traditional authority within the community exerts huge power. The Chief constitutes the highest traditional authority in the community. Allegiance of the people to traditional authority is much stronger, and as a result plays a critical role in facilitating the initiation, design and implementation of development initiatives through the organization of the local people.

The community relies on both communal labour and the municipal assembly to ensure the setting up of community development initiatives and ensuring their completion. Table 1 shows the recent community development projects in the community and figure 7 the map of Mayera Faase:

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community Activities</th>
<th>How they were Implemented</th>
<th>By Who?</th>
<th>When</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Public toilet</td>
<td>Community mobilization</td>
<td>Community</td>
<td>2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electrification</td>
<td>Community mobilization</td>
<td>Community/Government</td>
<td>2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clinic</td>
<td>Community/Government</td>
<td>Community/Government</td>
<td>2010</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 7. Map of Mayera Faase in the Ga West Municipality
Conclusion

Development in rural communities in Ghana is constrained by some socio-cultural, economic and geographical elements. The majority of rural residents depend on subsistence farming. These socio-cultural, economic and geographical forces slow down development. In order for development to be streamlined, there is the need for all stakeholders (the government, NGOs, CBOs, CSOs, community members – males and females) to strive to utilize the potential of every member of the community. This makes efforts (such as research, and gender sensitive development projects) towards improving the participation of women in development processes a necessity. The subsequent chapter encompasses the methods used for this study.
Chapter Four: Research Design and Methodology

Art and science have their meeting point in method. (Edward G. Bulwer-Lytton)

Introduction

This chapter is designed to discuss the research design and methodology. The first section constitutes a reflection upon the research framework, research design, population and sample size. The second section explains the field research processes, emphasizing the sampling design, data collection approach, instruments and methods employed. This section also illuminates the data analysis procedures and ethical considerations.

The study uses a mixed research approach to address the main aims of the study, namely to 1) assess how socio-economic status of women influence the community development process in rural Ghana, 2) examine the experiences of women in the community development context in rural Ghana, 3) examine the obstacles which hinder women’s participation, and 4) examine the avenues through which women may increase their visibility and participation in community development initiatives.

Research Framework or Paradigm

In the background to this study, I proposed that discrimination against women within the context of community development negatively impacts women as individuals, and the community at large. It is therefore necessary to sample the views of women in line with the critical realist paradigm. Critical realism is considered an implicit alternative to positivism and interpretivism (Bhaskar, & Danermark, 2006; Danermark, Ekstrom, Jakobsen, & Karlsson, 2002). It challenges the assumptions underpinning empiricism and interpretivism. Ontologically, it considers reality beyond what is apparent, discernible or experienced. Both the natural and social worlds are external to and independent of our perceptions, thoughts and understandings.
about them (Collier, 1994; Danermark et al., 2002). Thus, reality is independent of the social actor’s thoughts, theories, constructions, response or impressions.

Epistemologically, knowledge is considered to be of two sides – intransitive and transitive dimensions of knowledge in the world (Bhaskar, 1998). The intransitive phenomena are not human inventions independent of the researcher’s perception and knowledge about it. They are considered as “structures, mechanisms and real things, events, possibilities and processes of the world” (Bhaskar 1975, p. 22). The transitive objects of knowledge on the other hand, are personal and invented by humans or subjected to human activity (for instance, models, theories, paradigms and methods). This dimension of knowledge is subject to human existence. The differences between the researcher’s thought about the cause of a phenomenon, and what transpires between an event and its causal mechanisms (that are probably imperceptible) constitute the main focus of researchers who adopt critical realism (Bhaskar, 1998). According to Layder (1993)

Put very simply, a central feature of realism is its attempt to preserve a ‘scientific’ attitude towards social analysis at the same time as recognizing the importance of actors’ meanings and in some way incorporating them in research. As such, a key aspect of the realist project is a concern with causality and the identification of causal mechanisms in social phenomena in a manner quite unlike the traditional positivist search for causal generalizations. (p. 3)

Based on the critical realist framework, I consider the reality of discrimination against women in community development in Ghana to be in three domains: 1) the empirical; 2) actual; and 3) the real. The empirical domain constitutes the direct and indirect experiences of women. This may not cover all events since some events are indiscernible hence the need to consider the
real domain. This domain explains why the barriers to women’s participation in community
development occur. That is, the experiences of women or the noticeable pattern of treatment
given to women within the context of community development in rural Ghana go beyond what is
experienced or noticeable. A distinctive tenet of the reality (gender inequality) is that “there is an
ontological gap between what’ women ‘experience and understand, what really happens, and –
most important – the deep dimension where the mechanisms are which produce the events”
(Danermark et al., 2002, p. 39). Understanding the experiences of women and the underlying
mechanisms offers the opportunity to have a comprehensive understanding of how to transform
the conditions of women. For instance, women may be experiencing and having a decipherment
of gender inequality; nevertheless, critical realist ontology offers the fortuity of satisfactorily
examining such experiences within ‘the domain of the real’ and to accept as well as unearth the
unseen mechanisms operating to produce them. This paradigm has pushed me beyond the idea of
hard determinism and ignited my quest to understand and explain the generative mechanisms and
the resulting tendencies. In this study, I move beyond only exploring what can be empirically
experienced, and investigate, identify, and describe the unobservable, structures and mechanisms
that have fundamental control to generate effects (Bhaskar, 1975, 1989).

Social phenomena such as discrimination against women within the context of
community development are concept-dependent and need interpretive understanding
(interpretivism) as well as causal explanation. Therefore, this research and its methodology focus
on evidence and meaning (description as well as explanation) in order to be able to unearth the
causal mechanisms of the phenomenon under study. The question is “why measure or explore
the discriminatory experiences of women if we do not know how it occurs in the first instance?”
To investigate gender inequality within the context of community development in Ghana
requires a critical realist paradigm. The critical realist paradigm is compatible with mixed research methods (Craig & Bigby, 2015). Combining the philosophical underpinnings and research goals of the proposed study, it seemed appropriate to use the mixed research method design to investigate women’s involvement in community development in Ghana.

The process of researching into the challenges faced by women adopted by this study goes beyond the concrete empirical phenomenon of gender inequality in community development context towards its generative/ causative mechanisms. As a social work researcher researching on an open system, I believe that the persistent gender inequalities in community development contexts in Ghana should be explored and understood as manifestations of a number of interrelating and conjointly fundamental mechanisms related to individual, family and societal structures. The focus and concentration of this project is therefore narrowed down on five central research problems:

1. The level of participation of women in community development in rural Ghana,
2. The barriers to women’s participation in community development in rural Ghana,
3. The factors that predict women’s increased participation in community development,
4. The way community-level variables (cultural norms, socio-economic and politico-cultural factors) act as barriers or opportunities for women to engage in community development processes,
5. The experiences of women in the community development context in rural Ghana.

Each of these research problems draws attention to a number of potential mechanisms that seek to explain the condition of women in the community development context at different levels of analysis being it micro, mezo and macro. These levels of analytical perspectives are presented in figure 8:
According to Layder (1993) the research map is meant to “convey the ‘textured’ and interwoven nature of different layers and dimensions of social reality” (p. 7). The adoption of this research map is to provide a layered model to tie together the macro, mezo and micro levels and dimensions of gender inequality within the community development settings in Ghana. Table 2 below shows how the collected data relate to the components of the research map of Layder.

Figure 8. Research map. Adapted from “New strategies in social research”, by D. Layder, 1993, Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Element</th>
<th>Focus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CONTEXT</td>
<td>Macro social forms, e.g. gender, national culture, national economic situation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SETTING</td>
<td>Immediate environment of social activity, e.g. organization, department, team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SITUATED ACTIVITY</td>
<td>Dynamics of &quot;face-to-face&quot; interaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SELF</td>
<td>Biographical experience and social involvements</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: How the collected data relate to the components of the research map of Layder.
Table 2

*Types of data and Layder’s Elements*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elements</th>
<th>Qualitative</th>
<th>Quantitative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Context</td>
<td>Interviews – community leaders and organizational heads</td>
<td>Survey – Perceptions of women’s roles in community development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Setting</td>
<td>Interviews – community leaders and organizational heads</td>
<td>Survey – Civic Engagement Scale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self</td>
<td>Interviews – female community members</td>
<td>Survey – Socio-Economic Status Scale, Civic Engagement Scale and the Perceptions of women’s roles in community development</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Through the interviews with community leaders and organizational heads, this study sought to illuminate the paths that institutions and local governments are embarking on to address barriers to women’s participation in community development activities. This was aimed at understanding the value given to issues of gender equality in the community development context. This links up with Layder’s (1993) “context” (“the wider macro social forms that provide the more remote environment of social activity”) (p. 9). It should be noted that ‘there is no clear border between setting and context” (Carlsson, 2003, p. 6). The analysis of the Civic Engagement Scale and the interviews with the community leaders relate to the research element, “setting”. This study draws on the interviews and the survey to identify societal and institutional macro-level determinants (values and culture, power and authority within the communities) of the level of involvement of women in community development activities.
With a desire to reveal women’s thoughts for or against participating in community development activities, situates itself in what Layder refers to as “self”. This level focuses on how “an individual is affected by and responds to social situations” (Carlsson 2003, p. 6). This throws light on the link between the “biological experiences and the social involvements” (Layder, 1993, p. 9) of women and how that influences their level of involvement in community development activities. This is achieved through the analysis of the interviews from the women community members and the survey data.

Research Design

The study employed the mixed research method aimed at understanding the intricacies of women’s involvement in community development initiatives. According to Creswell and Plano Clark (2007)

Mixed methods research is a research design with philosophical assumptions as well as methods of inquiry. As a methodology, it involves philosophical assumptions that guide the direction of the collection and analysis of data and the mixture of qualitative and quantitative data in a single study or series of studies. Its central premise is that the use of quantitative and qualitative approaches in combination provides a better understanding of research problems than either approach alone. (p. 5)

I combined both qualitative and quantitative investigative perspectives and approaches in the investigation of the subject matter. I specifically adopted the “concurrent triangulation” mixed methods design (Creswell, 2003, p. 217). Quantitative and qualitative data were gathered concurrently during a single phase of the study. Analysis of the two data sets was conducted separately and the results were considered together during the data interpretation stage to assess
for confluence, divergence, incongruity or pertinency of the results from the two differing sources of data. The concurrent triangulation approach adopted is shown in the flowchart below:

![Flowchart of the Basic Procedures of the Concurrent Triangulation Design](chart.jpg)


The intent of using the concurrent triangulation mixed method design was to develop a more comprehensive understanding of the intricacies of women’s involvement in community development by obtaining different but complementary data. Mixed methods research is expected to offer a worthwhile opportunity to study and analyze broadly the values, principles and other societal or community level forces that determine the position of women within the context of community development. Creswell (2003) adds that the adoption of mixed research methods ensures the integration of the strengths of both qualitative methods (in-depth, contextualized, and natural setting) and quantitative methods (large sample, and more efficient
extrapolative and predictive power). The basic rationale for adopting this method was to amply capture in-depth information and trends of the subject matter under study. The integration of both quantitative and qualitative results at the interpretation phase produced a more far-reaching analysis and “strengthen the knowledge claim of the study” (Creswell, 2003, p. 217).

Table 3

Summary of the Adopted Concurrent Triangulation Mixed Research Design

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Key Tenets</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Level of Interaction</td>
<td>The basic logic of this approach necessitates independence of methods through data collection and analysis but interactive during the interpretation phase.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Relative Priority</td>
<td>Priority was given to both forms of data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Timing</td>
<td>Data gathering was done in a single phase concurrently</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 4   | Point of interface and strategies | Multi-level model was adopted.  
• Quantitative (survey) – Community level (188 surveys)  
• Qualitative – (interviews) – Female community Leaders and organizational heads and female community members (12 interviews) | Data Collection | Analysis | Interpretation |
|     |                                | Separate Analysis | Compare and combine results from both methods |

**Population and Sample Size**

The research included women in rural communities in Ghana. The choice of women was based on the fact that women were able to provide the needed information on their experiences in the community development context.
Qualitative. The sample size for the qualitative part of the study was twelve (12). The twelve (12) respondents included (5) key informants – female officials working in NGOs and CBOs, the department of community development and female community leaders, and seven (7) women from selected communities. The key informants were women who were or had engaged in community development. This sample size was appropriate because of the time consuming and labor-intensive nature of qualitative research. Again, the sample size was large enough to ensure that most of the perceptions and experiences of women concerning their involvement in community development were unearthed, but at the same time manageable.

Quantitative. With regard to the quantitative method, a sample size of two hundred and ten (210) was used. The two hundred and ten (210) respondents were women from Bolni, Yawhimakrom and Mayera Faase communities. The choice of this sample size was to obtain more comprehensive data from the study population to enhance generalizability of the findings. The level of expected variability and unpredictability in the population influenced the selection of this sample size (Khan, 2012). This sample size facilitated greater extrapolative and predictive power to reduce the probability a Type II error in the testing of the hypotheses (McCabe & Moore, 2003). That is, the sample size was large enough to detect significant effect or differences.

Community Entry. The fieldwork began in August 2017 in Ghana. Due to the pre-established contacts and the arrangements made (the recruitment of peer interviewers) through African Rights Initiative International (ARIII) – local NGO whose areas of focus included women and children of rural areas across Ghana- there was only a two-day break time in the training for the peer interviewers and the data collection. The Executive Director of ARIII was my primary
local contact. He recruited nine (9) of the field officers of the NGO as Peer Interviewers and Research Assistants (RA).

The training for the peer interviewers and the RAs was done over the course of four (4) days. Through this training, the peer interviewers were familiarized with the research instruments - survey questionnaire and the interview guide. There were role plays of the interview process in the various local dialects – Likpakpaln, Twi and Ga. This helped in translating the questions into the local dialects to safeguard reliability and quality in translation. The role-play also helped in enhancing their interviewing skills and techniques as well as their adherence to Wilfrid Laurier University’s Research Ethics guidelines.

I initially planned to move to the field with the peer interviewers on their first days of interviews, but unfortunately this was not possible due to how dispersed the study communities were from each other. I therefore tasked the peer interviewers to go through the necessary community entry processes. Before the research, the chiefs and leaders of the selected communities – Bolni, Yawhimakrom and Mayera Faase - were contacted for their approval. As custom demands, drinks were presented to the chiefs to inform them of the project and to seek their approval. All the community leaders gave approval for the study to be conducted in their communities.

**Sampling Design**

Sampling is of fundamental importance to the quality of information generated in an empirical study. According to Ross (2005) sampling has the potential of reducing the costs involved in data collection, its handling and analysis; human resource requirements for the fieldwork; and promoting a high level of accuracy of information. Thus, the impracticability of census survey as well as increased level of accuracy of information are the necessary forces
behind sampling (Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias, 1992). The realization of these advantages is however based on the accurate representativeness of the sample in terms of the relevant attributes of the population. With regard to this study, there were different categories of people within the study population from whom data were needed to address the research problem. I therefore sampled these segments separately (not combining them into one population) to give a fair representation of all the groups.

In order to select the required sample and minimize sampling error, both non-probability (for the qualitative) and probability (for the quantitative) sampling designs were used in recruiting the respondents for the study. I specifically made use of the multi-stage and purposive sampling techniques to select the respondents for the study.

**Qualitative sampling design.** Purposive sampling technique was used to select the key informants and the women needed for the qualitative aspect of the study. The key informants were selected according to the following criteria:

1. The respondent had to be in positions of power and authority in the community,
2. The respondents had to have worked or stayed in the community for more than 5 years,
3. The respondent had to be well acquainted with the community development process of the community.
4. The respondent had to be knowledgeable of the culture of the people

Employing purposive sampling technique offered the opportunity to select participants based on the researcher’s judgment and comprehension of the characteristics of the study population. That is, these participants were regarded as having adequate information on the research objectives, satisfy the characteristics of the phenomenon under investigation and deemed capable of providing answers to questions that were asked.
Kumekpor (2002) indicated that for a researcher to be able to effectively employ the purposive sampling technique, judgment and adequate knowledge about a sample unit that can provide the needed information for the attainment of the objectives of the study is very vital. Since this study seeks to explore the levels of involvement of women in community development activities, purposive sampling technique is deemed appropriate to select the officials of CBOs and NGOs who could provide adequate information for the attainment of the objectives of the study. Thus, the purposive sampling technique was preferred because it gave me the opportunity to select participants who fall within the category of respondents needed and have in-depth knowledge of the study matter.

**Quantitative sampling design.** With respect to the selection of the participants for the survey, multistage sampling technique was used. In the first stage, the regions of Ghana were sampled using simple random sampling technique. A simple random sampling technique (lottery method) was used to select three (3) regions of Ghana. The country was divided into three zones. These zones included:

- The Northern zone (Northern region, Upper West region and Upper East region).
- Central zone (Brong-Ahafo, Eastern, Ashanti and Volta regions)
- Southern zone (Western, Central and Greater Accra regions).

The zoning was based on the similarities in culture (language, system of inheritance). Each of the regions was written on pieces of paper and kept in three boxes representing the three zones. I shook the box to ensure that the papers mix very well and randomly selected a region from each of the zones. Through this, the Northern, Brong-Ahafo and Greater Accra regions were simple randomly selected.
In the second stage, the units sampled were communities in the three selected regions. This was done purposively. The inclusion criteria included being a rural community – a community with a population less than 5,000 (GSS, 2012) and with people of all social and economic classes. At this stage, Bolni, Yawhimakrom and Mayera Faase were selected. In the third stage, the units of sampling were the homes/households from which women were sampled for the survey. The homes were selected using systematic sampling technique. Each house in the selected communities was given a number. I selected a random starting point and fixed a sampling interval by dividing the total number of homes by 70 (the desired number of women in each community). Based on the random starting point and the fixed sampling interval, 70 homes were selected and in each of the selected homes a woman was selected and completed a survey. Random sampling technique was used to sample 70 women from each of the communities for the study. The peer interviewers approached the other women in their homes to seek their consent to participate in the study. In total, 221 women were approached and eleven (11) declined. Of the 210 women who agreed to take part in the survey, only 188 completed the survey (refer to the response rate section for details). Women who volunteered to be interviewed were surveyed. The use of posters and letters for the women in the communities was not feasible because most of the people in the communities could neither read nor write.

**Operationalization of Constructs**

**Socio-economic status: Independent variable.** For this study, socio-economic status as a construct refers to the position occupied by a woman, her household or family within a prevailing classification of the hierarchical socio-economic structure. It had a combination of social and economic variables such as income, occupation, and education. This construct was measured based on Kuppuswamy’s Socio-economic Status (SES) Scale. The SES scale and its
classification are presented in appendix G. In order to measure the internal consistency (how closely related the set of items in the scale are as a group) of the SES, I used the Cronbach alpha. That is, Cronbach alpha was used as the measure of scale reliability of the items. The SES scale had a Cronbach alpha level of .71 (See appendix J). The scale was satisfactory because the alpha falls within .70 and .95 (Tavakol and Dennick, 2011).

**Community development participation: Dependent variable.** The construct “community development participation” is the dependent variable. This refers to the extent to which women actively engage in or assume responsibility for diagnosing community needs and influencing or sharing control over the direction, execution and evaluation of community development decisions, resources, projects, and programmes that affect the quality of their lives rather than merely receiving a share of the programme benefits. Two indicators of women’s participation covering a wide range of attributes and beliefs were comprehensively measured. The domains or indicators included attitude/interest and active participation.

1. **Attitudes/interest** refers to the woman’s level of interest in, and beliefs about the nature of community development activities.

2. **Active participation** refers to behaviours of and roles played by women within the context of community development. That is, it captures the extent of women’s ability to participate in the initiation, development, implementation and evaluation of community development activities.

In total 17 questions were used to measure the construct ‘community development participation’. With regard to the measurement of this construct, I developed a 17-item Community Development Participation Scale (CDPS) for use specifically in Ghana. According to DeVellis (2016) a new scale must be grounded in either an extant theory or existing literature
related to the phenomenon or construct to be measured. In the process of the development of this scale, I first conceptualized the construct to be measured which was level of women’s participation in community development (the process of providing opportunities for women to share control over, engage in and influence community development initiatives, resources, and decisions, as well as to be accorded equitably share of the outcome of community development programmes). I also defined the objective of the scale (to measure the level of involvement of women, defined as the ability to contribute to and influence initiatives, decisions and resources within the context of community development), outlined the behaviours and outcomes to be predicted by the scale. The purpose of this composite scale was to measure the level of participation of women in community development. The development of a composite scale to measure this construct was borne out of the following challenges:

1. The construct is too complex and multidimensional to be captured by a single item and,
2. The unavailability of a scale that precisely measures the construct in question.

Following a review of relevant community participation literature, I generated an item pool of 37. Based on review of literature and other existing scales such as the community participation scale (Lehman, 1999), community and socio-political participation scale (Moreno-Jimenez, Rios Rodriguez & Martin, 2013), socially responsible leadership scale (Tyree, 1998), and the participatory behaviour scale (Talo & Mannarini, 2015), I increased the item pool to 44. Through peer review, I finally reduced the items to 33. The items were at first grouped into four conceptual sections or domains: attitudes and perceived benefits (8 items), active participation (11 items), Influence/power (6 items), and access (8 items). Each statement was scored on a 5-point scale (1= very much disagree to 5 = very much agree). The domains were based on the community development and participation literature as well as existing scales measuring
community participation (e.g., Lehman, 1999; Moreno-Jimenez, Rios Rodriguez & Martin, 2013; Talo & Mannarini, 2015).

The Community Development Participation Scale (CDPS) was a composite of two participation indicators geared towards getting a comprehensive feature of women’s level of participation in community development. The level of participation was measured on the basis of the total scores of the two domains/scales. The mean total scores of the attitude subscale = 31.25, active participation subscale = 27.84 and CDPS = 59.09. The CDPS total score varied from 17 to 85, with 17 being the lowest score and 85, the highest score.

The psychometric test I performed to determine the psychometric properties as well as the validity of the scale was Principal Component Analysis (PCA). A PCA with a direct oblimin rotation was conducted to examine the factorial structure and validity of the 17 items. The PCA with a direct oblimin rotation was used because it allowed the factors to correlate. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure verified the sampling adequacy for the analysis. According to Hutcheson and Sofroniou (1999 as cited in Field, 2009), KMO “values between 0.5 and 0.7 are mediocre, values between 0.7 and 0.8 are good, values between 0.8 and 0.9 are great and values above 0.9 are superb” (p.659). For these data, the KMO value was .82 (see Appendix K), which falls into the range of being great, so I am confident that the sample size was adequate and as such the factor analysis was appropriate. Again, Bartlett's test of sphericity $\chi^2 (136) = 846.68, p < .01$, indicated that correlations between items were sufficiently large for PCA. An initial analysis was run to obtain eigenvalues for each component in the data. Four components had eigenvalues over Kaiser’s criterion of 1 and in combination explained 54.50% of the variance in scores. The method I used in determining the number of dimensions or factors to be extracted was a scree plot (see appendix K) generated through the PCA. A scree plot is “a graph of the magnitude of
each eigenvalue (vertical axis) plotted against their ordinal numbers (horizontal axis)” (Mertler & Vannatta, 2005, p. 250). In order to determine the appropriate number of components, I looked at the point of inflexion and only factors left to this point were retained in the final analysis (see appendix K). The scree plot clearly showed an inflexion that justified retaining only two components (Components 1 and 2). The factor loadings also suggested these two dimensions: 1) attitude/interest (8 items) and 2) active participation (9 items) (see Appendix K).

An item analysis was also conducted for the CDPS to determine how its component items considerably contributed to its total score. Each item on the CDPS was correlated with its own total score and with the scale (See Appendix L). The mean of all of these correlations of the attitude subscale provided a content validity coefficient of .46. The mean of all the correlations of the active participation subscale provided a content validity coefficient of .53. These results provided evidence of acceptable dimensionality, construct and factorial validity for the CDPS.

With regards to the reliability of the CDPS, the attitude subscale had an alpha level of .73, and the active participation component with an alpha of .79. The CDPS total score had a Cronbach alpha level of .80 (See appendix J). The scale was found to have an acceptable internal consistency. According to Tavakol and Dennick (2011) the suitable alpha ranges from 0.70 to 0.95.

**Civic engagement: Independent variable.** The actions, beliefs and inactions of women that make them connected to public life, for instance communal life, politics, election, statecrafts and social issues (Doolittle & Faul, 2013), are the key determinants of civic engagement. The demonstration of civic engagement is expressed through two domains - attitudes and/or behaviours (Doolittle & Faul, 2013). The attitude domain includes women’s idiosyncratic beliefs and hunches about their connection as well as involvement in their community and their
perceived ability to make a difference in that community. Civic behaviour on the other hand involves the actions that women take to actively attempt to engage and make a difference in their community (Doolittle & Faul, 2013).

I adopted the 14-item Civic Engagement Scale (CES) by Doolittle and Faul (2013) to measure the participants’ civic engagement. The CES is made up of two subscales – behaviour and attitude. According to Doolittle and Faul (2013) the Cronbach’s alpha levels of the attitude and behaviour subscales are 0.91 and 0.85 respectively. Doolittle and Faul validated the scale on a Western sample. Due to the Western biased nature of the scale, validity and reliability (as it reflects the Ghanaian context) of this scale was determined through psychometric tests conducted after the data collection (see the validity and reliability section and appendix J). The attitude component of the CES had a Cronbach’s alpha level of .76 while the behaviour component had a Cronbach alpha level of .75. The CES had a Cronbach alpha level of .77, indicating acceptable internal consistency as the alpha fell within 0.70 and 0.95 (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011).

Data Collection Method

I made use of both qualitative and quantitative research methods to gather data from the respondents for this study. Data for this study were derived from a primary source. The primary source of data for the study comprised field data gathered from the respondents. Primary data are the kind of data collected directly from the field under the control and supervision of the researcher (Panneerselvam, 2011). The instrument for the collection of the quantitative data was a questionnaire comprised of a series of scales. The questionnaire was administered through face-to-face interviewing (for those who could neither read nor write) and self-completion of a paper copy (for those who could read and write).
The qualitative data on the other hand were gathered using a list of questions for in-depth interviews. The in-depth interviews were conducted and audiotaped by peer or insider interviewers. This kind of interview is diversely referred to as insider-outsider interview (Ganga & Scott, 2006; Mercer, 2007), and privileged access interviews (Elliot, Watson & Harries, 2002). In the selection of the peer interviewers, African Rights Initiative International (ARII) through its Executive Director identified some women volunteers of ARII in the various communities who were capable of serving in this position. The Executive Director of ARII was my primary local contact. He recruited nine (9) of the volunteers of the NGO for me as peer interviewers and Research Assistants (RA).

For the purpose of this study, peers refer to women who had lived in Bolni, Yawhimakrom and Mayera Faase, had significant social connections and had ready access to women in the communities. The peer interviewers were fluent in the local language as well as English and had basic knowledge and experience of research. The peer interviewers translated the interview guides into the local dialects of the people for respondents who neither understood nor spoke English. They also transcribed the audiotaped interviews into word documents. I paid them 120 Ghana cedis ($35.10 CAN) per transcript.

These female peer interviewers made accessibility to ‘local knowledge’, personal experiences and ‘interpretations’ easier (Byrne, Brugha, Clarke, Lavelle & McGarvey, 2015, p. 2). Again, the choice of female peer interviewers was influenced by my quest to minimize power imbalances. This made the respondents more relaxed and let their guards down since they were chatting with their peers instead of a male researcher (an outsider). This increased the

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16 A local Non-Governmental Organization that works in the rural communities in Ghana. The researcher is the Director of Research, Innovation and Development of this local NGO
participants’ comfort and reduced socially biased responses throughout the interview process and provided in-depth information about their real-life experiences (Byrne, et al., 2015). The peer interviewers or fieldworkers included three (3) women each from each of the selected communities – Bolni, Yawhimakrom and Mayera Faase. Of the nine (9) peer interviewers, six worked on both the interview (2 interviews each) and survey while the remaining three (3) worked solely on the survey. The peer interviewers conducted a maximum of two interviews each. The peer interviewers already had gained the trust of the participants since they worked with the women as field officers. This rapport which had already been established over the years with the participants smoothed the class and educational differences between the participants and the peer interviewers. Apart from the rapport, the peer interviewers dressed in the same way as the local people in order not to make apparent class differences during the interviews and also to make the participants feel more comfortable.

Before their first interviews, I had a 15-minute meeting with the peer interviewers (through phone with those who were at Bolni and Yawhimakrom and face-to-face with those who were at Mayera Faase) to go over the ethical guidelines with them and address any other questions they had. After the interview we had 30-minute debriefing sessions where I was briefed on all that went on during the interviews.

The interviews with the women and the female community leaders were conducted in their homes while those with key informants were done in their offices. Interestingly, the men were willing to allow their wives to participate in the interviews. Most of the time when the women were not available at home at the scheduled time for the interviews, their husbands sent for them for the peer interviewers. The interviews varied in length but took on average approximately between an hour to an hour and half. All interviews were audio recorded with the
oral consent of the respondents. The peer interviewers translated and transcribed the audio recordings into Microsoft word documents.

The data collection was planned to take place over the course of a month. However, despite the number of peer interviewers and RAs, it took about two (2) months (approximately August - October, 2017). The collection of the quantitative data was done within a month (August 10 – 29, 2017 while the qualitative data collection took two (2) months (August – October, 2017).

Training for Peer Interviewers and Research Assistants

A four-day workshop was organized on effective interviewing skills and techniques prior to the data collection phase for the peer interviewers. This workshop focused on helping the peer interviewers acquire the required research skills as well as getting familiar with the study, ethical considerations, the informed consent and the research instruments. This made them feel more comfortable in the recruitment of participants and the conduct of the interviews. There were role plays of the interview process in the various local dialects – Likpakpaln, Twi and Ga. This helped in translating the questions into the local dialects to safeguard reliability and quality in translation. The role-play also helped in enhancing their interviewing skills and techniques as well as their adherence to Wilfrid Laurier University’s Research Ethics guidelines. After the workshop, each peer interviewer was given an audio recorder, interview guides and a notebook in which they took notes during the interview process. The interviewees were compensated 50 Ghana cedis ($14.54) each. This was given to them after the interview to prevent any form of influence on their responses during the interview.
**Data Collection Instruments**

I used two data collection instruments for the study. These included the questionnaire, and semi-structured interview guide.

**Semi-Structured interview.** I used a semi-structured interview guide to gather the qualitative data from key informants and female community members to complement the data that were collected through the questionnaire. I structured the interview guide based on the objectives of the study.

**Quantitative questionnaire.** I used a structured questionnaire for the collection of the quantitative data for the study. I designed the questionnaire to identify and describe the perceptions of community members about the level of women’s participation in community development in rural Ghana. I segmented the questionnaire into four sections (see appendix F).

**Perception of women’s roles in community development.** This part of the questionnaire comprised a 14-item scale, perception of women’s roles in community development, capturing the socio-political context of women’s participation in community development. Participants were asked to rate their agreement to statements based on a 5-point Likert scale (1=Strongly agree to 5=Strongly disagree). I developed the items in this scale based on a review of the relevant literature on women’s roles in community development. In the process of developing this scale, an item pool of 31 was generated. I first reduced these items to 23 items and finally to 14 items based on relevant literature on women’s role in community development. Item revision was carried out to reduce redundant and unclear items. In this process, I maintained items that captured leadership roles, participation, cultural values, barriers and measures to support women. For instance, the item, “The traditional leaders have a positive view about women’s participation in activities in this community” was maintained. Apart from the Likert scale items, the other
questions in the section were both closed and open ended. The close-ended questions helped to reduce the influence of the interviewer. The open-ended questions also allowed a greater depth of responses and invited respondents to give authentic information to a question since no clues were given. The use of open-ended questions also supplied the respondents with a context for answers while offering little restriction on them. The open-ended questions as observed by Burns (2000) helped in facilitating richness and intensity of response (p. 572).

The remaining three sections of the questionnaire were the demographics (using the SES scale), the CES and the CDPS. These sections and the scales were discussed extensively under the operationalisation of constructs section on pages 114 to 118.

The content and face validity of the questionnaire were determined by the literature review and my dissertation advisory committee. I piloted the questionnaire with two of my colleagues to test whether the questions had the earmarks of relevance, clarity and unambiguity. This experiment supported the clarity of the questions on the questionnaire. The construct validity of the questionnaire was determined by its linkage to the theories (African womanist theory, gender discourses in Ghana and gender mainstreaming) that underlie the study. The questionnaire was submitted to my dissertation advisory committee, who examined the ability of the questions to address the constructs being researched and whether the scopes of the questions were adequate.

Response Rate

The final quantitative analysis included 188 discrete participant survey records. Two hundred and ten surveys – 70 to each of the three randomly sampled communities - were to be administered to female community members in the of the Bolni, Yawhimakrom and Mayera Faase communities. One hundred and eighty-eight (188) completed surveys were returned. Nine
(9) additional surveys were returned that were not considered useable because they were not appropriately completed with at times about 60 to 70% of the questions partially complete. The response rate was 89.52%. The response rate for the study was considered adequate given that a response rate of 70 - 80% is common and acceptable for a paper survey (Fincham, 2008, Creswell, 2008, Neuman, 2000). Of the 188 surveys, only 15 were self-administered, the rest were administered in a face-to-face approach. The table below shows the response rate distribution by the research communities:

Table 4
Response Rate Distribution by Research Community

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community</th>
<th>Number of Questionnaires Returned</th>
<th>Response Rate (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bolni</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yawhimakrom</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>77.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mayera Faase</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>98.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Qualitative - Trustworthiness of the data

Credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability are the main trustworthiness criteria used by researchers for qualitative research irrespective of their research paradigm (Guba & Lincoln, 1982; Schwandt, Lincoln, & Guba, 2007).

Credibility. Credibility refers to the confidence that the research data and findings demonstrate the story or experiences of the respondents (Macnee & McCabe, 2008). Graneheim & Lundman (2004) add that research findings must represent the correct interpretation of the respondents’ original perspective. In order for me to establish rigour in the investigation, I adopted strategies such as peer debriefing (Pitney & Parker, 2009), triangulation (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007) and member checking (Guba, 1981; Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007).
Peer debriefing. I sought support from my dissertation advisory committee members to provide me with scholarly guidance. The feedback from them assisted me to improve the quality of the study findings. I also presented the findings to my peers during the report writing stage in order to receive comments from them. I gave three (3) transcripts to three (3) of my PhD colleagues to code a transcript each. The coded transcripts were returned to me through emails before the end of October, 2017. Thus, I involved the perceptions from my Dissertation Advisory Committee members and colleague postgraduate students in developing the conclusion of the study (Bitsch, 2005).

Triangulation. In order for me to “obtain corroborating evidence” (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007, p. 239) and establish the integrity of the respondents’ responses, I used the informants technique of triangulation (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007). That is, the peer interviewers interviewed key informants from different organizations (NGOs, CBOs, and CSOs) and female community leaders. This provided an opportunity for me to corroborate their individual experiences and perspectives against others. As stated by Shenton (2004), “rich picture of the attitudes, needs or behaviour of those under scrutiny may be constructed based on the contributions of a range of people” (p. 66). In short, I corroborated the experiences and perspectives of the female community members with that of the key informant in order to establish the integrity of their responses.

Member Checking. Another strategy I adopted to improve the quality of the qualitative data was member checking. I provided the respondents with the opportunity to confirm whether the data and the findings of the study reflected what they wanted to put across or not. I provided the opportunity for the participants to provide opinions on the findings. I conducted member checking (Anney, 2014, Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007) activities through the peer interviewers in
the study communities. As part of the member checking process, I sent four of the individual transcripts to four of the key informants to examine their transcripts before the analysis of the data. All the four received the transcripts in person through the peer interviewers. Only four transcripts were sent out for member checking because during the interviews only those respondents agreed to examine or see the transcripts. The rough drafts of the qualitative findings were sent to the peer interviewers on November 15, 2017 for the respondents to examine them. I received an audio recorded feedback from the respondents after the peer interviewers had a discussion with them. With regards to the feedback on the individual transcripts, three of the respondents had no questions while the remaining one wanted to share her experiences after the interview. The peer interviewers could not collect this information because the member checking process was not to collect further data. The member checking meeting as a group yielded a great response. Only three people attended this meeting. At this meeting (November 21, 2017), all the three respondents were happy that their challenges were highlighted by the study and recommended a presentation of the findings to the elders of the communities when the report is complete. These helped me to include the voices of respondents in the data analysis and interpretation. As posited by Anney (2014) member checking helps in “controlling the obliteration and biases of inquirer during the analysis and interpretation of the results” (p. 10).

**Dependability and confirmability.** In order to address dependability and confirmability concerns of the qualitative findings, I involved the peer interviewers in evaluating the interpretation of the findings. As indicated by Tobin and Begley (2004), qualitative researchers must ensure that their findings, conclusions and recommendations are adequately supported by the data collected from the respondents. I also established dependability using peer examination (Schwandt et al., 2007). I have discussed my research processes and findings with several of my
colleagues who have experience of qualitative research and mixed research method design. They provided me with feedback on the research process as well as my findings. These feedbacks have enhanced the dependability of my qualitative findings.

Confirmability on the other hand was established through an audit trail (Bowen, 2009). That is, I have accounted for “all the research decisions and activities to show how the data were collected, recorded and analyzed” (Anney 2014, p. 278). I am keeping the raw data from the interviews for three years for the crosschecking of the investigative process. I also had a journal with all of the codes, categories and themes on my computer that shows how I analyzed my qualitative data (see Appendix M). The ability to do an audit trial based on the account of the research process, and decisions as well as the accurate keeping of the raw data for a specified period establishes confirmability of the study (Tobin & Begley, 2004).

**Transferability.** In terms of transferability of the qualitative findings, I have provided a thick description of my experiences and that of the peer interviewers during the data collection. This captures my explicit connections and that of the peer interviewers to the cultural and social contexts that surrounded the data collection. The provision of this greater understanding of the research setting helps in facilitating the transferability judgment by other researchers and readers of the findings (Anney 2014; Guba, 1981).

**Translation**

Data from some of the interviews were in English, Ga, LikpaKpaln and Twi. The data was mostly in local languages since most of the people in the target population were illiterate. It was therefore necessary for the interviews to be translated and transcribed into English. The transcripts and presentation of the analysis were done in English because I hope that foreign readers will understand and make sense of the data (González y Gonzalez & Lincoln, 2006).
Given the importance that context has during the unfolding of the data, the peer interviewers translated the data verbatim from the local languages (Ga, Twi and Likpakpaln) into English. However, in a number of cases, the interviews contained disjointed expressions that could not be translated verbatim, but need to be reshaped, which means turning them into coherent sentences in the local language was necessary. Therefore, the peer interviewers did not adopt a word-equivalence approach but used words which were closest in contextual meaning to the original text. The translation took place from 20th August 2017 to 18th September, 2017.

Data Handling and Analysis

Qualitative analysis. The recorded interviews were duplicated and stored in different password protected media (my laptop and flash drive) for safe data management, keeping and analysis at the Lyle S. Hallman Faculty of Social Work. The peer interviewers transcribed, translated (those in the local language) and typed the interviews into Microsoft word document. The analysis of the qualitative data was guided by the Analytical Framework developed by the UK National Centre for Social Research (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). The analysis begun with the familiarization with the content of the data collected. In order to familiarize myself with the collected data, I read and re-read the transcribed data. While reading and re-reading the data, I identified codes and themes. The table below presents some of the codes I identified:
women and men are *equally represented* in Mayera. This community is purely a traditional rural community so certain *activities are purely for women* while some are for men. When it comes to cleaning, the women are at the forefront but when it comes to weeding, *the men lead*. Both genders are actively involved in community development activities; .... But on a whole they are all equally involved. But most *NGOS have spoilt the community members* with money.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data Extracts/ Units of Data</th>
<th>Early Descriptive Codes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>equally represented in Mayera. This community is purely a traditional rural community so</td>
<td>Equally represented</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>certain <em>activities are purely for women</em> while some are for men. When it comes to cleaning,</td>
<td>Purely for women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the women are at the forefront but when it comes to weeding, <em>the men lead</em>. Both genders are</td>
<td>Men lead</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>actively involved in community development activities; .... But on a whole they are all</td>
<td>NGOS have spoilt the community members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>equally involved. But most <em>NGOS have spoilt the community members</em> with money.</td>
<td>Always expect money in return</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

After the familiarization process, I developed a conceptual framework based on the recurrent codes and issues. The recurrent codes were sorted and grouped under a smaller number of broader, higher categories placed within the overall framework. Meanings and labels were given to each of the already identified codes as against indexing of the data. Similar codes and themes were grouped or brought together. The data were finally summarized in order to help reduce the amount of materials to a more manageable level. I inspected every word of the original material to consider meaning and relevance to the subject under enquiry. The themes and sub-themes were discussed along with the reviewed literature. Quotations were presented verbatim in order to present a true reflection of the voices of the participants. The theming of the codes was done based on the key tenets of transnational feminist theory more specifically.
African Womanist theory. Generally, I did the analysis through the lens of the African Womanist theory. The table below shows some of the early codes and the initial themes

Table 6

*Development of Initial Themes from Descriptive Codes*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Early descriptive codes/categories</th>
<th>Broad initial theme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NGOS have spoilt the community members</td>
<td>Capitalist and Neoliberal ideologies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Always expect money in return</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tagged deviant</td>
<td>Patriarchal norms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Given names</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women place is the kitchen</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Quantitative analysis.** With regard to the quantitative data, the questionnaires were sorted and kept in a safe place for analysis. I coded and entered the questionnaires onto the computer using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Software, version 23. After the entry of the data, I cleaned the data to ensure consistency. Results were presented in tables. Below is the list of statistical measures and the hypothesis each of them was used to test:

Table 7

*Study Hypotheses and Statistical Measures*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hypothesis</th>
<th>Statistical Measure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>H₁: Women’s civic engagement is positively related to higher levels of</td>
<td>Correlation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>women’s participation in community development activities.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H₂: Region of residence is not associated with the levels of women’s</td>
<td>ANOVA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>participation in community development activities.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H₃: Community level variables including perceived constraining/restrictive</td>
<td>Correlation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>local cultural norms are predictive of women’s level of participation in</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>community development processes.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H₄: There are identifiable barriers to women’s participation in community</td>
<td>Multiple regression</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>development.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Field Challenges

Field work is never without challenges. During the data collection stage, I faced a range of challenges. Some of the challenges include language and financial difficulties. A major challenge had to do with the different dialects of the research areas. As indicated earlier, three different dialects were spoken in the research areas. During the fieldwork the questionnaires and semi-structured interview were all written in English. These were translated into these different dialects, in which the peer interviewers interviewed the participants. The responses of most of the participants were also given either in Ga, Likpakpaln or Twi, which were then translated into English. This translation process was an immense challenge for the peer interviewers because of the limited vocabularies in the local dialects as compared to English. This made some of the questions seem a bit similar. However, we were able to deal with it as a result of the peer interviewers’ fluency in English and the local dialects. Our main trepidation was about how to effortlessly translate some of the research concepts into the local dialects taking into consideration the different cultural perspectives on those concepts. The peer interviewers identified and used concepts closest in meaning to the original concepts and cross-checked with me to confirm whether they reflected the questions’ focus. In this translation process, we were worried about the fact that some meanings could be lost. However, the peer interviewers endeavored to mitigate this risk.

Finally, money posed a challenge for me during the data collection stage. I had not anticipated that some people might want to “charge” in order to participate in the study. In one instance, an assembly woman who was contacted to take part in the study demanded 200 Ghana cedis ($57.85 CDN) as what she called ‘sitting allowance’ before she participates in the study. I realized that to be fair to all the interviewees, I had to give them equal honorarium and since 1) I
did not have that money to pay all the participants 200 Ghana cedis and 2) I did not want to influence the responses of respondents through money, I decided that the peer interviewers go ahead to recruit and interview others but her. This case revealed that I had taken for granted that most people do not do interviews for free in Ghana. This brought to mind the importance of funding in research and the debate on whether honorarium given during data collection phase could influence people’s responses during interviews.

**Ethical Considerations**

Ethical principles and their adherence in research with human subjects is the hallmark of a good research and an imperative charge (Economic and Social Science Research Council, 2015; University of Minnesota Center for Bioethics, 2003). A good research involving human subjects should at least adhere to six main ethical principles which include 1) research should be designed to ensure its integrity and quality, 2) informing research staff and participants about the purpose, methods and intended use of the study, 3) confidentiality and anonymity of respondents, 4) voluntary participation, 5) avoid harm to participants, and 6) clarifying any conflict of interest (Economic and Social Science Research Council, 2015, p. 1). This study adhered to these basic ethical principles.

**Research should be designed to ensure its integrity and quality.** My Dissertation Advisory Committee (DAC) and I ensured from the preparation of the research proposal to the final submission of the report every activity is informed by a commitment to quality research. With the support of my DAC, I designed the study scientifically and clarified explicitly in the study the ways to achieve the objective of the study. All the committee members reviewed and provided their feedback throughout the entire process of the study. Finally, ethical approval for
this study was obtained from the Research Ethics Board (REB) of Wilfrid Laurier University (see Appendix A).

**Inform research staff and participants about the purpose, methods and intended use of the study.** I fully informed the peer interviewers and the participants about the goal and objectives of the study, its methodology, and all the risks and benefits associated with it. With regard to the participants, the information about the study was clearly stated in the informed consent forms (see appendix B and C). The peer interviewers read these consent forms to participants who could neither read nor write in order for them to be fully informed about the study before each interview. The participants were treated as independent agents having the right to refuse to participate in the study. The informed consent of the respondents was sought. This was done by disclosing and explaining the nature of the study, its overall purpose and the risks and benefits of participation, as well as the extended opportunity to ask questions and withdrawal at any point in time (The National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioural Research, 1979). The peer interviewers on the other hand were taken through training. This training was used to fully inform them about the study and what is expected of them.

**Voluntary participation.** The participants were made to fully understand what they are asked to participate by considering their language needs; were not pressured or manipulated to participate and consented to participate in the study as respondents. This allowed for voluntary participation by the respondents who understood the minutiae of participation in the study. In this study, we obtained the consent of the participants through either written or verbal means of consent. Consent of those who could neither write nor read was given verbally. In addition, I
developed an informed consent form for participants who were literate to sign before they participated in the study. None of the participants was coerced to participate in the study.

Confidentiality and anonymity. We ensured the privacy and confidentiality of the respondents. The participants’ rights to protect themselves and the information they provide during the study was upheld. To ensure confidentiality, I did not report private or identifiable information that could possibly be connected to the participants’ identity. Information such as names of respondents were eliminated from the questionnaires. This ensured that the identities of the subjects were protected. The interviews were conducted in locations that were discreet and mutually agreed upon. For instance, all the interviews conducted in Bolni were done in the homes of the respondents while one of the Assembly members arranged for the interview to be conducted in the community where she was taking refuge. The information collected were maintained and kept in a secured and locked cabinet and a password protected computer. During the data analysis stage of the qualitative data, I used pseudonyms for individual participants to protect their identity.

Avoid harm to participants. In my quest to make a positive impact on society through this study, I sought to unearth information that may be helpful in improving the lives of women within the context of community development in Ghana. While the collected information may help in discovering means of providing equal opportunities for women, the process as well as the information collected may also pose some risks and harm to the respondents. In this study, we did not subject the respondents to more risks than necessary. We did everything possible to maximize possible benefits and reduce the risk that might occur during the study.

Clarifying any conflict of interest. The direct and indirect contributions of my colleagues, and the peer interviewers have been acknowledged in the study. For instance, three
of my colleagues helped in the coding of data for the purpose of trustworthiness of the qualitative data. This is acknowledged under the trustworthiness section of the study. There is no undeclared conflict of interest in this study.

**Limitations of this Study**

Although the conceptualization and design of the present study were well thought-through, its design was not without limitations. The main limitations are expressed as follows:

Due to the limitations of doctoral study in terms of time, the main study interviews were held within a relatively short period. According to Bitsch (2005), a qualitative data collection demands that researchers immerse themselves into the study settings or the respondents’ world in order to gain an in-depth understanding of the subject under study. However, I was not able to have a prolonged period of engagement in the field. It should also be pointed out that I am a Ghanaian (born and educated in Ghana), sensitive to the Ghanaian culture and have some level of understanding of the participants’ culture and context.

Again, the sample size for the regression analysis after cleaning the data was 150 which is a bit low considering the complex nature of the model. As indicated by Jeon (2015) “The other limitation of the regression analysis is the degree of overestimation of R is affected by the ratio of the number of predictors to the sample size… If the sample size is small, there is a problem in generalizing the results.” (p. 1637). However, all the assumptions of regression analysis were met (see appendix N)

**Conclusion**

This chapter encompassed in detail the methodological approaches to the dissertation and provided justification for the practical actions taken, decisions made, and processes undertaken in the course of the research. The theoretical approach adopted by the research was critical
realism. A mixed method approach was used to address the general aim and objectives of the study as it is characterised by integrating qualitative method (to provide a deeper understanding of the phenomenon) and quantitative method (to establish causal relation among variables based on large sample size). Using the mixed method approach allowed me to describe and explore the level of women’s participation in community development processes from distinct perspectives and through the use of multiple sources of data collection including surveys and semi-structured interviews. Data acquired from the surveys and the interviews were analysed statistically and through the Analytical Framework respectively. The next chapter presents the results obtained from the quantitative data.
Chapter Five: Quantitative Data Analysis and Presentation

Introduction

A key component of the successful completion of this study is the analysis of the collected data in furtherance of testing the hypotheses and addressing the research questions. This chapter therefore comprises the analysis and presentation of the quantitative data in two broad sections. The first is descriptive statistics encompassing the analysis of the demographic details of the participants. The second part, which is inferential statistics deals with the testing of the research hypotheses. Generally, this chapter addressed the following four quantitative research questions:

1. What is the level and nature of participation of women in community development?
2. What are the barriers to women’s participation in community development?
3. What factors predict women’s increased participation in community development?
4. What are the most significant barriers to women’s participation in community development?

Descriptive Statistics

This section comprised the analysis of the demographic information of the participants as well as the level of participation of women. Table 8 below illustrates the descriptive statistics of the participants’ socio-demographic characteristics. The descriptive statistics displayed in this table are the minimum, maximum, mean, and standard deviation. The mean age of participants was 39.86 years ($SD = 12.57$, range = 20 to 70 years). The mean number of years of education was 4.60 ($SD = 5.16$, range = 0 to 19 years). The mean net monthly income was 137.19 Ghana cedis ($SD = 182.72$, range = 0 to 1000 Ghana cedis). The participants had a mean household income of 443.58 Ghana cedis ($SD = 469.69$, range = 40 - 2300 Ghana cedis).
The table further shows the descriptive statistics of the number of years participants have stayed in their communities and the number of children they have. Participants stayed in the communities for an average of 20.18 years ($SD = 13.61$, range = 4 to 70 years). Participants had on average 2.86 children, however this rate varied widely in the sample ($SD = 2.34$, ranged from 0 to 16 children). Again, the participants reported that the mean number of people in their immediate family was 5.74 with standard deviation of 3.03 and ranged from 1 to 18 people.

Table 8

*Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Participants (N=188)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participants' age</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>39.86</td>
<td>12.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participants' years of education</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>4.60</td>
<td>5.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participants' personal net monthly income</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1000</td>
<td>137.19</td>
<td>182.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Household income raw</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>2300</td>
<td>443.58</td>
<td>469.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participants' years of stay in the community</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>20.18</td>
<td>13.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of children</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>2.86</td>
<td>2.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of people in immediate family</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>5.74</td>
<td>3.03</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From table 9, participants were equally distributed from Bolni 34% ($n = 64$), Mayera Faase 36.7% ($n = 69$), and Yawhimakrom 29.3% ($n = 55$). Also, most of the participants were married (70.6%, $n = 132$). In terms of the educational status of the participants, it is apparent that approximately 50.5% ($n = 95$) of the participants had no formal education while 20.2% ($n = 38$) had Middle school/Junior High School certificate. Regarding occupational status, majority (78.7%, $n = 148$) of the participants were engaged in trading and farming activities.
Table 9
Community of Residence, and Educational, Occupational, and Marital Statuses of Participants
\((N = 188)\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bolni</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mayera Faase</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>36.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yawhimakrom</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>29.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marital Status</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Single</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>13.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>70.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divorced</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Separated</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widowed</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>8.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Educational Level</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No formal education</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>50.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary certificate</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>14.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle school/JHS</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>20.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior High School</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intermediate/Diploma</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>6.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate/Post-graduate</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Profession</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>8.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semi-profession</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clerical, trader/farmer</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>78.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skilled</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semi-skilled</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unskilled</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
On the rate at which the ideas or views of women were valued during community development meetings relative to their male counterparts, it was found that on average it was only 36.21% of the time that the views of women were valued ($SD = 10.79$). Regarding men, it was evident that their views were valued on average at approximately 63.79% of the time ($SD = 10.79$).

With regard to the level of participation of the women in the community development process, table 10 below depicts the following: Most participants felt that women were less able to influence community development decision-making (62.3%, $n = 117$). Most of the surveyed women (60.6%, $n = 114$) also felt that it was difficult for women to participate in community development activities while 74.5% ($n = 132$) thought that it was rather easy for their male counterparts to participate in developmental activities. However, almost half (48.9%, $n = 92$) reported they participated sometimes, 34% ($n = 64$) often participated whereas 11.7% ($n = 22$) always participate. Finally, majority of the participants (66.0%, $n = 124$) felt women were less represented in community development leadership.

In general, table 10 shows that majority (56.9%) of the participants ($n = 107$) have medium level of participation score; 31.9% ($n = 60$) have high level of participation score; 6.4% ($n = 12$) have a very high level of participation score while the remaining 4.8% ($n = 9$) have a low level of participation score.

With regards to the barriers to the participation of women and the motivations for their participation, the most common barriers for participating in community development were low level of education (38.2%), family or household responsibilities (29.6%), low confidence level (15.1%), and financial constraints (7.5%). The most common motivations for participating in community development was the opportunity to acquire skills through community development
activities (27.8%), desire to help their communities (23.9%); and the desire to motivate other women through their participation (16.5%).

Table 10

The Nature of Women’s Participation in Community Development (N = 188)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Difficult for women to participate in community activities</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>26.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>10.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not sure</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>52.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>8.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Women are less represented in leadership relative to men</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>10.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not sure</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>17.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>30.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>35.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>It is easy for men to participate compared to women</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>9.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not sure</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>31.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>44.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Women are less able to influence decision-making</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>25.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not sure</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>10.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>47.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>14.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency of time participants participate</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>Percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>---------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rarely</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>48.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Always</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>11.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>General level of participation</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>56.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>31.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very high</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Barriers to women’s participation</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Family responsibilities</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>29.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial constraints</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of information</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low confidence</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>15.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low education</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>38.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Males control the process</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>7.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No mentors</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Views not valued</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Motivations for women’s participation</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Access to information</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>9.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunity to acquire skills</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>27.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fines</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desire to help the community</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>23.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children’s future</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>9.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desire to motivate others</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>16.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling of belonging</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentorship outside the community</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>9.09</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
With regard to the mean total scores of the scales, table 11 below illustrates the following: The mean total score the SES Scale was 10.77 ($SD = 5.00$, range = 4 to 27). The CES attitude subscale had a mean total score of 47.60 ($SD = 5.66$, range = 19 to 56) while the CES behaviour subscale’s mean total score was 27.83 ($SD = 6.69$, range = 6 to 42). The mean total score of the CES was 75.43 ($SD = 9.90$, range = 38 to 98).

The mean total score of the CDPS attitude subscale was 31.25 ($SD = 4.99$, range = 19 to 40) while the CDPS active participation subscale’s mean total score was 27.89 ($SD = 6.55$, range = 9 to 45). The mean total score of the CDPS was 59.09 ($SD = 9.31$, range = 39 to 83).

Table 11

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mean Total Scores of the Scales and Subscales ($N = 188$)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Minimum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SES scale total score</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CES attitude subscale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CES behaviour subscale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CES total score</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CDPS attitude subscale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CDPS active participation subscale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CDPS total score</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Inferential Statistics

The purpose of this section was to use inferential statistics to test the hypothesis in the first chapter of the dissertation. The hypotheses tested are:

$H_0$: Women’s civic engagement is unrelated to higher levels of women’s participation in community development activities.

$H_1$: Women’s civic engagement is positively related to higher levels of women’s participation in community development activities.
H₀: Community level variables are unrelated to women’s level of participation in community development processes.
H₂: Community level variables are predictive of women’s level of participation in community development processes.
H₀: Region of residence is not associated with the levels of women’s participation in community development activities.
H₃: Region of residence is associated with the levels of women’s participation in community development activities.
H₀: There are no identifiable/significant barriers to women’s participation in community development.
H₄: There are identifiable/significant barriers to women’s participation in community development.

The statistical measures adopted include ANOVA, Correlation and multiple regression.

**Bivariate Pearson correlation analysis of the relationship between women’s civic engagement and their level of participation in community development activities.** The first hypothesis sought to explore relationships between civic engagement and women’s level of participation in community development using correlational analysis. The CES total scores and the CDPS total scores were used for the Pearson correlation analysis. The results of the analysis indicated that the Pearson Correlation Coefficient between women’s civic engagement and their level of participation in community development was $r = .65, p < .01$; which indicates that the relationship was statistically significant; therefore, I rejected the null hypothesis. That is, women’s increased civic engagement was positively related to higher levels of women’s participation in community development activities.
Spearman’s correlation analysis of the relationship between community level variables and women’s level of participation in community development activities. The second null hypothesis tested was community level variables are not related to women’s level of participation in community development processes. The community level variables included the measures in place to support women, the acceptability of women’s participation, the attitude of traditional leaders and the representation of women in the community. The results suggest that 3 out of 4 correlations were statistically significant and were greater or equal to $r_s(188) = .21, p < .01$, two-tailed. The results of the correlation analysis indicated that community level variables such as the existence of measures in the community to support women, the acceptability of women’s participation in the community and the positive view of traditional leaders about women’s participation were predictive of women’s level of participation in community development processes at the significant level of 0.01. The existence of measures in the community to support women was predictive of women’s level of participation in community development processes with a Spearman’s correlation coefficient ($r_s$) of .21, $p < .01$.

Again, the acceptability of women’s participation in the community was found to be positively associated with women’s level of participation in community development processes, $r_s = .27, p < .01$. Regarding the relationship between the positive attitudes and views of traditional leaders about women’s participation and their level of participation in community development processes, the results indicated that the Spearman’s Correlation Coefficient ($r_s$) was .25, $p < .01$. This designated that the relationship was statistically significant and therefore, I rejected the null hypothesis. Finally, the results indicated that the Spearman’s Correlation Coefficient between less representation of women in community leadership and their level of participation in community development was -.025, $p = .73$; which indicated that the relationship
was not statistically significant; therefore, I failed to reject the null hypothesis. In general, the results suggest that community level variables were related to women’s level of participation, with the exception of less representation of women in community leadership. The results are presented in table 12 below:

Table 12
*Spearman’s Correlation between Community level variables and Women’s Level of Participation (N = 188)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>CDPS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>There are measures in place to support women</td>
<td>.21**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women are less represented in community leadership</td>
<td>-.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women's participation is acceptable in this community</td>
<td>.27**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traditional leaders have positive view about women participation</td>
<td>.25**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

**Correlation analysis of the relationship between socio-economic status of women and women’s level of participation in community development activities.** The third hypothesis sought to test the relationship between the socio-economic status of women and their level of participation in community development. Results indicated an inverse relationship between Socio-Economic Status of women and their level of participation, \( r (188) = -.32, p < .01 \), two tailed. This therefore showed that the relationship was statistically significant and as a result I rejected the null hypothesis. That is, socio-economic status of women was negatively related to levels of women’s participation in community development activities. This suggests that the lower a woman’s socio-economic status, the more involved they are in community development activities.
One-Way ANOVA – community of residence and women’s level of participation in community development activities. This sub-section presents the results from the use of a one-way ANOVA procedure to compare the community development participation scale scores for the entire sample in relation to their communities of residence. That is, this analysis was to investigate whether the level of participation of the participants would be different depending on their communities of residence. A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was calculated on participants’ level of participation to their community of residence. The analysis was significant, $F(2, 185) = 21.31, p < .01$. Participants found their level of participation to be different in Mayera Faase ($M = 53.96, SD = 6.12$) than women in Bolni ($M = 63.14, SD = 8.56$) or Yawhimakrom ($M = 60.82, SD = 10.54$). Comparisons indicated that the level of participation of women in Bolni was not significantly different from that of Yawhimakrom, $t(185) = -1.50, p = .14$. Women’s level of participation in Mayera Faase was significantly different from that of Bolni, $t(185) = -6.27, p < .01$. Women’s level of participation in Mayera Faase was significantly different from that of Yawhimakrom, $t(185) = -4.50, p < .01$. These results are presented in tables 13, 14, 15 and 16 below:

Table 13

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>S.E</th>
<th>Lower Bound</th>
<th>Upper Bound</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mayera Faase</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>53.96</td>
<td>6.12</td>
<td>.74</td>
<td>52.49</td>
<td>55.43</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bolni</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>63.14</td>
<td>8.56</td>
<td>1.07</td>
<td>61.00</td>
<td>65.28</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yawhimakrom</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>60.82</td>
<td>10.54</td>
<td>1.42</td>
<td>57.97</td>
<td>63.67</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>188</td>
<td>59.09</td>
<td>9.31</td>
<td>.68</td>
<td>57.75</td>
<td>60.43</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 14
ANOVA: *Community Development Participation Scale*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>3032.68</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1516.34</td>
<td>21.31</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>13164.79</td>
<td>185</td>
<td>71.16</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>16197.46</td>
<td>187</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 15
*Contrast Coefficients of the Participants’ Communities*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contrast</th>
<th>Mayera Faase</th>
<th>Bolni</th>
<th>Yawhimakrom</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 16
*Contrast Tests*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contrasts</th>
<th>Value of Contrast</th>
<th>S.E</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CDPS Assume equal variance</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-2.32</td>
<td>1.55</td>
<td>-1.50</td>
<td>185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-9.18</td>
<td>1.46</td>
<td>-6.27</td>
<td>185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-6.86</td>
<td>1.53</td>
<td>-4.50</td>
<td>185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CDPS Does not assume equal variance</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-2.32</td>
<td>1.78</td>
<td>-1.31</td>
<td>103.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-9.18</td>
<td>1.30</td>
<td>-7.07</td>
<td>113.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-6.86</td>
<td>1.60</td>
<td>-4.29</td>
<td>82.22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Barriers to women’s level of participation in community development. To help establish the relationships between the barriers to women’s participation and women’s level of participation in community development in rural communities I hypothesized that; \( H_0 \): There are no identifiable/significant barriers to women’s participation in community development.

\( H_4 \): There are identifiable/significant barriers to women’s participation in community development.

Multiple linear regression analysis was used to create a model for predicting the effects of low level of education, motherhood and family responsibilities, low confidence level of women, lack of information, unacceptability of women’s participation in the community, lack of nominations from NGOs, and males having too much control over the process on the level of participation of women in community development process in rural Ghana. Thus, a regression equation which relates to the seven (7) barriers to the level of women’s participation in community development was given as Equation (1)

\[
Y_{cdps} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_1 X_2 + \beta_1 X_3 + \beta_1 X_4 + \beta_1 X_5 + \beta_1 X_6 + \beta_1 X_7 + \epsilon
\] (1)

Where:

\( Y_{cdps} \) = The community development participation score for the participants

\( X_1 \) = Low level of education

\( X_2 \) = Motherhood and family responsibilities

\( X_3 \) = Low confidence level

\( X_4 \) = Lack of information

\( X_5 \) = Unacceptability of women’s participation in the community

\( X_6 \) = Lack of Nominations from NGOs

\( X_7 \) = Males having too much control over the process
$\beta_1 =$ The coefficient of $X_{1.7}$ or the slope of the regression equation

$\beta_0 =$ The constant or the intercept of the regression equation and

$\varepsilon =$ Error term which measures the effects of the factors which influence the level of participation of women in community development process but are not included in the model

The method used in the validation of the hypothesis for the regression model was the t-test. Mathematically, the tested hypothesis was represented as: $H_0: b = 0$ and $H_1: b \neq 0$

The basic descriptive statistics and regression coefficients are shown in table 17:

Table 17

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coefficients for Variables Predicting Participant's Level of Participation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Model</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Constant)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of Nomination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unacceptability of Women's participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low Confidence Level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Males control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motherhood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of Information</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. Dependent Variable: Community development Participation scale

The SPSS model summary for the coefficients in table 17 above shows that the seven-predictor model was able to account for 44.3% ($R^2 = .44$) of the variability in level of participation of women in community development ($F(7, 142) = 16.14, p < .01$). This finding indicates that the model is significant and did a good job of predicting the level of participation.
of women in community development. That is, there is a significant relationship between the predictor variables in the model and the dependent variable.

Five of the seven independent variables were statistically significant: lack of nomination by NGOs and other organisations \( (p < .01) \), low level of education \( (p < .01) \), unacceptability of women’s participation \( (p < .01) \), males having too much control over the process \( (p < .01) \) and motherhood and family responsibilities \( (p < .01) \). From the table, low confidence level of women \( (p = 0.23) \) and lack of information \( (p = 0.33) \) were not significant. When assessing the relative strengths of the predictors using the standardized (beta) coefficient values, the greatest barrier to women’s level of participation in community development in rural Ghana is ‘males having too much control over the process’ \( (\beta = -.37) \), followed by ‘unacceptability of women’s participation’ \( (\beta = -.36) \), followed by ‘motherhood and family responsibilities’ \( (\beta = .33) \), then ‘lack of nomination by NGOs’ \( (\beta = 0.25) \) and ‘low level of education’ \( (\beta = .17) \). According to Acock (2014), the size of influence of the predictors can be interpreted using the following benchmark: 1) \( \beta < 0.2 \) is considered a weak, 2) \( 0.2 < \beta < 0.5 \) moderate, and 3) \( \beta > 0.5 \) strong effect (p.272).

Based on Acock’s benchmark, ‘males having too much control over the process’, ‘unacceptability of women’s participation’, ‘motherhood and family responsibilities’ and ‘lack of nomination by NGOs’ had a strong influence on the outcome variable while ‘low level of education’ had a moderate influence.
Table 18
Spearman’s Correlation Analysis for the CDPS Subscales and the Barriers to the Participant’s Level of Participation (N = 188)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>CDPS attitude subscale score</th>
<th>CDPS active participation subscale score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lack of nomination</td>
<td>-.04</td>
<td>.15*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low education</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unacceptability of women's participation</td>
<td>-.27**</td>
<td>-.12*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low confidence</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Males having control</td>
<td>-.11</td>
<td>-.21**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motherhood and family responsibilities</td>
<td>.45**</td>
<td>.009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of information</td>
<td>.036</td>
<td>-.069</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**. Correlation is significant at 0.01 level (2-tailed)
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

The results show that lack of nomination by NGOs and other organizations had no significant relationship with the participants’ attitude towards community development activities, but it was however found to be positively associated with the active participation domain of the CDPS with a Spearman’s correlation coefficient ($r_s$) of .154, $p = .04$.

Again, it was evident that the unacceptability of women’s participation had an inverse relationship with the participants’ attitude with a Spearman’s correlation coefficient ($r_s$) of -.27, $p < .01$. It was however found that the unacceptability of women’s participation had no significant relationship with the active participation of the participants.

Regarding the relationship between ‘males having too much control over community development process’ and the CDPS domains (attitude and active participation), the results indicated that ‘males having too much control over community development process’ had a negative association with active participation with the Spearman’s Correlation Coefficient ($r_s$) =
-.208, \( p < .01 \). However, this barrier had no significant relationship with the participants’ attitude.

Finally, the results showed that the Spearman’s Correlation Coefficient between ‘motherhood and family responsibilities’ and the participants’ attitudes was .45, \( p < .01 \); which indicated that the relationship was statistically significant. It was nonetheless found that ‘motherhood and family responsibilities’ had no significant association with the active participation of the participants in community development process.

**Summary of the Chapter**

This section presented the analysis of the quantitative data. A sub-section of the data analysis presented here simply described the demographic information of the sample \((N = 188)\). These descriptive statistics give the audience of the research an idea of the number of participants in relation to their marital status, educational level, and occupation. Further analysis provided the idea of how respondents rate their level of participation in community development, barriers to and motivations to their level of participation. The next approach to the analysis of the data was to use more advanced statistical tests such as bivariate and multivariate correlation, ANOVA, and multiple regression to determine the way the predictor and outcome variables are correlated to provide worthwhile acuity. A good understanding came from the bivariate analyses that indicate statistically significant correlations between women’s civic engagement, community level variables, and the socio-economic status of women (predictor variables and the participation of women in community development activities (the outcome variable).

All the bivariate correlations produced similar statistical significance \((p < .01)\). However, the less representation of women in community leadership was found not to have any statistically significant relationship with women’s participation. The results of correlating community level
variables with women’s participation corroborate that structural/community level factors are strong predictors of women’s participation; thereby concluding that the level of participation of women in community development increases as the atmosphere within the communities becomes more receptive to women.

The multiple regression on the other hand indicates five significant barriers to women’s participation in community development processes in Ghana. These barriers include motherhood and family responsibilities, males having control over the process, unacceptability of women’s participation, low level of participation and lack of nominations by NGOs. The subsequent chapter delineates the analysis and presentation of the qualitative data.
Chapter Six: Qualitative Data Analysis and Presentation

Introduction

This chapter presents the qualitative analysis of the 12 interviews that were conducted with female participants in three rural communities in Ghana. The aim of this qualitative interview analysis is to illuminate and supplement the results of the statistical analyses in chapter five. They are aimed to

- Explain and complement the results of the statistical analyses with respect to the barriers to the participation of women in community development process in rural Ghana;
- Explore the experiences of women in the community development context in Ghana;

To address these objectives, I analysed what participants reported about their participation in community development activities, their experiences in this context and the factors that motivate them to participate in the community development processes in their communities.

This chapter is structured into three sections. The first section looks at the ways in which women participate in community development in rural Ghana. The second section focuses on the factors that motivate women to participate in community development activities while the third part identifies the barriers to women’s participation.

Women’s Responsibilities and Ways of Participation in Community Development

The study shows that women in rural communities are involved in a myriad of ways in the initiation, design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of community development initiatives. Through the interviews with participants, it was identified that women participate in several ways in community development processes in rural Ghana. Most of the women interviewed said they take part in micro-loan schemes, the local government system, health
volunteerism, communal labour, vocational training, educational campaigns, representation of women at district assembly, and Community Advocacy Committee. A respondent indicated that:

... I am involved in community development activities. I got involved after my SHS (Senior High School). The opinion leaders made us aware that we have a responsibility to develop the community in order to curb the spread of malaria and other diseases. I am still involved although am in school. ... we have been involved in vocational training such as soap making, communal labour and even educational campaign on cleanliness. (Yaa)

A similar sentiment was articulated by a key informant who specified that “women are sometimes selected to represent their communities during decision-making ... we also have some few assembly women. As for communal labour, we are obliged to take part and we do” (Mercy).

Beside the general identification of the ways women participate in community development activities, some of the participants stressed on the specific activities they participate in. A participant emphasizing on her assembly member role indicated that:

Being an assembly woman at Deideman electoral area, I have so many responsibilities which I cannot even count because anything concerning the development, safety, children unable to go to school is the duty of an assembly member. I have to follow up on communal labour, girl child education campaigns or anything in relations to the development of the community. Errrrrh those who drop-out of school, I have to look for a place where they could learn a trade so that they can stay on their own. So as for my job I don’t think I can count them. Before I come for any assembly meeting, I have to sit with my people to know what they want and at the meeting, I have to lobby for my electoral
area. I have been an assembly member for the past seven years. I am currently in my second term. (Mary)

With regards to the representation of the women at community development decision-making meetings, a few women such as the Assembly members and the Queen Mothers\textsuperscript{17} were mostly present at such meetings. They represent the women and inform their constituents about any decisions made at those meetings. A Queen Mother emphasized this when she indicated that:

\begin{quote}
I organise meetings for my women and I advise them on many issues. I also represent them on many occasions in Bimbilla town [the district capital]. When I return, I organize them to tell them all that I learnt from the meeting. As the queen mother, I organize the women for community development activities. (Queen Mother 1).
\end{quote}

A similar idea was expressed by a participant who pointed out that:

\begin{quote}
I am a member of the eye volunteer group in this community. The district hospital normally organizes us to go around schools and communities to check people with eye problems. I also take part in other community development activities ... If my memory serves me right, I may have been doing this for the past 8 years. (Matt)
\end{quote}

It was apparent from the interviews that governmental and NGOs’ programmes created avenues through which women got the opportunity to participate in community development activities. As specified by the participants, government departments and NGOs’ programmes such as micro-finance, and skill training/ capacity building which focus on women continue to help them discover their potentials, develop skills, mobilize resources, initiate, implement and evaluate efforts geared towards addressing the problems of their communities. These activities

\textsuperscript{17} Queen Mothers are traditional female leaders, drawn from the relevant royal lineages, who are mostly responsible for women's and children's issues (http://socialfilms.org/QueenMothers/)
also provide women the opportunity to plan and execute self-help initiatives geared towards sustainable community development in rural Ghana.

The participants revealed that the Business Advisory Council\(^{18}\) (BAC), Songtaba, ARII and Grameen Ghana helped them to form groups, trained and provided some with start-up kits. These have helped them to participate meaningfully in the development of their communities. This was captured by an officer of BAC who indicated that:

> At BAC, we have formed several women groups in these communities and engage them in skills and managerial training. We also give them start–up–kits after the training ...

> Rural Enterprise Project (REP) as our funding agency together with the Government of Ghana, BAC has helped in promoting women participation in Ghana through empowerment.

Three participants re-echoed this by stating that:

> “Errmm... with regard to community development activities, I am involved in any communal activities be it communal labour or anything that brings development to the community. For example, at my community we have societal group championed by NGOs which seek the welfare of members and sometimes we take a particular place to clean. I always take part in all these activities.”  (Bafi)

> “I am a member of community development group. A group called Alaafiewulju introduced by Resilience in Northern Ghana (RING)\(^{19}\). I am the organizer for this project

\(^{18}\) Department created by the National Board for Small Scale Industries (NBSSI) to implement the Rural Enterprise Programs (REP)

\(^{19}\) RING is a five-year USAID-funded project implemented by Global Communities, the prime, with technical assistance from JSI and other partners (http://www.jsi.com).
so I do help the community to organize its development activities. I am also a member of SUSU group and also serve as the treasurer of the SUSU group.” (Kasi)

“I am a leader of this Grameen Ghana group. They do give us animals (goats). It is always my responsibility to share it to other women in this community” (Diana).

Finally, it was revealed through the interviews that women work as labour to assist in the various community development initiatives in their communities. When communal labour is organised in any of the rural communities, women are responsible for sweeping and fetching water for the men. The carrying of sand and water constitute a major responsibility of women whenever there is a community initiated or driven construction project such as the building of schools. This is captured by a queen mother when she reiterated that:

*women are represented in any development activity here in terms of roles but not number... Example when building our clinic, both men and women were equally represented when we talk about roles. While the men were mixing mortar, the women were fetching water.* (Queen mother 2)

The participants can therefore be seen to take part in community development activities within their various communities notwithstanding the challenges they may face.

**Motivation Factors for Women’s Participation**

The study at this point sought to understand factors that motivate women to participate in community development activities. It was evident from the study that the women consider the interest of their children as one of their major motivating factors. They further stated that the consequences associated with non-participation, social support, familiar support and protective factors motivated them to take part in the community-driven initiatives in their communities.
Future of their children. Women in rural communities in Ghana often believe that their children should always have a better standard of living than what the parents had. This idea and mentality became apparent in the interviews when most of the participants sought to justify their involvement in community development activities despite the challenges they face by assigning a reason such as the future of their children. Some considered themselves unenlightened or uncivilized due to their inability to read or write. They argued that they did not want their children to go through the same predicament due to a lack of access to educational facilities. They therefore decided to engage in these activities in order to ensure that essential services such as education, and health care among others are present in their communities to help secure a good future for their children. A participant during an interview stated:

When I look back, the positive thing that makes me continue to be part of the process is the need to help our children. We didn’t have girls who were educated. We used to prepare them for marriage and as a result they couldn’t speak or understand English but now we have stopped this practice. We want to ... educate them so that one day they will feed us. We don’t want them to also remain in our darkness (Queen mother 1).

Another participant concluded this by indicating that “...the future of my children pushes me to be part of any development activities we do in this community ... when there is light, children can study well” (Diana). These emphasize the fact that the future of the participants’ children served as a motivation for their participation in the development process of their communities.

Familial support and protective factors. The presence or absence of various protective factors and familial support impact the ways in which women participate and understand the need for them to participate in the community development process. It was evident from the study that the physical and emotional comfort women receive from their family members build
their strengths, levels of resilience and promotes their involvement in community development. One critical protective factor within the familial environment that was found to help promote resilience among women is the presence of familial support – having a supportive family member. This presupposes that women without these supports are more likely to be less resilient. That is, family members such as husbands, parents and siblings play an important role in supporting and influencing the level of their participation. This became clear when a participant stated that “my family has been very supportive. Their support and encouragement have been very helpful to me in this whole election issues ...” (Mary). An assembly woman confirmed this by indicating that:

… So, in most times he assists me in cooking, washing and taking care of the children. Even as I am here, I have been away for three days and my husband is home to take care of the children while am away and he gives me feedback on what’s happening at home. Even yesterday he called that Urban roads are around and looking for where to do culvert and I asked him to assist them which he did ...there is one of my brothers who lectures at GIMPA\textsuperscript{20}. He helps me in proposal writing, petition and even just yesterday, he spent about six hours writing a petition for me (Afia)

Despite the fact that most respondents (seven of the women) indicated that family members motivated them, others claimed that they at times discourage them due to the challenges the women often face. From the interviews, it was clear that some of their family members become happy whenever they got benefits from their participation but discouraged them whenever they face challenges. That is, they do not get support from their families when they need it most. This came to light when Yaa, a health volunteer stated that “my parents think

\textsuperscript{20} GIMPA stands for Ghana Institute of Management and Public Administration
it is a difficult work, so I should stop and do better work for a living or else I will continue to work for nothing”. This was re-echoed by an assembly woman who indicated that:

At times they are happy, for instance one of my brothers needed a health insurance card and when I brought him they assisted him without joining the long queues. But when am going through difficulties they discourage me. Oooh as for my husband, he is also 50-50 because at times I have to leave my responsibilities at home and lobby for my electoral area which sometimes he doesn’t like but after I succeed in bringing any development to the area, they all become happy and he says, ‘this is my wife’ but when I neglect my duties and he gets angry. (Afia)

“Eeiiii but as for my parents, they want me to stop this assembly woman work especially with the current difficulties I am going through” (Afia)

The support received by the participants from their family members greatly motivate them to participate in community development activities.

**Collective /Social support and communal life.** Ghanaians value communal life and community development activities serve as one of the avenues through which this idea is often exhibited. When women get to know that they are part of a loving, caring and helpful community of people at community development meetings, they are more likely to always participate in activities geared towards the development of the community. It was found that the women are able to solicit support from other members of the community during community development meetings. That is, community development meetings are not only used to solve social problems but also the personal problems. It offers them the opportunity to access people they can depend on in times of need. The opportunity to receive support from the other members of the
community was considered to be one of the major motivational factors for women to take part in community development activities. In line with this, a participant indicated that:

*The first time I took part in activities in this community was when we were building our clinic and also cleaning our cemetery, after these activities, I have always taken part in some of these activities organised in this community. The first one was really interesting. We learnt a lot, share our problems with others while we work and help each other through advice. All these push me to attend communal labour.* (Diana)

Another participant re-echoed this by stating that “*I have love for the community and believe that when I participate in activities, any time I have a problem, people will be willing to help me out so I go out to participate in most activities ... the feeling of being part of a community and having all these people to fall on whenever you have a problem makes me feel fulfilled whenever I attend communal labour*”. (Mercy) It can be argued that the participants’ love for their community as well as their respect for communal living impel their participation in community development activities.

**Punishment for non-involvement.** The traditional authorities in Ghana have put in place measures to ensure that each member of their communities actively participate or contribute time and resources in the development of the communities. It was evident from the interviews that community members who refuse to attend communal labour in the research communities are often fined or punished. These punishments were described as one of the factors that push some of the women to participate in community development. This is supported by the following statements from the interviews: “*Everyone has a role and sometimes people are fined for failure to participate in certain communal activities like clean ups or communal labour*” (Bafi)
“... because here, when you go contrary to culture or refuse to attend communal labour you can be fined or punished.” (Kasi)

I used not to go for communal labour because of my ‘banku’ business until the elders of the community summoned me, warned me and threatened to fine me if I continue to absent myself. From that time till now even if I cannot go, I send one of my children to represent me. (Adoley)

The fear of being punished or fined for refusing to attend communal labour was emphasized by the participants as one of the major reasons why they are forced to attend communal labour in their communities.

**Barriers to the Participation of Women**

The main goal of this study was to explore factors that hinder the participation of women in community development activities in rural Ghana. The participation of women was found to be influenced or limited by their socio-economic, cultural and political context. From the study, it was found that poverty, lateral oppression, harassment, cultural factors, multiple roles of women, self-esteem, colonialism, and the interference of capitalism and neoliberalism are forces that hinder the participation of women in community development processes in rural Ghana.

**Financial constraints/ poverty.** Women's participation was found to be influenced by their economic conditions. While the participation of both men and women is negatively affected by financial constraints, most of the participants indicated that they were adversely affected mostly as a result of limited access to economic opportunities and the resultant increase in the feminization of poverty. Most of the respondents believe that poverty prevents them from contributing effectively to the development of their communities. Some even lamented their inability to raise money to pay for transportation fare for them to attend meetings at the district
head office or nearby communities. They indicated that this has limited their access to programs organized by NGOs and the District Assemblies. This became evident in the following statements:

_Eaaa!! The way lack of money affects us is this, we have children going to school daily and there is no pesewa²¹ on you, what will you do? When there is no money, you can’t go... Sometimes the participation in some meetings involves contributions and at times I don’t have money... how do I participate in those meetings? (Diana)_

“If they are around they come but now it is about the money. The economy is hard. They prefer going out to sell to feed their families than participating in community development activities. (Queen mother 2)

_The challenge that hinders us is how some of us are weak, we can no longer work to feed ourselves and families, they could be a meeting in Yendi²² or Tamale²³ where a woman is needed, because of our weak financial stand it becomes difficult to participate unless we come together so that everyone brings the little they have so that the representative can go... We try our best, we are hardworking, but it becomes extremely difficult when it comes to our children’s school fees, we sell charcoal, firewood to make sure that the school fees let alone spending the little money on meetings. (Matt)_

“I can say most women are poor here ... they mostly don’t have a say” (Diana)

Yes, there were challenges. There were financial constraints. Sometimes you would want to go for meeting but might not have money ...ohhuuum you don’t know anything. Money!

²¹ A currency unit of Ghana

²² Yendi is the capital of Yendi Municipality in the Northern Region.

²³ Tamale is the capital of the Northern Region.
Money issues hard like something. If you don’t have you are not counted among others. Eeeee!!! My daughter if you don’t have money what can you do? If I am to tell you the effects, day will break us here. (Kasi)

An assembly woman concluded by stating that “…I am a mother, I cannot overlook my financial obligation to my children and instead use my money for posters and other stuff. Whenever someone is in difficulty and you have to help, I sometimes use my children’s school fees for that and it affects me a lot, but I don’t think is the same across board because I am in the rural community”. The feminization of poverty was emphasized as one of the barriers to their participation in the development process of their communities.

**Lateral oppression.** It was also clear from the interviews that the discrimination women face does not only occur between men and women but also women fight against themselves. Women strike out at each other at community development meetings due to jealousy and lack of trust. This cannot be talked about in isolation because this lateral oppression is in part attributable to the existing gender discourses about women and the socialisation process. The idea that women as a subjugated group within the community development context in rural Ghana are their own persecutors is supported by a participant who lamented that “Surprisingly the women themselves pull each other down saying that’s a man’s role.” (Yaa) Another participant re-echoed this by stating that “… you know women and our gossiping styles. Some of us don’t participate because of this gossiping nature of women” (Adoley). Beatrice confirmed this by indicating that:

... some members of the community more especially women were not happy with the chief for not choosing a man rather me. Some of my fellow women did not believe that I can do the work. They even went to say a whole lot of negative things about me to the
chief but since the chief knows me very well he did not mind them. Skin pain\textsuperscript{24} was the cause of all these.

Some women at some point work against one another in the process thereby making it difficult for women to freely participate in community development activities.

**Low self-esteem.** It was found from the study that women’s low self-esteem constitutes one of the barriers to participation. The self-perception of women (as to whether they have the capabilities to take up positions of leadership and power within the community development context) is considered by the participants to discourage most women from actively participating in community development in rural Ghana. In line with this, two participants stated that “… Most women have low self-confidence” (Diana); “Ladies also feel shy to sit in front of or talk before men” (Beatrice).

Another participant added that “during certain developmental activities more especially at the decision-making table, some women feel shy to participate, and perhaps they feel inferior to the men in the community…” (Queen Mother 2). Kasi also claimed that

> Even at alaafiewuliju meeting, when we choose some of our members to lead or perform certain tasks, they will just look down upon themselves and refuse to accept those jobs. They at times will tell us that they don’t know anything and as a result they can do the assigned job …

Mercy indicated that “sometimes I fear to participate in development activities because I don’t know how to express myself among the community leaders”

It was clear that the feeling of doubt and uncertainty about their ability to deliver during community development meetings affect the level of participation of some of the women.

\textsuperscript{24} Slang word for jealousy in Ghana
**Household responsibilities and timing for meetings.** From the interviews, it was evident that women in rural Ghana traditionally take care of the house and family. The participants claimed that they always have a high volume of household responsibilities, such as cooking, cleaning, and taking care of their children. This puts a colossal burden on them and limits their ability to attend and make meaningful contributions at community development meetings. Even those who were able to go to those meetings stated that they always get there very late compared to the men. This implies that women’s roles in the house, such as cleaning and cooking, do not provide them ample time to participate fully in community development initiatives. They therefore fall behind in community development processes because of how swamped they are with household responsibilities. This was captured by one of the participants who indicated that:

*Hmmm, what hinders women most is when the woman has a child that is not grown for the child to be left home alone, also if the woman has no one to take care of this child at home … then she always has to stay home instead of attending projects. But on the whole, we do a lot of sacrifices by leaving the children for some few hours … but you are sometimes insulted for that.* (Adoley)

A similar sentiment was expressed by participants who indicated that:

*Whenever there is a general meeting, we normally get there late because we have a lot of work to do in the house before attending … I have children and my husband also lost a brother and his children have increased my burden as a housewife. It is a suffering doing all my household responsibilities and ensuring that all these children are safe at school.* (Matt)
Our responsibilities are too much, the time you will bath the children and prepare food for the family normally delay us. (Kasi)

Too much family responsibilities on us do not allow us to participate in community development activities because we have to do this and that before we go for meetings. Married women are always busy and have little time to participate in such activities. (Beatrice).

We try our best, we are hardworking, but it becomes extremely difficult when it comes to our children’s school fees, we sell charcoal, firewood to make sure that the school fee does not beat us... I have three children, I have to take care of them, leaving them sometimes is a problem and also, I sometimes have to bring food home so participating sometimes in these activities actually disturbs my home. (Mercy)

When they call for community development activities meetings, males are the first people to go followed by females. This is due to the volume of activities we have to do in the house. Men are less busy at home than women therefore if there is any meeting they will go before us (Beatrice).

Also, there were indications that the planning and timing of meetings were often unfavourable. This is considered as a major barrier. As a participant in an interview lamented: “The time they call for meeting, we may still be doing these household responsibilities, the time you will get to the meeting you will either be late or they may have finished” (Kasi). The timing of some of the community development meetings do not often favour the respondents, hence their inability to always take part in these activities.

Multiple roles of women and limited time. The participants claimed that they continue to work within the domestic sphere and outside the home. From the interviews, it came to light
that the multiple roles of women – reproductive and productive roles – have implications on their level of participation in community development activities. The key idea is that women’s roles as wives and mothers combined with their productive roles as farmers, traders, teachers etc. (working in two worlds) are highly demanding in terms of time. According to the participants this was a major barrier to participation in community development. A participant during an interview posited that “Since women have too much responsibilities in this community, they might not have time to participate in community development activities, in that regard their level of participation is low” (Beatrice). Another respondent made a supporting statement by stressing that “your farm may be weedy and you will want to weed when they call for meetings at that time we might find it difficult to attend” (Kasi). Other participants re-echoed this when the indicated that “sometimes some of us are busy either selling or farming and taking care of the family so it prevents us from participating in developmental activities.” (Queen 2)

I will say we don’t have time because some women have to go to the market to sell, or go to farm and at the same time come back home with foodstuffs or whatever they have for the family, some also have kids at home to take care of while others may be breastfeeding. (Adoley)

The participants consider the multiple roles they play as mothers, wives, home managers, farmers, traders among others to pose a great challenge to their ability to actively participate in community development activities.

Western interference – Capitalism and neoliberalism. Participants pointed to the current transition of neoliberal capitalist agenda from the Global West across borders as having an influence on whether rural women will or will not participate in community development processes. Market capitalist and neoliberal ideas as indicated by five participants have shifted
women’s focus from the community to individualism. As the pendulum swings from collective
good to individual interests, the women tend to focus on personal benefits and profits rather than
the traditional communal life which underpin community development in rural Ghana. The
women are now putting their personal gains over community goods. For example, some of the
respondents perceive the NGO and INGOs within their communities as the capitalist agents of
the Western world that spearhead this agenda. That is, evidence from the interviews shows that
the activities of the NGOs have led to the replacement of the communal spirit with a focus on
individuals’ selfish gain. This idea of western interference was captured in one of the interviews
as shown in the following quote:

*But most NGOS have spoilt the community members with money anytime they partake in
activities hence when government officials lead community members in community
development activities; they always expect money in return... Again, if they are around
they come but now it is about the money. The economy is hard. They prefer to out to sell
or doing things that will earn them personal profit other that participating in community
activities* (Beatrice)

A participant re-emphasised the need to make profit to earn a living when she stated that:

‘*anoma antu a )buada*’ (if a bird does not fly, it goes to bed hungry), look at this my
business if I don’t prepare this and sell, I don’t get anything, so I always do it. This most
of the time make it difficult if not impossible to attend any meeting. (Adoley)

The participants emphasized the global capitalist and neoliberal agenda as a barrier to their active
participation in the development process of their communities.

**Colonialism through education and lack of access to information.** Participants
identified education and the use of English language during meetings most especially at the local
government level as a major factor which affect their level of participation in those meetings. Level of formal education and fluency in English language (tools of colonialism) have become the major indicators of people’s ability to meaningfully participate in meetings due to the fact that since Independence, English has been the lingua franca in Ghana. This colonial influence continues to linger in Ghana. Schools are instructed in the English languages, and official local government meetings are all conducted in English. According to the participants, most of them are not exposed to English thereby limiting their participation in community development meetings. It was further found that the men, who often have advantage to go to school, use the English language to wield and conserve control within the context of community development. A participant during an interview indicated that “some women cannot express themselves in English. Those that are educated look down upon the uneducated. Whenever the educated ones especially men talk, there is power behind it.” (Matt). Matt adds that “the level of education is our main challenge, we wish we could do as the men but lack of education”.

An Assembly woman threw more light on this by indicating:

Most at times, women after JHS they learn a trade hence positions like mine, most women do not want to contest for because of their educational background. I have a friend I nominated for a unit committee position but she refused because of her educational background. She later told me, she cannot speak English and as a result will not be able to meaningfully contribute at meetings (Afia).

To buttress this point, participants stated that ideas about intelligence are erroneously equated with people’s level of education and fluency in English. This, according to the participants, prevents most of them from actively participating in community development activities. This is evident in the following passages from the participant interviews:
...most of the men have been to school while few of the women have also been to school, hence during certain developmental activities some of the women feel shy to participate, and perhaps they feel inferior to the educated men in the community. When it comes to expressing themselves in English language, it puts several women off... (Queen mother 2).

*Our eyes are not opened, we cannot read ... if we were able to read or write, we will know how to discuss and do what is right, we are in darkness. It is only the girls of today who have had little education that won’t face this challenge. At meetings, the men say we as women don’t know anything in terms of school and all is towards those of us who are old and never had education.* (Kasi)

*I have not experienced any before but there is this woman in the village who they have a strange name for because she tried mentioning a word which she couldn’t mention well in English language and it became her name since then she doesn’t talk at meetings.* (Yaa)

*Again, Because of our lack of education and because men had the opportunity to go to school, they are normally chosen over us to participate in some meetings. Yes, it is because of that. It is because they are educated, they are mostly favoured, we are not educated to know anything so that inequality will exist, and it’s not anything more than that.* (Diana)

Another reason for the non-participation of some of the participants in community development activities is limited access to information. The inability of the women to easily have access to information concerning meetings and projects is considered a barrier. A respondent during an interview indicated that
If it happens that you don’t have a phone to get information, lack of means of transport, you don’t also have someone on top to send information to you, you will not be able to know what is going on. As part of the Grameen Ghana, I at times get information late because I don’t have a phone and even if I have there is not strong network in this town. If I don’t get the information, how will the other women get it because they rely on me for information. This is a big problem for us. (Diana)

One of the participants in an interview re-echoed this by indicating that “I don’t have a phone to get information. Sometime when they call for meetings they don’t get me, before I realised the meeting is passed” (Kasi). The colonial past of Ghana and the infrastructure deficits of the rural communities were accused of having a trickling down effect on the realities of the participants within the context of community development.

**Patriarchal relations (social norms and cultural values).** Participants identified social norms and cultural values as further constraining factors. The dominant societal and cultural norms in communities were found to prevent women from participating as fully as men in community development. The gender discourses in these communities were found to favour men having control over the process. Women’s place is considered to be ‘in the kitchen’ which discourages them from engaging actively in community development. Those women who actively participate indicated that they frequently encounter chauvinism. Diana indicated that “women suffer because we believe that men are to be our head. This idea that men are the head which is informed by our culture and our upbringing makes men talk anyhow to us during meetings”. Another participant added that “In most communities, men are those chosen to lead more than women though we are also chosen sometimes. Men have more leadership positions than women because we are made to believe that they can work harder than women” (Beatrice)
A participant emphasized the fact that women in these rural communities are expected to play roles in ‘private domain’ other than the public when she indicated that

... at times they go round telling people that women are supposed to be in a kitchen and there is no way I can help the community since I have a husband to attend to, take care of the children, cook so a serious woman cannot be an assembly woman so I have to counter all that. (Mary)

Other participants raised a similar concern in the passages below:

when having a meeting with the elders too, sometimes the ladies feel reluctant to talk because of lack of education and they are not well spoken and also they believe whatever they say their views will not be heard and have to stay in the kitchen. Sometimes if you want to say something you have to get the support of your husband if not people will start calling you names. Sometimes this local people any time you contribute as a youth or woman, they tell you to keep quiet. I faced challenges when I stated but now am ok. They used to tell you to keep quiet since you are young so I remain quiet. You are told yours is the kitchen (Diana)

Errrrr ... in development normally it is very difficult for women to come out even in their own locality because you know that in this country we have a lot of chauvinists. If a woman tries “to raise her head up” she is tagged with different names and at times insulted... this discourages us as women. In general, women are sidelined in this community. The district assemblies are not helping women. (Afia)

Yaa adds that women who try to challenge the system are called names when she stated that:

our culture sometimes does not allow most women to come out because the moment a woman stands out, she will be tag with names like man-woman (obaa
berima) so this makes some of us to be reserved to avoid name calling... As I said earlier. They tag us with names when we stand out. But it is not only Mayera but rather it’s a general sickness, for instance during the district elections, if you are a woman and you want to stand for assembly elections it is very difficult unless you have reached menopause and your children are no longer kids hence you will be tagged as a witch since you want to do the work of a man and also they will say that at the time that your husband needs you, you will be out there doing the work of the assembly so it is very difficult for women to come out”

A participant however justified these gender norms in an interview when she posited that:

I think there is inequality but it is very good because men are the head everywhere. It holds the society. Women are helpmates and men are the head.

Inequality is high here, but it is good. For me I am ok with it because men are the head and what a man can do I may not be able to do it. (Mercy)

Another dimension of the societal norms and values that serves as an obstacle for women is the distinct traditional gender roles. The issue of traditionally established gender roles was widely mentioned during the interviews. A Queen Mother in an interview stated that

Everyone has his role in this community. Likewise every home. Our culture and traditions have spelt out what we are all entitled to do. This brings peace among community members and they don’t complain. Members in the community are ok with the division of labour and responsibilities in this community. (Queen mother 2)

This sentiment was re-echoed by a participant when she said
This community is purely a traditional rural community so certain activities are purely for women while some are for men. When it comes to cleaning, the women are at the forefront but when it comes to weeding, the men lead. Both genders are actively involved in community development activities; however, the participation is based on the activity involved. The activity tells who plays the major role (Yaa)

Another respondent added that “The military for instance has some jobs for men and that for women. So, in general it is in this country ... based on gender we have jobs for women and that for men and it is the same in Mayera (Adoley)

A responded concluded by saying that these gender roles are entrenched to the extent that women who fail to follow them are given names. This ‘name calling’ at times makes women feel uncomfortable rising up against the system, thereby restricting their autonomy. This was evident when a participant stated that “if you don’t follow the gender division of labour you will be tagged as a deviant and given several names. This makes us to stick to institutionalized division of labour.” (Mercy)

Summary of the Chapter

This chapter comprised a presentation of the analysis of the qualitative data. Three major themes emerged during the analysis: ‘ways of participation’, ‘motivations for women’s participation’, and ‘barriers to women’s participation’. The first theme encompassed the myriad of ways through which women engage in community development processes in rural Ghana. Despite the adversity, challenges and threats, the theme shows that some of the women have bounced back and participate in the process in innumerable ways. The second theme included motivations to participation irrespective of the challenges faced. It emphasised that children and protective factors significantly encourage women’s participation. The third theme included
perceptions of colonialism, neoliberalism, gender discourses and traditional gender roles and the ways in which the subordination of women are sustained within the context of community development. In general, the power structure where men hold leadership positions with most women taking up subordinate positions, distinctive features in the Ghanaian culture, and the role of western influence were considered to work together to suppress women in the community development process. The subsequent chapter encompasses the discussion and integration of the results obtained from both the qualitative and quantitative analysis of the data.
Chapter Seven: Discussion of Major Findings

‘Women are the Blacks of the human race.’ Can they tell us then what or who are Black Women? The Blacks of the Blacks of the human race? You would think that Black women did not exist. In fact, they find themselves denied, in this way, by the very women who claim to be fighting for the liberation of all women. (Thiam 1986, p. 114)

Introduction

This study was conducted to respond to the ensuing goals: 1) to examine how the socio-economic status of women influence their level of participation in community development; 2) to examine the experiences of women in the community development context in rural Ghana; and, 3) to examine the obstacles which hinder women’s participation in community development processes in rural Ghana. The major findings were presented according to these goals. This presentation was done within the context of existing literature. That is, this chapter provides a discussion and an illumination of the major findings of the study and coalesced these findings with extant literature. All these discussions were done within the framework of the trans-national feminist theory.

Experiences of Women in the Community Development Context in Rural Ghana

This study shows that the level of participation of women in community development is a serious challenge worthy of being concerned about in rural Ghana. In my sample of 188 women, 56.9% somehow participate (medium level of participation) in community development activities while 6.4% actively participate (very high level of participation) in these activities. The average score of their level of participation showed that, despite the fact that most of the women somehow participated in community development activities, only a few (6.4%) were actively involved in the processes. Community-based studies in Ghana have reported results
similar to this finding (Adjei-Mensah, Antwi & Dauda, 2014; Apusigah, 2002; Asiimwe, 1998; Opare, 2005). Adjei-Mensah, Antwi and Dauda, (2014), and Asiimwe (1998) found that community development participation is dominated by men at the expense of women. In line with our finding they found that few women actively participate or are appointed into positions of authority in community development.

Again, a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) on participants' level of participation to their community of residence indicates that the level of participation of women in Bolni was not significantly different from that of Yawhimakrom, but that of women in Mayera Faase was significantly different from the other two. This can be explained by the fact that that Bolni and Yawhimakrom are traditional communities while Mayera Faase is a community of settlers.

Furthermore, the study demonstrates that some women in rural Ghana show a high level of resilience against all odds and take leadership roles in community development initiatives. This finding illustrates that women have the capacity to manage and adapt to the challenges they face. It was clear from the study that the adaptive capacities of women in the rural communities are built through their involvement in micro-loan schemes, the local government system, health volunteerism, communal labour, vocational training, educational campaigns, representation of women at district assemblies, and in the Community Advocacy Committees. Peterman, Behrman and Quisumbing, (2011) confirm this level of resilience among women in their review of empirical literature on gender differences in developing countries. They argue that rural women tend to develop their level of resilience and increase their knowledge through their involvement in local organizations and social networks. In line with this finding, other evidence shows that community development participation assists community members especially women improve their lives and build upon their skills.
It should be noted that the rural women interviewed were prepared to live with and not resist the existing discrimination and challenges. Women in Africa, especially those in the rural communities are socialised to value communal and family cohesion. They therefore take on the responsibility of maintaining family unity and addressing the needs of their children, and for preserving the cultural and societal traditions of their communities, in the face of existing gender discrimination. The essentialist nature of western feminist analysis would not be able to capture or account for this unique and critical element in the life of rural women in African societies.

Western feminists are engulfed with colonial discourses and consider women of the third world countries to be in need of a Western saviour (Mohanty, 1991; Spivak, 1995). Transnational feminist theory generally contests these colonial discourses and “affirms women’s agency while recognizing women’s oppression in multiple sites, through colonialism, nationalism, fundamentalism, patriarchies and global economic structures. Agency is recognized as partial and limited by a variety of historical and structural constraints.” (Deepak, 2011, p. 7)

Western feminists are also concerned with issues such as female control over reproduction, variation and choice within human sexuality, as well as debates about the female body while African womanists are heterosexual, pro-natal, and concerned with "bread, butter, and power" issues (Gaidzanwa, 2013; Mikell, 1997). I however think that arguing from this standpoint ignores the realities of Ghanaian and African women who are not heterosexual and/or prenatal. Ghanaian women just like most African women are more concerned about access to land, the right to own property, control of food distribution, health care, and support for their families. These concerns are peculiar to the socio-economic, political and cultural context of Ghana and Africa in general. These kinds of peculiarities of experiences and concerns of African women are what transnational feminism seeks to embrace in the analysis of women’s struggles.
and issues across borders (Grewal & Kaplan, 1994; Mohanty, 2003; Robertson, 1992). The transnational feminist movement rallies women taking into consideration their subjective experiences with the intention of providing activism for gender equality in the face of enforced gender inequalities across borders. In the effort towards ensuring equality they are rallied to resist the forms of discrimination they may face (Baksh, 2015).

The resistance to gender inequality brings to the discussion the reliance on NGOs, INGOs and governmental organisations as means of women empowerment. This study found governmental and NGOs’ programmes to be the major social organisations that create the opportunity for women to build their adaptive capacities within the community development context in rural Ghana. This opportunity to acquire skills through community development activities and programmes motivated them to engage in those activities. This finding is supported by Egyir’s (2013) findings that World Vision Ghana run micro-credit schemes, support the education of girls, and assist women farmers. These, she argues, help women and the vulnerable in these communities contribute to the development of the communities. Shamsuddoha and Nazneen, (2003) add that the social organisations provide consciousness training for women. Contrary to this finding, Mannan (2009) found that the neoliberal climate and limited funds have made most NGOs to be more profit-driven rather than focusing on the real needs and concerns of their target population. This is what he describes as the NGO “poverty enterprise.” Thus, their focus has now been geared towards “advancing the capitalist welfare of NGOs” (Karim, 2013 p. 2).

Notwithstanding Western feminism’s attempts to be intersectional, wide-ranging, and inclusive, it still does not embrace the different values, experiences and needs of different women groups and identities. As argued by McCrayer (2015), Western feminism operates
under the same systems of oppressions instead of dismantling them. Rather than
rejecting the privileges many feminists receive as white, cisgender, non-disabled women,
they perpetually attempt to assimilate the rest of us up to some capitalistic, imperialist
standard of whiteness. (p. 2)

This assimilation is accomplished through the programmes of governmental and Non-
Governmental Organisations. They are active actors of the Western feminist colonial project.
The framework used by these organisations to achieve the feminist agenda is influenced by the
colonial discourse of the Western saviour. The relationship between these organisations and
women reinforces the power hierarchy between the West and third world women. This is a
problem because third world women are conceived as a homogenous group – “the oppressed” –
discounting their socio-cultural diversity. As argued by Parpart, Staudt and Rai (2002)
“…contradictory institutions as the World Bank, Oxfam and many more radical NGOs …
improve productivity within the status quo than to foster social transformation” (p. 1).

While INGOs and NGOs argue that they work to empower Ghanaian women, often these
are influenced by their funders. The upward accountability (Courville, 2006) of NGOs to funders
and donors hamper their efforts to addresses the felt needs of the rural women. Practically, the
funders regulate the agenda of these organisations with the local people having little to no
control over their activities. The activities of these donor-informed organisations have not been
able to challenge the status quo but rather superimpose and safeguard Western feminists,
neoliberal and capitalist ideals on Ghanaian women. Roman (2004) confirms this by arguing that
NGOs serve to protect Western feminists as well as middle-class hegemony. Over a decade now,
most of the funds and attention have been shifted towards reproductive health and
contraceptives. These are not actually what African women need and hence missing the mark.
This speaks to the idea of a white or Western saviour syndrome pushed forward by Western feminists through these organisations.

**Motivation Factors for Women’s Participation in Community Development Processes**

A significant finding of the study is that interest in the needs of children serves as one of the major motivational factors for women to get involved in community development activities. Consistent with this finding, Nobles and Frankenberg (2009) found women’s community development participation to be strongly correlated with the well-being of their children. It means the wellbeing of children aids the mobilisation of women for community development activities (Sindato, Kimbita & Kibona, 2008). Likewise, Wells (2013) found that the ability of mothers to provide a good standard of living for their children is a strong predictor of their community, family and labour force involvement. According to Wells (2013) the fundamental cultural expectations that influence women’s involvement in the family and community are: “1) children are principally the responsibility of mothers and 2) mothers should immerse themselves in the care and nurture of their children” (p. 87). This informs the day-to-day activities of mothers. Garey (1999) adds that a woman who is unable to make the interest of her children paramount in every activity she engages in is likely to feel guilty and exhausted. Their participation in community development activities strengthens their conviction that they have the authority to shape the future of their children. This speaks to the centrality of family and children in the life of Ghanaian women.

This is in line with Uka (1985) who stated that “… in fact parents (more especially women) labour to train their children in order that they might support them” (p. 190). This underscores the centrality of children in the life of African women. The birth of a child confers on mothers the responsibility of securing a good future of the children. In Africa, the ideal life is
to be venerated by one’s own family more especially one’s children. Therefore, the future of a woman’s children demonstrates the worthiness of the life she lived. In general, motherhood and child nurturing are central to African women (Jacobs, 2011; Norwood, 2013; Phillips 2006). This highlights one of the key tenets of Africana Womanism which is “mothering and nurturing” (Hudson-Weems, 2000; Hudson-Weems, 1994, p. 73). Thus, African Womanists are committed to the art of mothering, caregiving and childrearing (Collins, 2001; Hattery & Smith, 2007; Norwood, 2013).

It was also found from this study that the collective/social support that women receive from participating in community development activities motivates them to take part in the processes. That is, rural women use this avenue to help solve both social and personal problems. In line with this finding, Woolcock and Narayan, (2000) found that the synergy among community members including women is facilitated by an interdependent approach that incorporates the acceptance and promotion of women’s participation with the promotion of common good. Social support and the possibility to address shared problems through community-driven activities constitute one of the key promoters of collective actions (Saegert, Thompson, & Warren, 2001; Woolcock & Narayan, 2000). Thus, when there is gross gender discrimination in communities, there is always a lack of opportunity for the communities to capitalize on the existing assets to improve the lives of their residents equally (Durston, 2000; Durston & Duhart, 2003 as cited in Aizenberg, 2014). A woman’s commitment to community development activities may increase if she or her community stands to benefit from these participatory activities (Renedo, Marston, Spyridonidis, & Barlow, 2015). Equally, she may be detached from the process if there is no obvious positive effect of participation (George et al., 2015).
Another finding from this study is that the presence or absence of various protective factors and familial support impact the ways in which women participate and understand the need for them to participate in community development process. That is, family members – husbands, parents and siblings - play an important role in supporting and influencing the level of participation of women in community development. The family-centered nature of African women and society as highlighted by Africana Womanism is highlighted in this finding. The family is considered a key pillar of the African society and Ghanaian society to be specific. According to Mbiti (1975) “each person in African traditional life lives in or as a part of the family” (p. 175). The institution of a family through heterosexual marriage is a virtue in Ghana. Although the families may have challenges, the survival of familial relationship is paramount to women and as a result strive to maintain the family fabric intact. The Ghanaian society is “family-centred, and not self-centred” (Hudson-Weems, 1994). As argued by Kisembo, Magesa, and Shorter (1998), “the family community was the fundamental element of the African, this basic sphere of action, through which [both men and women] became integrated with the larger, human community… [both men and women] always acted from within the sphere of the family” (p. 202). This family-centered nature of women and the Ghanaian society at large makes familial support for women one of the key determinants as to whether they will participate effectively or not in community development activities. Africana Womanists argue that unlike Western feminists, African women are men companionable. For instance, lesbian separatists and radical feminists are perceived to promote ideas that reject marriage and motherhood which lead to manhating (Dosekun, 2007; Norwood, 2013, Tamale, 2006). According to Norwood (2013), these manhating ideologies are considered to be at odds with African values and ideals hence the
rejection of Western feminism by most African women. African women crave a reciprocally supportive relationship with their husbands, fathers and brothers (Hudson-Weems, 1994).

It was further found from the study that the punishments associated with the non-involvement of community members in community development activities such as communal labour force some of the women to participate in the process. Bonye (2011) argues even though … that there are adequate policies and programmes that create the enabling environment to ensure that local people participate and articulate their views in the development process, the reality is that, these policies and programmes are not responsive enough to the needs and demands of the people hence the need for local laws to ensure effective community organization. (p. 33)

This kind of participation is what Andre, Martin, and Lanmafankpotin (2012) refer to as “obligatory institutionalized participation”. (p. 1). Andre, Martin, and Lanmafankpotin, (2012) when discussing citizen participation indicate that “the mechanisms of obligatory institutionalized participation are defined by law, and citizens must take part in them or risk a penalty, generally in the form of fines …” (p. 1). In most rural communities in Ghana, the unwritten laws make participation in communal labour obligatory. These unwritten laws are often enforced by the traditional leaders and unit committee members. Fines are penalties used for households that refuse to contribute their quota to the development of the communities. Despite the fact that these fines may ensure some level of participation of the people in community development, this kind of participation is a ‘coerced’ form of participation other than a voluntary one. Another drawback of this strategy is its ability to continue to fuel the existing class relations and consequently affect negatively the members of the communities who are in low economic class. Since majority of women are poor, they are mostly affected on the bases of
their gender and class. The quantitative findings sum up this discussion when it came to light that the economic situation of women had an inverse relationship with their level of participation. That is, the lower the socio-economic status of women the more likely they are to participate in community development activities such as communal labour.

Finally, the results of this study indicated that women’s civic engagement is positively related to higher levels of women’s participation in community development activities. Similar to this finding, some researchers have found civic engagement to be positively correlated with the level of political participation of women (Claibourn & Martin, 2007; Curtis, Baer & Grabb, 2001). Civic engagement “lays the foundations of political engagement and participation as political action is already being undertaken” (ARDD-Legal Aid, 2016, p. 4). Brand (2003) acknowledges that women face several challenges in their effort to participate in the development of their communities. She further adds that it becomes easy for them to participate in the development space if their engagement is done through civil societies and organizations. Ekman and Amma (2012) however, argue that civic engagement cannot be considered a necessary condition for political participation. This ‘latent’ form of participation is important in understanding political behavior but does not necessarily lead to high level of participation in decision-making and political processes.

The Intersections of Colonialism, Patriarchy and Neoliberalism

It was found from the qualitative study that patriarchal norms and values constitute a major barrier to the participation of women in community development processes in rural communities in Ghana. It was also found in the quantitative study that community level variables such as the existence of measures in the community to support women, the acceptability of women’s participation in the community and the positive view of traditional leaders about
women’s participation were predictive of women’s level of participation in community
development processes at the significant level of 0.01. These variables are shaped by the existing
patriarchal norms within the community. Facio (2013) defines patriarchy as

a form of mental, social, spiritual, economic and political organization/structuring of
society produced by the gradual institutionalization of sex-based political relations
created, maintained and reinforced by different institutions linked closely together to
achieve consensus on the lesser value of women and their roles. These institutions
interconnect not only with each other to strengthen the structures of domination of men
over women, but also with other systems of exclusion, oppression and/or domination
based on real or perceived differences between humans, creating States that respond only
to the needs and interests of a few powerful men. (p. 2)

Male dominated power structures in the rural communities in Ghana which cut across family and
all other social structures and institutions can be considered a means for the entrenchment of the
patriarchal system of women subordination. According to Labeodan (2007);

The patriarchal system is held in high esteem in most African Societies. As a result of
this, women… are to be seen and not heard… there is so much suppression and
oppression of women by men who are supported by the cultures……. They used certain
facts about the physiology of man and woman as the basis for constituting a set of
identities that work to empower men and disempower women. (p. 113)

This acceptable system deprives women more than men the freedom to direct the economic,
social or cultural affairs of society, and allows men to take leadership roles at the expense of
women. This is emphasized by Gilligan (1982) who posits that
Women’s deference is rooted not only in their social subordination but also in the substance of their moral concern. Sensitivity to the needs of others and the assumption of responsibility for taking care lead women to attend to voices other than their own and to include in their judgment other points of view. (p. 3)

People’s thought about women with regards to what they are expected to do mainly affects their level of involvement in the development of their communities. Women are considered to be confined to playing productive and caring roles. This is re-echoed by Eitzer (1998) who found that, “the responsibility of women for domestic maintenance and child care frees men of such duties but limits the capacity of women.” (p. 402)

All these patriarchal norms and values are attributable to the socialisation process of Ghanaians which ascribes care and domestic roles to women. For instance, the patriarchal social framework in Ghana has made most rural people continue to view women as subservient to men. Women in most cases feel that local government leadership is a space solely for men, thereby refusing to vie for such positions and those who by chance take up such positions are generally comfortable with the back seats (Ngara & Ayabam, 2013).

As indicated by Engster (2007) gender ascribed roles such as care and domestic responsibilities for women trade-off the ability of women to realise their goals and effectively contribute to the development of their communities. That is, the relegation of women to the domestic space greatly thwarts the opportunity for women to participate in the public sphere in rural communities in Ghana. In a nut shell, it can be argued that rural women face heightened challenges and risks due to the patriarchal cultural and social norms that define the existing gender discourses and stereotypes. For example, social customs and women’s caregiver and
domestic roles limit their level of active participation in the development decisions and activities that affect their lives, communities and families.

It was further found that the high volume of household responsibilities such as cooking, cleaning, and taking care of their children and the timing for meetings serve as challenges for women in rural communities. The domestic and care responsibilities threat faced by women continuously results in community development challenges. Hence, it is imperative that in the discussion of community development problems faced by women, their household responsibilities are given the necessary attention. In line with this finding, several studies show that a “motherhood penalty,” is often paid by women in most communities (Crittenden, 2002; Hewlett, 2007; Muhonja, 2017; Samman, Presler-Marshall, & Jones, 2016; Williams, 2000). The most important penalty paid by women is time. They face challenges with regards to navigating between household and family responsibilities and participation in community development activities. This makes “Only women with supportive families run for office, whereas men are more likely to run in spite of discouragement from their families.” (Silbermann, 2015, p. 126). Similar to this, Horne, Johnson, Galambos, & Krahn (2017) found that women perform more domestic tasks compare to men. They further indicate that this consistent pattern of household responsibilities of women tends to limit their ability to engage in other tasks outside of the home.

Contrary to this finding, Hudson-Weems (1994) argues that, “The Africana woman has never been restricted to the home and household chores, and her male counterpart had more often than not shared the role as homemaker” (p. 64). This is partly untrue of rural Ghanaian men, who mostly see the kitchen and the performance of household chores such as dish washing, and meal preparation as the responsibility of women. Women however, dictate and control most of the things that happens in the home. Indeed, in addition to doing household chores, women play a
maternal role in the lives of their children. Ogunyemi (1996) concludes that African women’s household responsibilities and maternal roles both suppress and empower them. With regards to the empowerment aspect of household responsibilities, Lahiri (2003) attributes power to women in domestic roles such as wives and mothers. She argues that the household responsibilities of wives and mothers positively impact their consciousness and their shared bonding, which she considers as their prodigious power. Sanday (2008) concludes that:

Women in their roles as mothers and senior women ensured the performance of practices that authenticated, regenerated and nurtured the family. Their leadership was therefore not one of subjugation of subjects, but that of responsibility to conjugate—to knit and regenerate social ties in the here and now and in the here-after, through their leadership in upholding tradition (p. 1).

Despite the fact that scholars such as Sanday (2008) and Lahiri (2003) argue that women’s roles as mothers empower them, I see these roles to suppress them more than empowering them. For instance, within the context of community development, husbands more often than not capitalize on these household and childrearing responsibilities and cultural roles to limit the level of women’s participation in public life.

Another significant finding of the study is that the multiple roles of women – reproductive and productive roles – and limited time constitute a major barrier to the participation of women in community development processes in rural Ghana. Women in Ghana play multiple roles combining both traditional and contemporary roles. They are mothers and wives, and work outside of the home at the same time. The socio-cultural norms and the economic situation of African communities put the expectation on women to engage in income generating activities as well as perform domestic roles (Oduyoye, 2000). The performance of
these roles and the transition to public life result in lack of time for themselves and to actively participate in community development activities. Similar to our finding, Gidudu, Enose, and Betty, (2014) found that women’s duties within and outside the home have negative implications on the opportunities available for them to take up leadership positions in the development of their communities. This challenge is what I refer to as “capitalist penalty”\textsuperscript{25} relating to time, inability to take good care of themselves, and to the persistent withdrawal of women from society. Any woman involved in both reproductive and productive responsibilities faces time constraints navigating between household responsibilities, job and a community development position because they are more disadvantaged relative to men.

A key finding of this study is that financial constraints and poverty pose a challenge to women in the rural areas of Ghana in their attempt to actively participate in the development of their communities. Getting involved in certain community development activities in Ghana involves some financial commitments. Generally, the relatively pathetic poor financial disposition of rural Ghanaian women is a critical challenge which mostly accounts for their poor participation in certain developmental activities. According to GSS (2015) there is a higher incidence of poverty among rural women. Adjasi and Osei (2007) therefore consider poverty in Ghana to be a rural phenomenon. They conclude that rural women’s lack or limited access to credit facilities and resources contribute to their dearth of fiscal strength.

Even though the lack of financial resources poses a challenge to the women as depicted by the qualitative findings of the study, the quantitative data adds another layer to the discussion.

\textsuperscript{25} In the community, wives and mothers encounter systematic impediments in terms of time, perceived benefits relative to active the participation in the community due to the capitalist ideology that has recently overshadowed the communal living.
It was found from the quantitative data that the general socio-economic status of women was negatively related to levels of women’s participation in community development activities. That is, the lower a woman’s socio-economic status, the more involved they were in community development activities such as communal labour. It is plausible to argue per this finding that the fines associated with non-attendance in communal labour push women with low socio-economic status to always attend communal labour. Their inability to pay the fines motivates them to participate in those activities or get someone from their household to represent them if need be. Contrary to this finding, Pambè, Gnoumou and Kaboré (2013) found that in Burkina Faso, socio-economic status has an association with women’s involvement in decision-making in communities. They found that while the level of education of women has a strong relationship with their involvement in decision-making, their household wealth status has a weaker relationship with their participation in decision-making in their communities.

It was also found that lateral oppression constituted a challenge to women’s participation. The challenges women face within the context of community development do not only occur between men and women but that women also fight against each other. Georgatos (2017) contends that the discussion of lateral oppression can well be understood when we recognize and critically analyze its historical antecedents – colonialism and Christianity. In the discussion of this, Chengu (2015) argues that

Unbeknown to many, most of human history took place in Africa, where women were equal, if not superior, to men. For thousands of years, African societies were matriarchal, and they prospered. By bringing an oppressive form of colonial Christianity to Africa, Europeans replaced millennia of prosperous matriarchy with oppressive patriarchy. (p. 1)
Chengu further adds that the Christian patriarchies and their masculine fundamentalism overthrew the existing pre-capitalist and pre-colonial female dominance in Africa. The Christian patriarchy and the other offshoots of colonialism such as capitalism have made women angry and this anger is what is misdirected towards their fellow women (Georgatos, 2017). That is the anger at the patriarchal social system - which is institutionalised by their countries and community’s colonial oppressor histories - is what is erroneously veered towards other women.

It was found from this study that women’s low self-esteem constitutes one of the major threats to their participation. In line with this finding, Pryor, Hurtado, Saenz, Santos, and Korn (2009) found that “women are far less likely to claim personal characteristics such as leadership and public speaking skills, competitiveness, social skills, and popularity” (as cited in CIRCLE factsheet, 2013, p. 4), all of which are considered requisite characteristics one needs to possess in order to be able to actively participate in community development activities. Gender discourses in communities symbolically inform women’s self-experience (Dimen, 1991; Markus & Oyserman, 1988). According to Dimen (1991), gender discourse constitutes a “force field” that is inseparably tangled with representations of women as to what they have the capacity to engage in or not. Dimen further adds that this “force field sets the terms for self-experience” and codes the “problems of the self” with regards to women (p. 334). Diagnosticating the force field provides a greater understanding that women’s non-involvement in community development “may be a problem equally of gender as of self” (p. 338). It can be further argued that the low level of participation of women in community activities is “a kind of “live” patriarchal discourse that sets the stage for the symbolic coupling of femininity with what are otherwise non-gendered though far from neutral aspects of the self, such as passivity, dependence, inferiority” (Anjali, 2016). Thus, the patriarchal norms of Ghanaian society have relegated women in the rural
communities to the background thereby making some women feel incapable of taking up leadership positions within the context of community development.

Another significant finding of the study is that the Western interference through capitalist and neoliberal agendas have been a significant threat to the involvement of women in community development activities in rural Ghana. The current transition of neoliberal capitalist agenda from the Global West across borders is found to have an influence on whether rural women will or will not participate in community development processes. Current neoliberal capitalist economic policies favour the acquisition and safeguarding of capital and wealth by individuals across the globe. Engels (1997) highlights the challenges associated with the emergence of a global capitalist system and its forces when he indicates that:

Since the exploitation of one class by another is the basis of civilization, its whole development moves in a continuous contradiction. Every advance in production is at the same time a retrogression in the condition of the exploited class, that is of the great majority. What is a boon for the one is necessarily a bane for the other; each new emancipation of one class always means a new oppression of another class. (p. 28)

Globalisation and capitalism have led to the problem of gender inequity and inequality where the capital and wealth associated with the global economy is unevenly distributed between men and women. These inequalities and pressures have pushed some women’s focus from the community to individualism. As the pendulum swings from collective good to individual interests, women turn to focus on personal benefits and profits rather than the traditional communal life which underpin community development in rural Ghana. Some of the women are now putting their personal gains over community goods.
Again, actors such as governmental organisations and NGOs have taken up the responsibility of providing basic necessities such as health care, education and water for most rural folks in Ghana. Most of these actors’ roles and programmes are shaped by the dictates of their funders. Wallace (2004) sums this up when she indicates that:

NGOs increasingly rely on official donor funding and goodwill, and as the conditionalities attached to that aid increase, they are inevitably drawn into supporting and even spreading many aspects of the dominant global agenda. (p. 203)

There are polarizing thoughts concerning the role of NGOs in developing countries such as Ghana. A school of thought argues that NGOs as “‘do gooders’ promote liberal democracy, while others see it as imperial spreaders of Eurocentric hegemony” (Nasir, 2014, p. 1). It was found in this study that NGOs and their programmes in rural communities continue to perpetuate imperial power and patriarchal ideals. In line with this finding, Klees (2002) found that NGOs are influenced by neo-liberalism and as a result their means of operation maintain other than addressing systemic inequalities. As the “missionaries of the new era” (Tandon, 2006), Petras and Veltmeyer (2001) stress that NGOs are nurturing “a new type of cultural and economic colonialism” (p. 132). Even those NGOs that pride themselves in the promotion of gender sensitive development tend to perpetuate what they seek to address. The white-privileged feminist ideologies championed by these gender-sensitive NGOs create a distorted analysis of sexism because they often ignore the material realities of African women. Thus, they ignore how patriarchy, poverty and lack of education intersect with gender. As Crenshaw (1989) indicates “the doctrinal manifestations of this single-axis framework … contribute to the marginalization of Black women” (p. 140). That is, this “single-axis” framework (Crenshaw, 1989) of implementation of development programmes by NGOs miss the mark with respect to African
women’s experiences and superimpose the Western feminists and neoliberalist ideals on African women.

Finally, the study found that colonialism and education constitute major barriers to women’s participation in rural communities in Ghana. Similar to this finding, Dogo (2014) found that male dominance and the passivity of women in the development processes of most African countries can be attributed to the colonization and the patriarchal structures the system instituted.

Within the rural Ghanaian context, the West through colonialism and its forces such as capitalism and neoliberalism has had a great influence on the conditions of women. The colonial state and the introduction of capitalist forces in Africa have and continue to change traditional social institutions as well as assist in the consolidation of patriarchal control over women. Undoubtedly, colonialism and the establishment of a capitalist political system have impoverished both men and women in Africa (Yeboah, 2017). However, women suffer the most under this imposed capitalist system. The resource and power bases of women continue to weaken while the few elites who are mostly men accumulate capital and strengthen their power bases (Mies, 2010). It is important to argue that women’s subordination cannot be attributed exclusively to the needs of capitalism and colonialism. African men dance to the tune of these systems and contributed their part in the subordination of women. They worked in collaboration with the patriarchal colonial structures to assist in the decline of the power bases of women (Wamagatta, 2008).

According to Lovett (1989), colonial rule accepted the existing traditional structure of power and modified aspects to ensure that the colonizers amassed capital and made it easy to control the colonized. It is argued that the traditional pattern of authority in Africa during the precolonial period was matriarchal rather than patriarchal, providing women with more political,
social and economic authority and power (Chengu, 2015, Engels. 1962). Engels states that male
domination started when mother-right was replaced by patriarchy. The relationship between
indigenous and European patriarchal forces and European introduced capitalist structures ended
up exposing women to new forms of oppression and domination not found in previous African
societies (Staudt, 1989). Thus, the existing power balance between men and women in most
African societies changed when colonization begun due to the introduction of cash crop farming,
money-based economy, Western education and Christianity (Derrickson, 2002; Dogo, 2014;
Okome, 2002).

Education and language are other imperialist tools used to enslave the mind of the
African. As found in this study, there is a significant relationship between low level of education
and women’s level of participation in community development activities. The linguistic and
discursive practices associated with colonization and education played an instrumental role in
assigning low prestige to African languages. Although most African countries gained
independence during the 1960s, we are still linguistically colonized. In line with this, Mateene
(1985) indicates that:

All African countries use European languages … in nearly all their official businesses,
and almost to the exclusion and to the detriment of the national African languages… In
this way, African countries obligatorily use foreign colonial languages in almost all-
important fields where the national languages should have full vent, or even the exclusive
right of use. Thus, we are forced to admit that all African countries are today
linguistically dependent on Western Europe from which they declare themselves to be
politically independent. (p. 41)
Within the Ghanaian context for instance, there are over forty (40) local languages. However, English is the lingua franca. The local languages are not used at official ceremonies and for official duties. Since independence, teaching and learning in schools are done through English to the detriment of the local languages. That is, English is the medium of instruction at every level of education in Ghana. It is recently that the Ghana Education Service is considering the use of the local languages to teach at the basic level. People’s level of fluency in English is erroneously equated to their level of knowledge. As a result, a large percentage of women due to lack of formal education and poor English language skills limit their access to development processes as well as political power. As stated by Myers-Scotton (1993), men who have had the opportunity to attend school and have good English language skills have developed an ‘elite closure’ – limiting women’s access to community development processes and political influence. It can therefore be argued that English linguistic imperialism has become a symbol of power and knowledge.

The economic, linguistic and discursive practices of colonization are the architects of the current realities of women in Africa. This is summed up by Dogo (2014) when she posited that:

Consequently, as a result of the displacement of women, economically, and their relegation to production of food crops in the new capitalist system, and in addition, a new religion that taught the subordination of the woman to men, and also an educational system that also fostered male dominance, which more men had the opportunity to obtain than women; the system of gender relations changed in the Nigerian society from a complementary one to a female subordinating one. The colonial Nigerian society was therefore a patriarchal one and even with the demise of colonialism, the society remained patriarchal as it is today. (p. 274)
Conclusion

Rural Ghanaian women are marginalized due to their socio-economic status, and their gender. The study found a lot of complexities in the forces that contribute to the discriminations faced by the women as they relate to Africa's past and present, the traditions and gender discourses in their communities. Some other predominant issues faced by the women relate to behavioral and idiosyncratic patterns associated with their self-esteem and socialisation. I believe that identifying the special interests of rural women is one of the main ways of addressing the knottiness of community development culture in rural Ghana.

The universalized analysis and depictions of women from non-Western countries such as Ghana by Western feminists fail to address their subjective experiences as argued by transnational feminists (Hudson-Weems, 1994). This chapter, through the transnational feminist lens, discussed the experiences and situations of women within the context of community development in rural Ghana. Recognizing the particular struggle of Ghanaian women helps to demonstrate the importance of understanding their histories as opposed to the monolithic representations of them as silenced and lacking agency, by Western feminists. Globalization, colonialism and capitalism were the central issues that shaped the conditions of Ghanaian women. Gender-sensitive Ghanaian NGOs and activists must work towards empowering women by taking into consideration their subjective experiences and the historical (colonialism) and current (neoliberal and capitalist ideologies) fundamental causes of the discriminations they face within the context of community development.
Chapter Eight: My Reflections

Introduction

Researchers, mostly qualitative researchers, today continue to struggle with an ongoing crisis in methodology: a “triple crisis of representation, legitimation, and praxis” (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000, p. 17). Qualitative research requires thoughtful reflection and is strengthened by researchers using journaling as a technique to process their reactions to interviews. A reflexive exploration of methodological dilemmas or challenges of qualitative research can provide a starting point for assessing the consequences and transformative potential of the research. This chapter therefore encompasses my personal reflections throughout the research process.

Personal Reflections

Journaling and reflexive writing have not been part of my academic training and career until I entered into this PhD program. This has been a challenging part of the program for me, but I have the belief that to be progressive I cannot remain in my comfort zone. In terms of keeping journals, I have tried to do so since the beginning of this research, but this has never been easy for me. I purchased more than a few jotters to keep record of activities, my ideas and challenges throughout this study. The jotters have been almost empty until the period of the data analysis. I had never thought I could remember to record or keep a journal. This research has imbued in me such discipline and I have been quite unsettled during this process. I have come to the realisation that one salient component of social work research is reflection upon my actions and feelings. As a budding social work researcher and educator, being creative is critical, both in research and practice; for life may throw at me something new that I have never experienced before.
Until this project, my ideas about research have been more positivist in nature. I had seen myself as objective and innocent as a researcher. Over-reliance on professional and researcher objectivity have been major platforms in my research and professional education. Journaling and reflexivity have therefore been scratchy, nevertheless indispensable, activities for me. Through this research, these ideas (innocence and objectivity) have been challenged as contentious, unreasonable and at times unrealistic.

The reflexive approach to research has been argued to enhance the quality of research. Through the research, I have been challenged to extend my understanding of how my position and interests as a researcher impact all stages of a research process. In divergence with my engrained conventional and positivist (impersonal) approach to research, I have learnt to acknowledge the implications of my own history, experiences, beliefs and culture on research processes and outcomes. For example, data analysis methods in research carry the epistemological, ontological and theoretical assumptions of the researcher hence making them subjective other than neutral (Alvesson and Sköldberg, 2000). Reflexivity is essential in the “deconstructive exercise for locating the intersections of author, other, text, and world, and for penetrating the representational exercise itself” (Macbeth, 2001, p. 35). It should however be pointed out that reflexivity cannot be considered as the only right way of doing research. Many scholars have questioned its claim of validity and methodological high ground (Eakin & Mykhalovskiy, 2003; Pillow, 2003). For instance, Pillow (2003) asserts that the adoption of reflexivity poses a great limitation on the critical representation of the voices of the research participants. The adoption of reflexivity is meant to improve upon my level of versatility in research other than seeing one research methodological tool as the only right way of doing research.
Keeping a reflexive journal has been a great challenge to me. The struggle I have is to be able to reflect on my story without bringing into it the story of others since stories and identities are relational. Thus, there will be no self without others and vice-versa. The questions that continue to cloud my thought process are: “is the story I am about to tell mine and mine alone to share? Won’t the sharing of this story be a betrayal to those whose stories may slip into it? Can I isolate myself and my story from others?” These questions may have been influenced by the ‘colonization’ of my mind by Western higher education. This may have made me see myself as separate from the other which is inconsistent with the community minded approaches Ghanaians and most Africans in general have. Another struggle I have concerns the risks and consequences of being open about my private life. What urges me on to still share is a quotation from Ofsted (2004). “The most distinctive of these very good teachers is that their practice is the result of careful reflection ... They themselves learn lessons each time they teach, evaluating what they do and using these self-critical evaluations to adjust what they do next time” (Ofsted 2004, p. 1).

The central philosophical questions that I continue to think about are “What is the purpose of a university education? Is it to learn what to think or to learn how to think? What I appreciate about my education till the last few days before the first scheduled date for my proposal approval meeting was the fact that I had been taught how to think but not what to think. Throughout my coursework, I was given assignments which were geared towards helping me to learn how to think. Comments and feedback from my advisors made me critically think about my ideas as well as my epistemological and ontological stance. These experiences helped me with regards to being receptive to new concepts, evaluating them and deciding for myself which of those ideas and concepts make sense per the available evidence. This training has been based on
the philosophy of competition of ideas. I was made to believe that this may seem scratchy since my long-held ideas may be challenged. However, this will help in producing an open-minded intellectually agile scholar rather than a one-dimensionally minded person, trained only in the art of repeating what is told.

I was worried based on an experience I had with one of my committee members who had different epistemological stance as well as different framework, withdrew from my committee. I began to wonder whether I should change my epistemological stance or not. Fortunately, my advisors despite the differences in our epistemological stance have after this experience pushed me to learn to think rather than learn what to think.

These struggles and learning have immensely made me feel unsettled. I used not to easily accept new ideas that challenge what I already know but these challenges have put me on the road of developing the attitude of being opened to new ideas that challenge what I already know. Through this experience, I have imbued in myself a sense of seeing myself through the eyes of others. That is, I have developed an excellent reflexive awareness of myself and other. For instance, as a man who grew up in a patriarchal culture that in many sense subordinates women, I had been following the dictates of the society so as to feel adjusted in the system. However, my experience with my mother (of blessed memory) has empowered me to explore the plethora of ways to play my quota to better the conditions of women. In doing so, I began to embrace feminist ideas and work towards breaking free from the patriarchal values that had betrayed me and kept me from becoming aware of my unearned privileges as a man. As I came to value and ascribe to the feminist thinking, I have become aware that I embodied patriarchal thoughts and beliefs. To this end, I cannot help but to ask the following questions: have I been blind to the plight of women all these while as a means to feel adjusted to the dominant culture? Have I
internalized patriarchal values and belief systems? Unearthing the answers to these questions is unsettling as it urges me to examine the historical roots of gender inequalities and my place in perpetuating discrimination against women. Quinn (2000) emphasizes that transformational change happens when one chooses to change himself/herself – often by choosing self-sacrificing behavior. I am committed to learn to be the difference I want to see and develop my personal flexibility within groups. I find this mindful decision to be constructively liberating. Liberating in the sense that I find myself being freed from a sense of self that derived value from titles, and power roles.

I came to this research with an interest in understanding the realities of women within the context of community development. My positionality and the knowledge I had about my own experience as a man who grew up in single female-headed household in the research context spurred me on. Researching into experiences of gender inequality among women in Ghana as an outsider and a researcher and the use of peer interviewers allowed me to access profound information both officially and informally. We however bumped into several challenges because of the similarities some of the peer interviewers shared with the participants. They were to some extent over-familiar with the research context and some of the respondents which compounded the challenges we faced. Because of their identity as women and known by some of the participants, they seemed to have certain expectations about the information they should tell them throughout the interview. I can recall the interviewers asking definite questions concerning the respondents’ experiences and getting responses such as “you know this better than I do”, and “you have experienced some”. The greater familiarity with the context make the asking of ‘obvious’ questions and explaining share experiences difficult since the respondents assume the insiders should know all those information (Brekhus, 1998; Hockey, 1993; Kanuha, 2000). This
therefore have implications on the thickness of data that might be collected (Mercer, 2007). To be able to help the respondents refrain from answering those question with their assumptions about the peer interviewers as insiders, they tried to probe with more questions. It was learnt from the interview process that some of the respondents wished to talk about other issues instead. We further noticed that at some point in time the respondents gave little detailed information due to the assumption that they shared common knowledge. While the insider (peer interviewers’) knowledge and experience of gender inequalities in community development context are similar to that of the other respondents, I learned from the transcripts and the debriefing that their perceptions and experiences are not always similar to the peer interviewers.

In order to better manage my roles as a male researcher (insider-outsider), I started taking notes (writing a journal) about the transcripts as I read them; writing down the resemblances and variances in my personal thoughts and the respondents’ experiences and calculatingly reflecting on these experiences. In the long run, I used an ‘imaginary friend’ whom I interacted with concerning the uncomfortable, scratchy or jumbled feelings I had throughout the whole research process. For instance, the feeling of powerlessness among the woman which was found after reading and re-reading the transcript made me feel sad. Their experiences and the discovery of my (as a man) direct and indirect contribution to the conditions of the women as well as my unearned privileges made me feel ashamed. My inability to think straight and find what practically I can do to savage the situation made me feel disillusioned, and frustrated. The journaling and my “imaginary friend” helped me to balance my viewpoints, to provide elucidations that could rationalise my anxieties and trepidations. These brought to light my ‘blind spot’ in the interpretation of the data.
It is worth noting that the challenges were not only awe-inspiring but also unexpected. Thus, the struggle they spawned in my thought about the insider-outsider ‘divide’ was my utmost difficulty. Generally, the challenges were significant to my research journey. They have helped me in developing useful reflexive techniques.

Through the reading of the transcripts I discovered my unearned male privileges and opportunities. This discovery has created in me so many complications and conflicts. In fact, men (including me) are beneficiaries of circumstances. The questions that continue to bother me are “how do I play my part to make this world just to the best of my abilities?” and “how can I extricate myself from a system which on one side benefits me and on the other side oppresses and disadvantages more than half of the population?”. It has been difficult for me to fathom and strategize to be useful without always feeling guilty of being part of such an oppressive and unjust system. However, this whole research process has pushed my interest into not just community development but to further research into the structural issues that generally affect women and means of ensuring a transformational shift at a transnational level.

Generally, the analysis of the transcribed data was an interesting process. In the middle of the immersion and analysis of the qualitative data, I came to recognize data immersion and analysis as a process through which I was transforming myself. I had a feeling of regret as some of the peer interviewers failed to probe further certain issues which would have been significant due to the nervousness or excitement of each exchange. This was internal but became evident when I was reading and re-reading the transcripts as well as listening to some of the audio-recordings of the interviews which were in Twi (the local language). Another thought that became prevalent to me was the fact that I was unconsciously distancing myself from the data at this stage. I tried to control my feelings and thoughts during the process of reading and re-
reading of the transcripts. This behaviour and thought were unconsciously influenced by my positivist lens. When I became conscious of this, I began asking myself questions: can the data be neutral? Am I not implicated in this data? Can I distance myself from this data? This struggle continued throughout the whole process of immersion into the data.

In the analysis of the qualitative data, most qualitative researchers encourage researchers to be reflexive about how they analyse participants’ accounts of their lives. That is, it becomes more appropriate for qualitative researchers to reflect on their own account in qualitative data analysis. The major challenge I faced in the qualitative data analysis period had to do with how to be reflexive. My interest in reflexivity as it relates to data analysis is developing in response to my cumulative mindfulness of the limited nature of my reflexive processes throughout the data analysis process of this research. I am increasingly aware of the relationship between the epistemological and other assumptions that underpinned the data analysis methods I used and my limited level of reflexivity in the data analysis process. I am also conscious of my lack of theoretical and methodological tools with which to operationalize reflexivity. Reflecting on these methodological lapses has sustained my recent interest in reflexivity in the analysis of qualitative data.

Another challenge I experienced is the possibility of multiple interpretations of data. In analysing qualitative data, there is the possibility that two researchers can have different interpretations for the same data due to their frame of reference and differences in the kind of understanding they get from reading the data. For instance, it became apparent during the analysis that one of my colleagues who analyzed some of the transcripts for the purpose of trustworthiness interpreted one particular excerpt from one of the respondents’ stories differently. A respondent indicated that:
“… As part of the Grameen Ghana, I at times get information late because I don’t have a phone and even if I have there isn’t a strong network in this town. If I don’t get the information, how will the other women get it because they rely on me for information.”

Jennifer Vasic, a colleague coded this except as ‘weak social capital’ and added that the respondent was referring generally to the social network in their community as a big problem. I however coded this as ‘infrastructural challenges”. These different codes were possible because our interpretations of the data were based on our identities, subjectivities and worldviews which were obviously different. This made it evident that understanding the setting or context of a research is crucial in making accurate interpretations of what we see and hear (i.e. where do we position ourselves in connection with our research).

I am now developing an interest in reflexivity and journaling as key strategies in qualitative research. This has made me to realize the need to leave my comfort zone. In fact, I am implicated in the entire research process hence the need to adopt and develop reflexive strategies. As a researcher diligently tries to get immersed in the data, the influence of subjectivity and pre-existing frames of reference are unavoidably part of the interpretation. I could not set aside my worldview, my social location, beliefs, values, personal experiences and biases. Throughout the research, I could not separate or “black box” my personal experience and biases. Thus, my frame of reference and subjectivity as a researcher are inescapable in a qualitative approach to research.
Chapter Nine: Conclusion and Recommendations for Practice and Research

Introduction

This chapter encompasses the conclusions of this study and recommendations for the improvement of the conditions of women in rural Ghana.

Conclusion

This study approached women’s concerns within the context of community development from a transnational feminist perspective and investigated how systemic as well as women’s idiosyncratic factors pose as challenges to women. This dissertation is an initial step toward bringing to the fore the importance of incorporating women’s concerns into community development work. From the analysis of the data, the following conclusions can be drawn.

First, the conditions of women in rural Ghana within the context of community development were not the best. They are less involved in the decision with regards to what projects to undertake, how much be allocated to projects and who gets the benefits of these projects.

Second, despite the fact that women were less involved in this process, they had high level of resilience. The study empirically demonstrates that women in rural communities in Ghana have adapted to the setbacks they face in their communities.

Third, there are several motivation factors for women who in one way or the other take part in the community development process. Familial and community support, and the interest of their children motivate the women to thrive against all odds in community development processes.
Fourth, Western interference, colonialism, patriarchy and capitalist ideologies continue to hinder the involvement of women in the development of their communities. It is therefore important to address these issues in order to help better the lives of women in rural Ghana.

This study conveys two specific significant contributions to the empirical literature in community development. First, this study is one of the first empirical studies focusing on women’s concerns in community development process in Ghana via a theoretical approach using the transnational feminist theory. It empirically assessed the level of participation of women in community development in Ghana. Secondly, utilizing the transnational feminist theory facilitates the assessment of the prevailing system of transnational domination (neoliberal globalisation) by conveying an overall picture of how this hegemonic discourse and ideology continue to subjugate women and suggests strategies geared towards leveraging the existing structures of global power without becoming complicit in them.

**Recommendations**

*Accountability.* Ghanaian women’s problems cannot be solved by any Western saviour (NGOs and INGOs) because the Global North and South operate within and outside different geopolitical spaces which requires movements or organisations which are more sensitive to changing the structures and ideologies around aggression and power dominance. Women groups and organisations that are knowledgeable about the problems of Ghanaian women and context-specific and effective solutions should be given the opportunity to lead the transformation efforts. The existing power should be leveraged to dispersal of power by allowing local people to have those voices.

The Ordinary women need to keep their spaces because it is within these spaces (associations, community organisations) that they can define their priorities. The reframing of the
narrative as to who has the responsibility to define the women/feminist agenda, have the resources to control that and how is to be held accountable for the transformation process is very important. I therefore recommend for conversations around constructive patriarchy and global inequalities. These conversations must focus on the interrogation of structural inequalities, and the way women’s positionalities and subjectivities are constructed by the different positionalities and ideologies. These conversations should be done by the women who are at the center of the discourse. This will help in ensuring that the way Ghanaian women define power within the context of development are brought into the discussions thereby helping them create spaces for themselves to resist patriarchy and transform the community development system.

**Awareness creation and sensitisation programme.** The deconstruction of patriarchy in rural Ghana may begin with raising awareness about the need to get women involved in the community development process. However, not all stakeholders (men, women, and groups) in the communities are informed about women’s vulnerability within the context of community development and the strategies that can help in pro-actively responding to these structural issues. It is therefore argued that, the provision of this information as well as the targeting of the entrenched gender discourses in the communities by feminist movements and social workers in Ghana will go a long way to help garner support for the feminist agenda, reduce the barriers facing women and overall lead to the transformation of societal structures. This awareness programme should be rooted in empirical research.

Again, local gender-sensitive and transnational feminist movements have to sensitize men to assist women in the performance of their household responsibilities to reduce women’s burden in their households. This will help provide women the same amount of time to engage in the development of their communities as their male counterparts.
Provision of leadership opportunities for women in rural communities in Ghana.

Due to the low representation of women in community development leadership, I recommend that opportunities be provided for women at every level of leadership in all areas of community development decision-making. Having more womanists and transnational feminists occupying those spaces will help in transforming the paradigm rather than just making up numbers. For instance, if more transnational feminists are given the opportunity to serve as Minister of Local Government, District, Municipal and Metropolitan Chief Executives as well as Mayors of Cities by Governments, they would be able to shape local government policies towards the transformation of the existing patriarchal system.

The local people should also change their attitude towards women leaders (this can be done through public education) and vote for more transnational feminists to serve as Assembly and Unit committee members thereby creating more spaces for women to resist patriarchy. While providing these leadership opportunities for women, the women who are not privileged to occupy those spaces must challenge those who get these opportunities to ensure accountability because delivering the feminist agenda is often not the pursuit of most women in power.

Setting up structurally transformative policies. The national and local Governments should come up with community development policies and strategies that recognize and address the structural problems, race and class. These policies and strategies must move away from the right-based approach to development since this right-based approach has missed the mark. This liberal paradigm does not in any way transform the economic and political inequalities which thrive on neoliberalism. We should therefore go beyond this minimalist agenda and pursue transformational thinking and politics within the community development policy regime in Ghana.
One of the transformative strategies is the need to focus on the use of local languages as the languages for District assembly meetings rather than English language since the use of English prevents most women from actively participating in these community development activities. This should be emphasized in community development policies and programmes and the local governments must have the political will to implement it.

**Promotion of girl-child and Adult Literacy Education.** I recommend the resuscitation of Ghana’s Adult Learning Education (ALE) practices and policies which are currently in defunct. The Government of Ghana must set up a functional national policy framework on ALE. The ALE programmes and practices must target women in rural areas in Ghana who are mostly illiterate. The ALE programme must focus on literacy, expansion of income generating activities of women and other women issues such as poverty reduction. Some of the challenges facing women within the context of community development can be mitigated by ALE through the promotion of non-formal education in literacy drives. Making rural women in Ghana more knowledgeable and literate will empower them and make them functionally literate.

Again, there is also the need for the promotion of girl-child education in Ghana. The national and local government of Ghana must collaborate with parents to ensure the enrolment and retention of girls in school. On the part of government, making the Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (fCUBE) policy effective will help in addressing the issue of parents choosing which of their children should be sent to school due to poverty. Government will have to absorb costs such as examination fees to relieve parents of this financial burden.

**Financial empowerment.** Feminization of poverty was one of the major barriers to women in rural Ghana. It constraints their ability to effectively and actively participate in community development activities. It is therefore recommended that civil societies and the
government focus on the provision of soft loans for women in rural areas. This financial empowerment has the potential of improving their economic status and providing them the opportunity to actively engage in the development of their communities.

**Recommendation for Further Research**

In the course of this study, the areas identified for further research are:

1. A comparative study of barriers to the participation of rural and urban women in community development processes in Ghana.

2. The place of men in promoting gender equality within the context of community development in Ghana.

**Feasibility for the Dissemination of Findings and Recommendations**

I intend to present complementary copies to the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development, the Sunyani Municipal Assembly, the GA West District Assembly and the Nanumba North District. I also plan to present the findings and recommendations to the study communities. Finally, I plan to present the findings at scholarly and professional conferences in Ghana and publish a series of articles in relevant academic journals.
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Appendix A: Ethical Clearance

August 02, 2017

Dear Charles Gyan

REB # 5393
Project, "Gaspung for breath: Gender concerns and the politics of community development in Ghana"
REB Clearance Issued: August 02, 2017
REB Expiry / End Date: August 31, 2018

The Research Ethics Board of Wilfrid Laurier University has reviewed the above proposal and determined that the proposal is ethically sound. If the research plan and methods should change in a way that may bring into question the project's adherence to acceptable ethical norms, please submit a "Request for Ethics Clearance of a Revision or Modification" form for approval before the changes are put into place. This form can also be used to extend protocols past their expiry date, except in cases where the project is more than two years old. Those projects require a new REB application.

Please note that you are responsible for obtaining any further approvals that might be required to complete your project.
Laurier REB approval will automatically expire when one's employment ends at Laurier.

If any participants in your research project have a negative experience (either physical, psychological or emotional) you are required to submit an "Adverse Events Form" within 24 hours of the event.

You must complete the online "Annual/Final Progress Report on Human Research Projects" form annually and upon completion of the project. ROMEO will automatically keeps track of these annual reports for you. When you have a report due within 30 days (and/or an overdue report) it will be listed under the 'My Reminders' quick link on your ROMEO home screen; the number in brackets next to 'My Reminders' will tell you how many reports need to be submitted. Protocols with overdue annual reports will be marked as expired.
Further the REB has been requested to notify Research Finance when an REB protocol, tied to a funding account has been marked as expired. In such cases Research Finance will immediately freeze funding tied to this account.
All the best for the successful completion of your project.
(Useful links: ROMEO Login Screen ; ROMEO Quick Reference Guide ; REB webpage)

Yours sincerely,

Robert Basso, PhD
Chair, University Research Ethics Board
Wilfrid Laurier University

Rosemary A. McGowan, PhD
Vice-Chair, University Research Ethics Board
Wilfrid Laurier University
Appendix B: Informed Consent Statement for the Survey

WILFRID LAURIER UNIVERSITY

Gasping for breath: Gender concerns and the politics of community development in Ghana

You are invited to participate in a research study designed to unearth the level of participation of women in community development process in Ghana. The researcher wants to survey Ghanaian women’s thoughts about the roles of women in community development. A total of 210 participants will be surveyed. The key research questions are: 1) What are the barriers to participation of women in community development activities in Ghana? 2) How does the socio-economic position of women affect their level of involvement in community development activities in Ghana? 3) How do community-level variables (cultural norms, socio-economic and politico-cultural factors) act as challenges, barriers or opportunities for women to engage in community development process? I am a PhD student of Wilfrid Laurier University, working under the supervision of Profes. Magnus Mfoafo-M’Carthy and Shoshana Pollack. I am conducting this study as part of the requirements for my PhD degree in Social Work. You are invited to participate in a research study. Please read this consent document carefully before you decide to participate in this study and consent to being interviewed.

Information: In the process of learning about the levels of participation of women in community development activities, you will be asked to participate in a survey with a researcher. There will be a set of opened and closed-ended questions for you to answer; however, please know that there are no right or wrong answers. The questions will provide you the opportunity to share your thoughts and experiences within the context of community development.

Time Required of You: It could be about 30 minutes that I will need of your time in the survey. I will schedule the interview at your convenience as much as possible.

Recording of Interview: With your permission, the researcher will take notes of your responses to the open-ended questions so that the researcher can review your responses at another time.
Risks and benefits: Benefits for this study include contributing to knowledge regarding gender inequalities in community development processes in Ghana and having the opportunity to talk to someone (the researcher) who is genuinely interested to hear your story and to learn what you think. While risks to you in this study are minimal, there is the potential that the telling of your thoughts and experiences can be upsetting. The researcher will support you throughout the interview and he can guide you to additional supports if needed.

Anonymity and Confidentiality: Your identity as well as the information you share will be kept confidential. The questionnaire will not identify you by name. Neither your name nor identifying information will be used in any published materials. The data collected from the field will be accessible to my supervisors, Profs. Magnus Mfoafo-M’carthy and Shoshana Pollack.

Contact: If you have questions at any time about this study or the procedures, (or you experience adverse effects as a result of participating in this study) you may contact the primary investigator, Charles Gyan, through his email gyan2550@mylaurier.ca. You may also contact the supervisors for this research: Dr. Magnus Mfoafo-M’Carth (mmfoafomcarthy@wlu.ca) with phone number 001(519)-884-0710 ext. 5238 and Dr. Shoshana Pollack (spollack@wlu.ca). Her phone number is 001(519)8840710 ext. 5220. This study has been reviewed and approved by the University Research Ethics Board. If you feel that you have not been treated according to the descriptions in this form, or your rights as a participant in research have been violated during the course of this project, you may contact Dr. Robert Basso, Chair, University Research Ethics Board, Wilfrid Laurier University, 001 (519) 884-0710 x4994 or rbasso@wlu.ca

Participation: Your participation is voluntary. There is no penalty for not participating. If you decide to participate, you may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty and without loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you withdraw from the study, every attempt will be made to remove your data from the study, and have it destroyed. You have the right to omit any question(s)/procedure(s) you choose.

Feedback: The researcher will contact and advise you of completion of the final report for this study. You will be asked if you want to meet with the researcher to review the findings and to receive a copy of the report.
**Publication:** The final report will be available by June 30, 2018. The findings from this research will be presented at conferences and published in scholarly journals.

**Consent:** I have read and understand the above information. I have received a copy of this form. I agree to participate in this study.

Participant’s signature____________________________ Date:____________

Researcher’s signature____________________________ Date:____________
Appendix C: Informed Consent Statement for the Interview

WILFRID LAURIER UNIVERSITY

Gasping for breath: Gender concerns and the politics of community development in Ghana

You are invited to participate in a research study designed to unearth the level of participation of women in community development process in Ghana. The researcher wants to explore Ghanaian women’s thoughts about the roles of women in community development. A total of 12 respondents will be interviewed. The key research questions are: 1) What are the barriers to participation of women in community development activities in Ghana? 2) How does the socio-economic position of women affect their level of involvement in community development activities in Ghana? 3) How do community-level variables (cultural norms, socio-economic and politico-cultural factors) act as challenges, barriers or opportunities for women to engage in community development process? I am a PhD student of Wilfrid Laurier University, working under the supervision of Profs. Magnus Mfoafo-M’Carthy and Shoshana Pollack. I am conducting this study as part of the requirements for my PhD degree in Social Work. You are invited to participate in a research study. Please read this consent document carefully before you decide to participate in this study and consent to being interviewed.

Information: In the process of learning about the levels of participation of women in community development activities, you will be asked to participate in an interview with a researcher. There will be a set of questions to guide the interview; however, please know that there are no right or wrong answers. Questions in the interview will provide you the opportunity to share your thoughts and experiences within the context of community development.

Time Required of You: It could be about 1 hour that the researcher will need of your time in the interview. There will be a follow up meeting to confirm responses from your interview. This may take about a half hour. Altogether, it may take you about 1.5 hours. I will schedule the interview at your convenience as much as possible.

Recording of Interview: With your permission, the researcher will take notes and audio record the interview with you so that the researcher can review your responses at another time.

Risks and benefits: Benefits for this study include contributing to knowledge regarding gender inequalities in community development processes in Ghana and having the opportunity to talk to someone (the researcher) who is genuinely interested to hear your story and to learn what you think. While risks to you in this study are minimal, there is the potential that the telling of your thoughts and experiences can be upsetting. Again, there is the potential of you facing some social risks including lack of cooperation or intimidation from your husband (if married. The researcher will support you throughout the interview and he can guide you to
additional supports if needed. The researcher will also solicit for the cooperation of your husband (if the need be). You will have the opportunity to decide if you wish certain information that you told the researcher to be included in the final report.

As a participant of this study, please be advised that it is possible that your identity could become known, despite my best efforts to keep your identity private. It is possible that someone could recognize you either through your participation and/or through the information you provide.

**Confidentiality:** The researcher will make every effort possible to maintain confidentiality of the information you share. This interview will be digitally recorded. The information collected will be maintained and kept in a secure and locked cabinet and password protected computer at the Faculty of Social Work for 2 years. This includes electronic files, handwritten notes and audio recordings. After 2 years, the handwritten notes will be shredded and recycled, and the digital audio files will be destroyed. During the analysis, you will be assigned a coded identification, and this code will be used to identify you in the transcript; the interview transcript will not identify you by name. Neither your name nor identifying information will be used in any published materials. The data collected from the field will be accessible to my supervisors, Profs. Magnus Mfoafo-M’Carthy and Shoshana Pollack.

**Anonymity:**

While steps will be taken to protect your identity through the use of a pseudonym, rather than your own name, it is possible that someone might recognize you from your stories and/or quotes in the final published report. The researcher will provide you with an opportunity to decide what information about you that you wish to include or exclude from publication. It is completely okay if you would like to participate in this study but not permit any quotes to be used in a published report.

**Contact:** If you have questions at any time about this study or the procedures, (or you experience adverse effects as a result of participating in this study) you may contact the primary investigator, Charles Gyan, through his email [gyan2550@mylaurier.ca](mailto:gyan2550@mylaurier.ca). You may also contact the supervisors for this research: Dr. Magnus Mfoafo-M’Carthy ([mmfoafomcarthy@wlu.ca](mailto:mmfoafomcarthy@wlu.ca)) with phone number 001(519)-884-0710 ext. 5238 and Dr. Shoshana Pollack ([spollack@wlu.ca](mailto:spollack@wlu.ca)). Her phone number is 001(519)8840710 ext. 5220. This study has been reviewed and approved by the University Research Ethics Board. If you feel that you have not been treated according to the descriptions in this form, or your rights as a participant in research have been violated during the course of this project, you may contact Dr. Robert Basso, Chair, University Research Ethics Board, Wilfrid Laurier University, 001 (519) 884-0710 x4994 or [rbasso@wlu.ca](mailto:rbasso@wlu.ca)

**Participation:** Your participation is voluntary. There is no penalty for not participating. If you decide to participate, you may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty and without
loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you withdraw from the study, every attempt will be made to remove your data from the study, and have it destroyed. You have the right to omit any question(s)/procedure(s) you choose.

**Vetting of contribution:** The researcher will allow you to vet your contributions before utilizing them in the study. That is, you will have the opportunity to carefully and critically examine the information you will give in order to validate whether they reflect what you wanted to put across.

**Feedback:** The researcher will contact and advise you of completion of the final report for this study. You will be asked if you want to meet with the researcher to review the findings and to receive a copy of the report. You may also decide to just have a copy of the report emailed or mailed to you.

**Publication:** The final report will be available by June 30, 2018. The findings from this research will be presented at conferences and published in scholarly journals. The researcher will also contact you to review the final report for publication and provide your consent for the kind of information about you that you wish to include or exclude from publication.

**Consent to understanding the vetting process:** I am aware of and understand the ‘vetting process’.

Participant’s signature ___________________________ Date:_____________

Researcher’s signature ___________________________ Date:_____________

**Consent:** I have read and understand the above information. I have received a copy of this form. I agree to participate in this study. I also agree to have my interview audio recorded.

Participant’s signature______________________________ Date:___________

Researcher’s signature______________________________ Date:___________

**Consent to Use of Quotes:** I have reviewed and agree to the use of my quotes in the final report.

Participant’s signature______________________________ Date:___________

Researcher’s signature______________________________ Date:___________
Appendix D: Interview Guide for Women Community Members

LYLE S. HALLMAN FACULTY OF SOCIAL WORK
WILFRID LAURIER UNIVERSITY

Research Study: Gasping for breath: Gender concerns and the politics of community development in Ghana

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR WOMEN COMMUNITY MEMBERS

This interview schedule is intended to solicit the views of people concerning factors affecting the participation of women in community development processes. I am therefore soliciting your support, cooperation and consent to provide appropriate responses to these questions. Please be assured that your information will not be disclosed to any third party and your anonymity and integrity is highly protected. The answers provided here will be purely for academic purposes and that there is no right or wrong answer to the questions. Please answer questions to the best of your recollection. I do appreciate that the interview will take some of your valuable time. However, without your kind and expert input the ambitions of this research project cannot be realized. To this end, I would like to thank you very much for your valued and kind consideration.

Personal data
1. Could you please tell us about yourself?

Background Information about your Community Development participation
2. In what ways are you involved in community development activities (communal labour, district assembly etc) in this community?

probes:
   a. How come you started with community development?
   b. For how long have you been involved?
   c. Why have you continued or not to be involved in community development activities?
   d. What kind of activities have you been involved in?
3. What does your family think about your involvement in community development activities?
probes:
   a. What does your husband think about this?
   b. What do your parents think about this?,
   c. What do your siblings think about this?

**Community development in General**

4. Can you mention positive aspects/things about community development processes in this community? Please give concrete examples.
   probes:
   a. Why do you think these aspects are positive/important?

5. Can you mention some challenges/barriers with community development participation in general? Please give concrete example
   Probes:
   a. Did you face any challenges when you started participating?
   b. Have you experienced other challenges after participating for a while?

**Community development, gender and barriers in Ghana**

6. Can you describe the difference between female and male participation in community development in this community?
   Probes:
   a. What is the difference in terms of participation?
   b. What is the difference in terms of access?,
   c. What is the difference in terms of managing community development activities?
   d. What is the difference in terms of being a community development leader?

7. Can you tell me about your perceptions with regard to the levels of inequalities existing within the community development structure/leadership in this community?
   Probes:
   a. Can women assume the same leadership positions in this community?
   b. What accounts for that?
8. Can you give examples of challenges/barriers women face when they participate or organize community development activities?

Probes:
  a. How does lack of time affect women’s participation in this community?,
  b. How does labor/job affect women’s participation in this community?,
  c. How do responsibilities at home affect women’s participation in this community?,
  d. How does lack of money affect women’s participation in this community?
  e. How does access affect women’s participation in this community?
  f. How does lack of role models affect women’s participation in this community?
  g. How does gender harassment affect women’s participation in this community?
  h. How do gender roles affect women’s participation in this community?
  i. How do cultural issues affect women’s participation in this community?

9. What do you think constitutes three main challenges for women’s participation in community development?

Possible Probes:
  a. Please explain each and give examples?

10. Do women face different challenges or the same challenges when they want to start/get involved in community development activities? Please explain further.

11. To ridicule is to criticize, to make fun of someone or something or to use humiliating words or behaviour. Have you ever had an experience of being ridiculed on the basis of gender during a community development process? If so, can you tell me about it?

Probes:
  a. What happened?
  b. What did you do?
  c. How often do you experience this?
  d. How do you handle such issues?

Socio-Cultural barriers

12. Can you describe the ideal woman in this community?

Probes:
  a. What are some of the stereotypes or images of how a woman should behave?

13. How does this perception about an ideal woman affect your participation in community
development processes?

14. Please identify at least five cultural values in your community?

15. Can you tell me which of these cultural values you think impact on equal participation in community development processes in this community? Please be specific about each value and why it impacts community development.

16. Tell me about your experience in community development context in this community

   Probes:

   a. Has it been positive/negative? Why?

   b. Have the reactions always been the same?

   c. Have the reactions hindered or empowered you to continue with community development activities? Why or why not?

Socio-Economic barriers

17. How do personal and family economy (income) affect women’s participation in Community development? (can your share your experience?)

   Probes:

   a. personal income/family income –

   b. Do you think this is the same across rural communities in Ghana?

   c. What is the difference?

18. Tell me more about the division of labour and responsibilities as a woman in Ghana and how that affects your involvement in community development activities?

19. In what ways do educational level and socio-economic status of women affect their levels of participation in this community? Can you please share your experience?

Other questions

20. In your opinion, what can be done to facilitate so that more women can involve themselves and family members in community development activities?

21. Anything else you would like to add
Appendix E: Interview Guide for Women Key Informants

LYLE S. HALLMAN FACULTY OF SOCIAL WORK
WILFRID LAURIER UNIVERSITY

Research Study: Gasp ing for breath: Gender concerns and the politics of community
development in Ghana

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR WOMEN KEY INFORMANTS

This interview schedule is intended to solicit the views of people concerning factors affecting the participation of women in community development processes. I am therefore soliciting your support, cooperation and consent to provide appropriate responses to these questions. Please be assured that your information will not be disclosed to any third party and your anonymity and integrity is highly protected. The answers provided here will be purely for academic purposes and that there is no right or wrong answer to the questions. Please answer questions to the best of your recollection. I do appreciate that the interview will take some of your valuable time. However, without your kind and expert input the ambitions of this research project cannot be realized. To this end, I would like to thank you very much for your valued and kind consideration.

1. Could you please tell us about your background (family life, work experience and practical community development experience)?
2. Based on your experience, can you tell me how women and men are equally represented in community development processes in this community? Please give concrete examples.
3. Can you share with me the major barriers that hinder women from fully participating in community development activities?
4. Based on your experience, in what ways do local communities within this District ensure women’s participation in development?
5. Can you share with me how the culture of the community has influenced the level of participation of women in the development of their communities?
6. What are the most important things or strategies your office/agency/organization/community considers for ensuring women’s participation in community development process?
7. Can you tell me how class and gender play out to affect the levels of participation of women in this community?
8. In your view, how is gender inequality reproduced linguistically in this community?
9. In your view, how is gender inequality reproduced nonverbally in this community?
Appendix F: Questionnaire

LYLE S. HALLMAN FACULTY OF SOCIAL WORK
WILFRID LAURIER UNIVERSITY

QUESTIONNAIRE

I am a PhD student in the Lyle S. Hallman Faculty of Social, Wilfrid Laurier University, currently conducting a study on gender issues and the community development process in Ghana. You are selected to participate in this study and would kindly request you to share your opinion about your experiences in participating in community development. Community development involves the organization of community members for the planning, initiation and design of projects geared towards addressing their common and individual needs and problems. Your honesty and kindness would be of great help in many aspects. Be assured that the information you share will be kept confidential and be used for the academic purpose only. Thank you in advance for your support and commitment.

SECTION A: PERSONAL BACKGROUND

1. Age: ....................................(years)

2. Marital Status:  
   a) Single [ ]  
   b) Married [ ]  
   c) Divorced [ ]  
   d) Separated [ ]  
   e) Widowed [ ]  
   f) other ...........................................

3. Educational Level:  
   a) No Formal Education [ ]  
   b) Primary School Certificate [ ]  
   c) Middle school/ Junior High School certificate [ ]  
   d) Senior High School Certificate [ ]  
   e) Intermediate/ Diploma [ ]  
   f) Graduate or post graduate degree [ ]
4. How many years of education have you completed? ………………………(years)…

5. Do you personally have means of income?
   a) Yes [   ]
   b) No [   ]

6. What is your personal net monthly income? ………………………………………

7. What is your household net monthly income? ………………………………………

8. What kind of employment do you undertake? ………………………………………

9. What is your occupation? ……………………………………………………………

10. What community do you live in? …………………………………………………

11. How long have you been living in this community? ______________(years)

12. Do you have children living with you as a dependent (s)? If yes, how many?………………

13. Do you care for any other dependants at home? If so, how many?………………

14. How many people are in your immediate family? ……………………………
SECTION B: PERCEPTIONS OF WOMEN’S ROLES IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Please rate your level of agreement to the following statements to the best of your knowledge using the following ratings:

1. Strongly Disagree = SD
2. Disagree = D
3. Not Sure = NS
4. Agree = A
5. Strongly Agree = SA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>NS</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>SA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15. It is difficult for women to participate in activities in this community.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Women are less represented in community leadership relative to men.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Women have a difficult time participating in activities in this community because they are female.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. There are measures in place to support women in participating in this community.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. The policies available to support women are applicable to both senior and junior levels in this community.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. It is easy for men to participate in activities in this community compared to women.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. The socio-economic status of women hinders their participation in activities in this community compared to men.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. It is easy for women to prove their ability in community meetings.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. Women’s participation in community activities is acceptable in this community.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. The traditional leaders have a positive view about women’s participation in activities in this community.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. Women’s family responsibilities interfere with their ability to actively participate in community activities.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26. It is harder for women to prove their ability in community activities and processes.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27. Women are less able to influence decision-making in this community.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28. Women encounter more barriers to participating in community activities compared to men.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
29. How often do YOU participate in community development activities as compared to men in this community?
   a) Never [ ]  
   b) Rarely [ ]  
   c) Sometimes [ ]  
   d) Often [ ]  
   e) Always [ ]

30. How often do women participate in community development activities as compared to men in this community?
   f) Never [ ]  
   g) Rarely [ ]  
   h) Sometimes [ ]  
   i) Often [ ]  
   j) Always [ ]

31. How acceptable is it for women to participate in community development activities in this community?
   a) Not at all acceptable [ ]  
   b) Slightly acceptable [ ]  
   c) Moderately acceptable [ ]  
   d) Very acceptable [ ]  
   e) Completely acceptable [ ]

32. What barriers, if any, hinder women’s involvement in community development?
   ……………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………..
   ………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………
   ………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………
   ………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………
33. Based upon your experience, please indicate on a scale of 0 to 10 how each one of the following barriers limit your involvement in the community development activities in this community. (0 = not at all, 10= to a large extent)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not at all</th>
<th>To a large extent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Lack of nomination (by NGOs and Other Organisations)</td>
<td>0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Low level of education</td>
<td>0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Unacceptability of women’s participation in this community</td>
<td>0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Low confidence level</td>
<td>0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Male having too much control over the process</td>
<td>0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Motherhood and family responsibilities</td>
<td>0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Lack of Information</td>
<td>0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

34. In your opinion, how do women achieve top positions in this community with regards to community development committees? (Please tick the relevant one)
   a) Qualification (experience, competence, capability) [ ]
   b) Class background [ ]
   c) Connection with men [ ]
   d) Family Reputation [ ]
   e) Women's networking [ ]
   f) Affirmative action policies [ ]
   g) Other, Specify) ________________

35. What percentage of the time are women’s ideas about community development valued or accepted? .................................................................%

36. What percentage of the time are men’s ideas about community development valued or accepted? .................................................................%
SECTION C: THE CIVIC ENGAGEMENT SCALE

Attitudes:
Please indicate your level of agreement to the following statements.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I feel responsible for my community.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I believe I should make a difference in my community.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I believe that I have a responsibility to help the poor and the hungry.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I am committed to serve in my community.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I believe that all citizens have a responsibility to their community.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. I believe that it is important to be informed of community issues.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. I believe that it is important to volunteer.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. I believe that it is important to support charitable organizations.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Behaviors

Please indicate how often you exhibit the behaviors below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Always</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I am involved in structured volunteer position(s) in the community.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. When working with others, I make positive changes in the community.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I help members of my community.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I stay informed of events in my community.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5. I participate in discussions that raise issues of social responsibility.  
6. I contribute to charitable organizations within the community.

SECTION D: COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PARTICIPATION SCALE

Attitudes/Interest Items:
Please indicate your level of agreement to the following statements.

Agree

1. Community development activities are helpful.  
2. Community development activities are interesting.  
3. I learn a lot from participating in community development initiatives.
4. I am unconcerned with community development issues.  
5. I feel that community development activities are futile.  
6. I have an unequal opportunity as men to take part in decision-making  
7. I usually feel unsafe when I am involved in community development program activities
8. I feel socially unaccepted in venues for community development initiatives.

Disagree
Active participation:

Please indicate how often you exhibit the behaviors below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behavior</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>Always</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I run for community development leadership positions.</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I voice my opinions about decisions that affect us.</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I partake in activities of the Community Development committee.</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I am part of the community development committee.</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I participate in local government institution.</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. I take responsibility for changes to this community.</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. I am very involved in community development activities.</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. I have the opportunity to contribute to community development decisions.</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. I participate in NGO, association, and social collective.</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CONCLUDING QUESTIONS

37. If you participate in community development, what motivates you to get involved in these activities?

..............................................................................................................

..............................................................................................................

38. From your experience, what would help increase the number of women meaningfully participating in community development activities in this community?

..............................................................................................................

39. What do you think are the best strategies for getting the community to promote women’s participation in community development process?

   a) .............................................................................................................

   b) .............................................................................................................

Thank you
Appendix G: Socio-Economic Scale

Kupuswamy’s Socio-Economic Status Scale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Profession or honours</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate or post graduate</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intermediate or diploma</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior High school certificate</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle school/ Junior High School certificate</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary school certificate</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illiterate</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Legislator, Senior Official &amp; Manager</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technicians and Semi-profession</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clerk</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skilled Workers and Shop &amp; Market Sales Workers</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agricultural &amp; Fishery Worker</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Craft &amp; Related Trade Worker</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plant &amp; Machine Operator and Assembler</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary Occupation</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Income per month (in Ghana cedis.)             |       |
| ≥2000                                          | 12    |
| 1000-1999                                      | 10    |
| 750-999                                        | 6     |
| 500-749                                        | 4     |
| 300-499                                        | 3     |
| 101-299                                        | 2     |
| ≤100                                           | 1     |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Socioeconomic class</th>
<th>Total Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Upper</td>
<td>26-29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper middle</td>
<td>16-25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower middle</td>
<td>11-15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper lower</td>
<td>5-10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower</td>
<td>0&lt;5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Occupational Divisions along with sub-divisions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Divisions of occupation</th>
<th>Sub-divisions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Legislators, Senior Officials and Managers</td>
<td>• Legislators and Senior Officials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Corporate Managers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• General Managers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Professionals</td>
<td>• Physical, Mathematical and Engineering Science Professionals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Life Science and Health Professionals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Teaching Professionals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Other Professionals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Technicians and Semi-Professionals</td>
<td>• Physical and Engineering Science Associate Professionals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Life Science and Health Associate Professionals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Teaching Associate Professionals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Other Associate Professionals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Clerks</td>
<td>• Office and customer Services Clerks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Skilled Workers and Shop /Market Sales Workers</td>
<td>• Personal and Protective Service Workers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Models, Sales Persons and Demonstrators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Agricultural and Fishery Workers</td>
<td>• Farmers and Skilled Agricultural and Fishery Workers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Subsistence Agricultural and Fishery Workers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Craft and Related Trades Workers</td>
<td>• Extraction and Building Trades Workers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Metal, Machinery and Related Trades Workers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Precision, Handicraft, Printing and Related Trades Workers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Other Craft and Related Trades Workers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Plant and Machine Operators and Assemblers</td>
<td>• Stationary Plant and Related Operators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Machine Operators and Assemblers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Drivers and Mobile-Plant Operators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Elementary Occupations</td>
<td>• Sales and Services Elementary Occupations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Agricultural, Fishery and Related Labourers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Labourers in Mining, Construction, Manufacturing and Transport</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Workers not classified by occupations</td>
<td>• New Workers Seeking Employment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Workers Reporting Occupations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unidentifiable or Inadequately Described</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Workers Not Reporting Any Occupations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Appendix H: Protocol for Trustworthiness

**Protocol for Trustworthiness**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criterion</th>
<th>Activity/Technique</th>
<th>Actual Activity</th>
<th>Dates planned/completed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Credibility</td>
<td>Peer debriefing</td>
<td>DAC members guidance</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Coding by 3 colleagues</td>
<td>September/October 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Triangulation</td>
<td>Interviewed a range of people</td>
<td>August, 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Member Checking</td>
<td>Individual transcript examination</td>
<td>November, 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Group discussion sessions on draft findings</td>
<td>November, 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dependability</td>
<td>Peer examination</td>
<td>The peer interviewers assisted in the evaluation of the interpretation of the findings</td>
<td>November 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confirmability</td>
<td>Audit trial</td>
<td>Keeping the raw data for 3 years</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Keeping a journal with all of the codes, categories and themes</td>
<td>November, 2017</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix I: Log for Recording Verbal Consent

TITLE: Gasping for breath: Gender concerns and the politics of community development in Ghana

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant’s Unique ID number (i.e. 17-R01)</th>
<th>Participant’s Name (pseudonyms)</th>
<th>Date:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>17-R01</td>
<td>Queenmother1</td>
<td>10/08/2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17-R02</td>
<td>Queenmother2</td>
<td>22/08/2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17-R03</td>
<td>Yaa</td>
<td>10/08/2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17-R04</td>
<td>Mary</td>
<td>06/09/2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17-R05</td>
<td>Bafi</td>
<td>14/08/2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17-R06</td>
<td>Adoley</td>
<td>13/08/2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17-R07</td>
<td>Kasi</td>
<td>10/08/2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17-R08</td>
<td>Diana</td>
<td>28/08/2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17-R09</td>
<td>Matt</td>
<td>22/08/2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17-R10</td>
<td>Afia</td>
<td>20/09/2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17-R11</td>
<td>Beatrice</td>
<td>28/08/2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17-R12</td>
<td>Mercy</td>
<td>13/08/2017</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix J: Psychometric Test

Socio-Economic Scale’s Cronbach Alpha

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reliability Statistics</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cronbach’s Alpha</td>
<td>N of Items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.71</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Civic Engagement Scale’s Cronbach Alpha

CES attitude

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reliability Statistics</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cronbach’s Alpha</td>
<td>N of Items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.76</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CES behaviour

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reliability Statistics</th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cronbach’s Alpha</td>
<td>N of Items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.75</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Community Development Participation Scale’s Cronbach Alpha

#### Community Development Participation Scale - Attitude

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reliability Statistics</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cronbach's Alpha</td>
<td>N of Items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.73</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Community Development Participation Scale - Active Participation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reliability Statistics</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cronbach's Alpha</td>
<td>N of Items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.79</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Community Development Participation Scale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reliability Statistics</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cronbach's Alpha</td>
<td>N of Items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.80</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix K: Factor Analysis

Scree Plot

Eigenvalue vs Component Number
### Results of Factor Analysis of the CDPS items (Principal Components Extraction, Direct Oblimin Rotation with Kaiser Normalization)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Initial Eigenvalues</th>
<th>Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings</th>
<th>Rotation Sums of Squared Loadingsa</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>% of Variance</td>
<td>Cumulative %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.41</td>
<td>25.93</td>
<td>25.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.49</td>
<td>14.67</td>
<td>40.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.21</td>
<td>7.13</td>
<td>47.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.15</td>
<td>6.77</td>
<td>54.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>.95</td>
<td>5.56</td>
<td>60.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>.89</td>
<td>5.23</td>
<td>65.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>.83</td>
<td>4.91</td>
<td>70.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>.70</td>
<td>4.14</td>
<td>74.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>.66</td>
<td>3.90</td>
<td>78.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>.59</td>
<td>3.47</td>
<td>81.70</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>.56</td>
<td>3.28</td>
<td>84.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>.53</td>
<td>3.11</td>
<td>88.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>.47</td>
<td>2.76</td>
<td>90.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>.43</td>
<td>2.51</td>
<td>93.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>.40</td>
<td>2.37</td>
<td>95.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>.39</td>
<td>2.30</td>
<td>98.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>.33</td>
<td>1.96</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

a. When components are correlated, sums of squared loadings cannot be added to obtain a total variance.
### Component Factor Loadings for CDPS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Component 1</th>
<th>Component 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A1: Community development activities are helpful</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A2: Community development activities are interesting</td>
<td>.23</td>
<td>.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A3: I learn a lot from participating in community development initiatives</td>
<td>.38</td>
<td>.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A4: I am unconcerned with community development issues</td>
<td>-.13</td>
<td>.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A5: I feel that community activities are futile</td>
<td>-.16</td>
<td>.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A6: I have an unequal opportunity as men to take part in decision making</td>
<td>.22</td>
<td>.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A7: I usually feel unsafe when I am involved in community development program activities</td>
<td>.28</td>
<td>.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A8: I feel socially unaccepted in venues for community development activities</td>
<td>-.20</td>
<td>.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Act1: I have the opportunity to contribute to community development decisions</td>
<td>.47</td>
<td>.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Act2: I participate in NGOs, associations and social collective</td>
<td>.51</td>
<td>.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Act3: I am very involved in community development activities</td>
<td>.65</td>
<td>.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Act4: I take responsibility for changes to this community</td>
<td>.58</td>
<td>.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Act5: I participate in local government institution</td>
<td>.63</td>
<td>-.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Act6: I am part of the community development committee</td>
<td>.70</td>
<td>-.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Act7: I partake in activities of the community development committee</td>
<td>.67</td>
<td>-.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Act8: I voice my opinions about decisions that affect me</td>
<td>.48</td>
<td>.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Act9: I run for community development leadership</td>
<td>.69</td>
<td>-.05</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.*

*Rotation Method: Oblimin with Kaiser Normalization.*

a. Rotation converged in 10 iterations.
Appendix L: Item-Total Correlations for CDPS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attitude factor</th>
<th>CDPS^1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attitude Item</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Community development activities are helpful</td>
<td>.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Community development activities are interesting</td>
<td>.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I learn a lot from participating in community development activities</td>
<td>.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I am unconcerned with community development issues</td>
<td>.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I feel that community development activities are futile</td>
<td>.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. I have an unequal opportunity as men to take part in decision making</td>
<td>.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. I usually feel unsafe when I am involved in community development activities</td>
<td>.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. I feel socially unacceptable in venues for community development initiatives</td>
<td>.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>.46</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Active Participation Factor</th>
<th>CDPS^1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Active Participation Item</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. I run for community development leadership</td>
<td>.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I voice my opinions about decisions that affect us</td>
<td>.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I partake in activities of the community development committee</td>
<td>.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I am part of the community development committee</td>
<td>.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I participate in the local government institution</td>
<td>.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. I take responsibility for changes to this community</td>
<td>.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. I am very involved in community development activities</td>
<td>.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. I have the opportunity to contribute to community development decisions</td>
<td>.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. I participate in NGO, association and social collective</td>
<td>.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>.53</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CDPS: Community Development Participation Scale

^1These correlations are based on item-total correlations. These correlations are significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
# Appendix M: Journal of Codes

## Development of Initial Themes from Descriptive Codes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Early descriptive codes/categories</th>
<th>Broad initial theme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| NGOS have spoilt the community members  
Always expect money in return  
Its about education  
Economy is hard | Capitalist ideologies & NGO interference |
| Most men have been to school  
Few women have been to school  
Education  
Cannot speak English | Neoliberal ideologies & educational challenges |
| Tagged deviant  
Given names  
Purely for women  
Women are helpmate  
Men are the head  
Women place is the kitchen  
Gender roles  
Men to take the lion’s share  
Cultural norms, ideas and beliefs shape  
Women stand –men don’t allow them  
There are inequalities, but it is good holds the society  
Men are the favorites  
Culture – influence participation, gives control, resources  
Culture and tradition spell out what one is entitled to do | Patriarchal norms & Distinct traditional gender roles |
| Eye volunteer  
Susu | Resilience & participation |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CAT</th>
<th>Grameen Ghana Micro-loan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gossip</td>
<td>Lateral oppression &amp; Micro-aggression</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We Criticize ourselves</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insult</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Lateral oppression & Micro-aggression | |
| Supportive relationship | Protective factors |
| Become happy when you go there | |
| Love for community | |
| People help me out | |
| Become happy when you go there | |
| Women interact...look for solution | |
| We discuss our problems | |

| Protective factors | |
| Feel shy- women | Self-esteem |
| Feel inferior | |
| What men can do I may not be able to do | |
| Can’t do | |

| Self-esteem | |
| Women busy selling | Multiple jobs |
| I do housework and farm | |

| Multiple jobs | |
| Take care of the homes | Burden of care |
| Provide the needs of my children | |
| I prepare the children for school | |

| Burden of care | |
| When you go contrary you will be punished | Punishment |
| Fine | |
| You feel bad if you don’t go | |

| Punishment | |
| No money | Infrastructure and financial problems |
| No network | |
| Phone | |
Appendix N: Test Results of the Regression Assumptions

Model

To help establish the relationships between the barriers to women participation and women’s level of participation in community development in rural communities I hypothesized that;

**H0:** There are no identifiable/significant barriers to women’s participation in community development.

**H4:** There are identifiable/significant barriers to women’s participation in community development. Thus, a simple regression equation which relates the seven (7) barriers to women’s participation to women’s level of participation in community development is given as Equation (1)

\[ Y_{cdps} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_1 X_2 + \beta_1 X_3 + \beta_1 X_4 + \beta_1 X_5 + \beta_1 X_6 + \beta_1 X_7 + \varepsilon \] (1)

Where:

\( Y_{cdps} \) = The community development participation score for the participants

\( X_1 \) = Low level of education

\( X_2 \) = Motherhood and family responsibilities

\( X_3 \) = Low confidence level

\( X_4 \) = Lack of information

\( X_5 \) = Unacceptability of women’s participation in the community

\( X_6 \) = Lack of Nominations from NGOs

\( X_7 \) = Males having too much control over the process

\( \beta_1 \) = The coefficient of \( X_{1-7} \) or the slope of the regression equation

\( \beta_0 \) = The constant or the intercept of the regression equation and
\( \varepsilon \) = Error term which measures the effects of the factors which influence the level of participation of women in community development process but are not included in the model.

**Assumption #1: The dependent variable should be measured on a continuous scale**

The dependent variable is measured on a continuous scale hence meets this assumption.

**Assumption #2: There should be two or more independent variables, which can be either continuous (i.e., an interval or ratio variable) or categorical (i.e., an ordinal or nominal variable).**

I have 7 independent variables.

**Assumption #3: There should be independence of observations (i.e., independence of residuals), - using the Durbin-Watson statistic.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>R Square</th>
<th>Adjusted R Square</th>
<th>Std. Error of the Estimate</th>
<th>Durbin-Watson</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>.67a</td>
<td>.44</td>
<td>.42</td>
<td>5.29</td>
<td>1.84</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. Predictors: (Constant), Lack of Information, Unacceptability of Women's participation in this community, Lack of Nomination by NGOs and Other Organizations, Low Level of Education, Males having too much control over the process, Motherhood and Family Responsibilities, Low Confidence Level

b. Dependent Variable: Community development Participation scale

Durbin-Watson score of 1.841 is closer to 2 indicating the absence of autocorrelation.
Assumption #4: There should be a linear relationship between (a) the dependent variable and each of the independent variables, and (b) the dependent variable and the independent variables collectively.

I used scatterplots and partial regression plots to check for linearity.
Partial Regression Plot

Dependent Variable: Community development Participation scale

Low Level of Education

Partial Regression Plot

Dependent Variable: Community development Participation scale

Unacceptability of Women's participation in this community
Partial Regression Plot
Dependent Variable: Community development Participation scale

Partial Regression Plot
Dependent Variable: Community development Participation scale
Assumption #5: homoscedasticity and Normality

This assumption was met
GASPING FOR BREATH

### Kolmogorov-Smirnov

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statistic</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Standardized Residual</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Shapiro-Wilk

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>df</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* This is a lower bound of the true significance.

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

---

Histogram

**Dependent Variable: Community development Participation scale**

Mean = -1.04E-15
Std. Dev. = 0.976
N = 150

---

Regression Standardized Residual
Normal P-P Plot of Regression Standardized Residual

Dependent Variable: Community development Participation scale
Assumption #6: Multicollinearity

Coefficients

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Unstandardized Coefficients</th>
<th>Standardized Coefficients</th>
<th>Collinearity Statistics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>S.E</td>
<td>Beta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Constance)</td>
<td>54.61</td>
<td>2.73</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of Nomination</td>
<td>.53</td>
<td>.15</td>
<td>.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low Education</td>
<td>.46</td>
<td>.18</td>
<td>.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unacceptability of</td>
<td>-.83</td>
<td>.15</td>
<td>-.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women's participation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low Confidence</td>
<td>.45</td>
<td>.20</td>
<td>.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male control</td>
<td>-1.11</td>
<td>.21</td>
<td>-.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motherhood</td>
<td>.79</td>
<td>.17</td>
<td>.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of information</td>
<td>-.16</td>
<td>.16</td>
<td>-.07</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a Dependent Variable: Community development Participation scale

The tolerance of all the predictors in the model were greater than .20 and the variance inflation factors (VIF) were less than 5. The data therefore meet this assumption.

Assumption #7: There should be no significant outliers, high leverage points or highly influential points.

Residuals Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Predicted Value</td>
<td>48.73</td>
<td>69.21</td>
<td>58.33</td>
<td>4.61</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Std. Predicted Value</td>
<td>-2.08</td>
<td>2.36</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard Error of Predicted Value</td>
<td>.69</td>
<td>2.01</td>
<td>1.20</td>
<td>.24</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjusted Predicted Value</td>
<td>48.78</td>
<td>69.71</td>
<td>58.32</td>
<td>4.63</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residual</td>
<td>-12.15</td>
<td>14.62</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>5.17</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Std. Residual</td>
<td>-2.30</td>
<td>2.76</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.98</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stud. Residual</td>
<td>-2.34</td>
<td>2.80</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.99</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deleted Residual</td>
<td>-12.66</td>
<td>14.98</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>5.42</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stud. Deleted Residual</td>
<td>-2.38</td>
<td>2.87</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mahal. Distance</td>
<td>1.52</td>
<td>20.38</td>
<td>6.95</td>
<td>3.22</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cook's Distance</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centered Leverage Value</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.14</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. Dependent Variable: Community development Participation scale
Assumption #8: Residuals (errors) are approximately normally distributed