

TRADITIONAL LEADERSHIP FACTOR IN MODERN LOCAL GOVERNMENT SYSTEM IN GHANA:

Policy Implementation, Role Conflict and Marginalization

K. D. Kessey

Department of Planning

*Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology,
Kumasi. Ghana.*

ABSTRACT

The search for appropriate institutional framework for local governance and development has been a difficult task in Africa. Although Traditional Authorities are authentic and time-tested institutions of governance, their role has been politically, administratively, and financially marginalized since the introduction of modern local government system. The focus of this paper is the discussion on the various local government structures, policies and their marginalization strategies. The discussions include indirect rule, establishment of town councils, introduction of public treasuries, the first and second republican local government models and the decentralized system of government with creation of District Assemblies. Some of the strengths and weaknesses of the systems were discussed. The issue of local taxation and the bias of the revenue distribution formula against Traditional Councils are also discussed. The Stool Land Revenue (SLR) shared among Traditional Authorities (TAs) is only 7 per cent of the District Assemblies Common Fund (Grants). The District Assemblies receive 55 per cent of the SLR plus DACF. The political structures, taxation authority, distribution of SLR, and Grants are used as tools to marginalize the traditional authorities. While the performance of some modern local government institutions, as agents of local development, is poor the development efforts of some Traditional Authorities at promoting education, health and environmental management, are highly commendable in Ghana. This indicates that Traditional Councils have potentials that are not fully harnessed due to marginalization. Modern local government stands to gain if Traditional Authorities become active partners and their potentials harnessed for development.

Keywords: *Traditional Leadership, Agglomeration, Devolution, Marginalization.*

INTRODUCTION

The African traditional system of government existed before the advent of colonialism in the continent. Some of the Traditional Kingdoms are Buganda and Toro in Uganda, Moshi in Burkina Faso, Yoruba and Hausa in Nigeria, Asante and Dagbon in Ghana just to mention a few. The Leadership of these kingdoms provides bonds of unity, ethnic cohesion and stability. The Asantes in Ghana, for example, had an administrative -cum -military structure that showed the hierarchy of authority within the Kingdom, the chain of command and the lines of communication within the system (Obeng, 1986). The Kingdom mobilized resources through local investment and taxation and generated revenue for the purposes of development and upkeep of the system (Arhin et al, 1992).

However the introduction of modern Local Government system in Ghana by the colonial administration started a process of marginalization of the Traditional System. The research investigated and analysed the strategies and processes of marginalization of the Traditional Systems in terms of legal, financial and politico-administrative roles in national and local governance. The effect of modern Local Government system on the ability of Traditional Authorities in Ghana to mobilize local resources for development and

maintenance of traditional areas was also highlighted. The latent conflicts that exist between some Traditional Authorities and Local Government institutions were also discussed. A survey conducted among African students at the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST), Kumasi confirmed the marginalization of Traditional Kingdoms in national and local affairs in other African countries such as Uganda. For accelerated local development the paper suggests that Africa should not marginalize her Traditional Leaders who control the populace and other large resources. Instead, the paper recommends partnership between the two politico-administrative systems for effective local governance and accelerated development.

METHODOLOGY

The initial part of the study was a review of secondary data on the genesis of the modern Local Government system in Ghana, which was introduced by the colonial administration. Thereafter, primary data were collected through interviews conducted at randomly sampled Traditional Councils, the National House of Chiefs secretariat and District Assemblies (Local Government). Other public institutions surveyed were the Office of the Administrator of District Assemblies Common Fund, Office of the Administrator of Stool Lands and the Ministry of Lands and Forestry. Some foreign students at the KNUST were also interviewed on the roles Traditional Leaders play in National and Local affairs in their respective countries.

Brief Overview of Local Government Development

The conventional argument is that modern Local Government systems emerge from either aggregation or devolution. The theory of aggregation argues that nation-states emerge through agglomeration of existing autonomous local (traditional) entities. It places identifiable sovereign entities, such as geophysical ethnic localities, at the centre of the development of a nation-state (Centre). The sovereign entities become the foundation and building blocks of the nation, which could be described loosely as federation of those entities. It argues that local entities aggregate if only they recognize and accept the fact that such a move would better promote their specific aspirations and progress. The process, according to this theory, is triggered by higher order needs arising among the localities.

One might argue that the local governments emerging from such a process have considerable bargaining powers and could take strong positions against the nation-state in case of unnecessary interference in local affairs or over domination by the Centre. A major problem is the possibility of the Centre having too many local units, some of which could be non-viable.

The other postulation is the devolution theory, which assumes the existence of a "natural or fundamental organizational unit" called the Centre. The central government has jurisdictional power over the national territorial entity. The central government creates nation-wide institutions for delegation of part of central authority, functionally and spatially. The institutions perform specific local functions on her behalf for the sake of effective performance of the central government and not for achieving local goals per se.

This is by virtue of the fact that they do not appreciate local problems and identify local needs as they focus on achievement of national goals. Local government entities, in that context, have limited authority and strong influence is exercised over them by the Centre. One major problem the central governments face in Africa is inability to foster cooperation with strong Traditional Authorities that existed before the emergence of the nation-states.

Emergence of Modern Local government of Ghana: Historical Perspective

Ghana's traditional system of governance is examined side by side with the institution of the nation-state with the view to identifying the processes of marginalization, participation and conflicts. The political history of Ghana indicates that the country has developed a local government system along the devolution model despite the fact that strong Kingdoms existed before the creation of the nation-state. For the new nation-state system to succeed therefore, the colonial administration introduced certain new policies and strategies for local governance. One of such policies was the 'indirect rule' in which ethnic entities were adopted as basic units of local administration.

In 1852 a National Legislative Assembly was inaugurated for the paramount chiefs who passed a resolution to impose an annual poll (head) tax of one shilling on all adult Africans for public welfare projects. However poor accountability and resistance to the taxation, among others, led to the abolition of the tax in 1861 by the colonial administration. The decision to abolish the poll tax was a source of conflict as the policy limited the power of Traditional Authorities to levy taxes and promote development in local areas. Therefore when the colonial administration established Native Treasuries in 1931 in the paramountcies to collect all taxes they were resisted by the Traditional Leaders and the citizenry. The revenue collectors were branded as local collaborators of the colonial administration and were resisted (Wight, 1947).

In addition to Traditional Councils independent town councils were established for Accra, Cape Coast and Sekondi-Takoradi in 1894, Kumasi (1925), Obuasi (1935) and Tarkwa (1940). Though, the Traditional Councils were given some automatic seats on the town councils yet they regarded the Town Councils as "rival" institutions meant to usurp their powers (Wight, 1947).

The Town and Traditional Councils petitioned the colonial administration for grants for support and provision of social amenities such as water, basic schools, dispensaries, and incinerators due to rapid population growth and abolition of the poll tax (Wight, 1947). The colonial administration could not meet the requests owing to financial problems caused by the 1930 world depression.

Conflict between Traditional Councils and Public Treasuries

Although the Town and Traditional Councils made the petition, the colonial administration saw the Traditional Councils as major obstacles to ruling the colony. Therefore, a Native Authority Ordinance was passed in 1944 that neglected the Traditional Authorities and put the colonial administration in direct control of the localities. Among others, the Ordinance empowered the governor of the colony:

- To amalgamate existing Traditional Paramount areas into viable units and by that initiated an artificial aggregation process with devolutionary goals.
- To appoint chiefs for areas where disputes and litigation made enstoolment or enskinment of a chief impossible. That provision encouraged the appointment of local chiefs who were obedient to the colonial administration but not persons necessarily acceptable to the people as chiefs. The colonial administration failed to realize that chiefs are not political appointees.
- To increase the number of local tax sources.
- To set up local committees to manage revenues and expenditures to ensure accountability while using the committees to tailor the goals of the administration.
- To introduce a system of grants – in - aid for local development, basically to implement centrally designed projects.

The Traditional Councils and the people were not happy with the powers given to the Town Councils. Therefore they resisted the town councils' efforts at generating revenue and managing the towns. A case in point was the failure of the people to pay a water rate introduced by the town councils. From that time, the Centre-local relationship was marred by conflicts as the citizenry saw the whole process as imposition by the colonial administration. Again, it was seen as an attempt to control the Traditional Leaders, their people and revenues. The tension was further increased by the agitation for political independence that triggered the Accra riots in 1948. The Watson Commission, appointed in 1949 to investigate the causes of the riots, indicated in its report, among others, that some sections on Local Government in the proposed 1946 constitution were inappropriate. That revelation therefore began the search for an appropriate Local Government System for the Gold Coast.

THE SEARCH FOR AN APPROPRIATE LOCAL GOVERNMENT SYSTEM

The process of searching for an appropriate local government system has been a long and difficult one. Different models have been tried without much success as revealed by the following efforts and analyses.

The Coussey and Greenwood models

Based on the Watson Commission's report, an all-African constitutional committee was appointed in 1949 headed by Sir Justice Coussey. The Coussey committee recommended, among others, that the Native Authorities should be replaced by democratically elected councils, which should nevertheless retain a place for chiefs who were recognized as having important role in the Gold Coast (Hicks, 1961).

Based on the Coussey committee's report, Traditional Councils were sidelined and Local Councils with elected members introduced. This was in spite of the fact that the modern system was foreign to the Ghanaian socio-political environment. The Traditional Councils and the citizenry became apprehensive of the new system and could not identify themselves with it because of its alien and impersonal nature.

The administration enacted the Local Government Act, 1951 that introduced a local government model based on Sir Sydney Philipson's recommendations. The Table 1 shows that the Act of 1951 introduced a two-tier Local Government system comprising 278 local councils. Two-thirds of the total membership of the local councils was by popular election while the one-third was reserved for Traditional Leaders. Two elected representatives from each local council were elected to the district councils within their areas of jurisdiction.

Table 1: The Structure of the Premier Model

Levels in the System	Description of Level	Number of Councils	Percentage of Elected Membership	Percentage of Traditional Authority Representatives
First Level	District	26	100	Nil
Second Level	Local	252	67	33

Source: *Local Government Act, 1951*

The astonishing features of the model were the absence of chiefs at the highest level of local decision-making and numerous councils created by the Colonial Administration. With the shortage of management personnel and financial resources the 278 councils were less viable. Eventually, the Central Administration had to support them financially to make them viable.

The Greenwood Commission appointed to study the operations and management of the councils described them as too many and non-viable. Not even their amalgamation into 70 multi-purpose councils, based on the report, could turn things round. The Traditional Councils were marginalized and the Colonial Administration succeeded in creating for itself local administrative wings in the name of Local Government as institutions for local development. The Traditional Leaders went into a state of inactivity as far as governmental affairs were concerned. Such was the state of local governance when the country attained political independence in 1957.

The First Republican model

The first all Ghanaian government led by Dr. Kwame Nkrumah increased the number of councils from 70 to 183 councils. Unlike the earlier model, government abolished all seats reserved for the Traditional Councils. That decision marginalized further the Traditional Leaders in local governance. The local government system received a fatal blow with the introduction of a one party socialist state with its centralized planning system. The Traditional Authorities were marginalized further in local governance as all the local councilors were elected from one party. Local Commissioners were appointed to represent the Head of State at local level. With the heavy presence of the Local Commissioners there was no way the local councils could oppose the centrally determined policies by government.

The Center governed the localities through centrally financed Local Councils. The Traditional Leaders became dormant, Local Councils were impotent and the people apathetic to local matters and taxation. The central government showed its presence and effectiveness at local level through state provision of public utilities while the creation of multiple centres of authority was suppressed. That Local Government policy led to a lop-sided development of the country and mass deprivation of the citizenry as government favoured only the areas that supported it during general elections.

The Post First Republican Models

The National Liberation Council that succeeded the First Republican government introduced a new model of Local Government in 1966. The structure was a four tier one from regional to area level (Table 2). That was a local government structure designed to restore the image of the local government institution. However the main weakness of that system was that its management was left completely in the hands of

civil servants. There was a complete absence of elected membership to any of the councils. It was local rule through bureaucracy. The era drew the bureaucrats into political positions as the District Administrative Officers (DAOs) who occupied the status of the ousted local commissioners. The chiefs were brought in only as chairmen of the Town/Area councils, the lowest level of decision-making.

The second republican government operated the same system while preparing a local government bill to put before the national parliament. The product of that exercise was the Local Government Act, 1971 which provided for partial elected membership of councils and appointed members by Traditional Councils. The Act was not fully implemented before that government was overthrown by the military and the National Redemption Council (NRC) was formed.

The NRC amended the Local Government Act of 1971 by the decrees -NRCD 138 (1972) and NRCD 258 (1974). The four-tier system was not abolished however the number of district councils was increased to 65. The councils were non-elective. The government appointed two-thirds of the total membership and the Traditional Councils occupied the remaining one-third. District Administrative Officers (DAOs) were put in charge of the entire administration of the districts. The sectoral ministries and agencies in the districts were placed under the management of the DAOs however they did not have control over them in terms of technical direction and goal setting.

Table 2: The Second Local Government Structure

Level	Description	Total Number	Membership	Traditional Leader
First	Region (Highest Level)	9	Appointed Council	Nil
Second	District	47	Appointed Council	Nil
Third	Local/Urban	NA	Appointed Council	Nil
Fourth	Town/Area	NA	Appointed Council	Chairman of Council

Source: *Local Government Structure, 1966. NA– Not Available*

Some of the significant changes introduced by that government were the following:

- On the positive side it introduced a uniform public service (for local and central government employees) based on the Mills-Odoi report. By that policy the local government employees were absorbed into the public services and their remunerations paid by the central government.
- It opened the way for the transfer of more experienced administrators to the districts (where there was acute shortage of expertise) to improve the quality of public administration.
- The remunerations of the local employees became regular and guaranteed because they were paid by the Centre.
- It reduced the financial burdens on Districts as they did not have to pay their employees from the local coffers.

On the negative side local institutional building and development suffered as:

- The districts lost control over their labour force - a major factor in the local development process - by virtue of the fact that they had no hand in their recruitment, remuneration, training, promotion and code of conduct. Put differently, the factors that influence labour productivity were placed outside the control of the Districts,
- It did not encourage the districts to invest in local capacity building in view of the fact that their staff could be transferred at any time
- The local staff ceased to identify themselves with the Districts, and for that matter would not put in any extra effort to push the goals of the district forward. Instead they tended to please the Center which controlled their career prospects.
- The policy depressed local revenue mobilization considerably in that revenue collectors received guaranteed monthly salaries irrespective of the revenues they collected at the end of the month.

What could have been an opportunity for the districts to divert the locally generated funds formerly for the payment of staff to finance capital expenditure was made to slip by. The Districts spent lavishly on recurrent items while important social infrastructure was absent.

It was to help the Districts to salvage their financial situation that the 1979 *Republican Constitution* of Ghana made a specific provision that;

"...not less than fifteen per centum of the net revenue accruing to the government from dues, rents, royalties or from operations of any enterprise or undertaking of any person or body of persons however described operating within the area of authority of a district council in respect of land or mineral resources shall be paid by the government to that council for the purpose of development in that area" (*Republican Constitution of Ghana, 1979:137*).

Unfortunately, however, before that could be fully implemented the constitution was suspended through a military take over of government.

One could argue that despite several changes introduced during the period under review, the evidence suggests that the local government system remained explicitly under the control and monitor of the Central Government. The Centre was not prepared to loosen its grip and made the system an almost completely ineffective local system. Again, none of the structures gave any significant role to the Traditional Leader while the sources of funds for the Traditional Councils were taken over as national assets especially lands, mineral deposits and forest resources just to mention a few.

The Decentralized Model

The latest Local Government Act 1993, Act 462 replaced Provisional National Defence Council Law (PNDCL) 207 introduced in 1988. The Act 462, supported Central Government legislative instruments that established 110* Assemblies.

The model maintained the four- tier local government structure introduced in 1966. The levels are the Regional Coordinating Council, Metropolitan/Municipal/District Assembly, Zonal/ Area/Town Councils and Unit Committees (Table 3). At the regional level, local decisions are made by the Regional Coordinating Council (RCC) which is completely non- elective. It comprises the Regional Minister (as chairman), the Deputy Regional Minister, all Metropolitan/Municipal/District Chief Executives (DCEs) and Presiding Members (PMs) of the Assemblies and two chiefs from the regional house of chiefs (RHC). The regional heads of decentralized departments are ex-officio members. Since government appoints Ministers and DCEs one could conclude that the RCCs could easily take decisions in the interest of the Centre instead of local affairs.

Table 3: The Decentralized Local Government Structure

Level	Description	Total Number	Type of Membership	Traditional Leader
First	Regional Coordinating Council	10	Appointment	Two Chiefs per Council
Second	Metropolitan\Municipal District	110*	Election 67%	About 10% per District
Third	Zonal/Town/Area	142	Appointment	NA
Fourth	Unit Committee (Lowest Level)	1600	67%**	NA

**The number has been increased to 138 but details on the third and fourth levels of the new districts are not available.*

***Other members constituting 33% are nominated.*

At the District level, the Assembly is composed of a District Chief Executive (DCE) appointed by the

President and confirmed by at least two – thirds of the total membership of the Assembly. All members of Parliament in the area of jurisdiction of the Assembly are members but without voting rights. The elected members from respective electoral areas constitute 67 per cent. Again, the President appoints 33 per cent of the members in consultation with traditional authorities and interest groups. The appointment of one-third of the total membership of the assembly makes the system fall short of a full elective Assembly. In the past, appointed members of assemblies were mainly Traditional Leaders as a way of blending the two systems of government. Presently, they share that privilege with other interest groups. One way of interpreting that policy is that the arrangement ensures the Centre's influence on the Assemblies while at the same time diminishing the influence of Traditional Leaders on the Assemblies.

Although some analysts argue that the present law is the most comprehensive attempt at promoting local self government in Ghana, this is highly debatable in view of the fact that the system is indirectly controlled by the Centre. The control is done through various legal, politico-administrative and financial arrangements. For example, the President has an executive power to abolish and/or dissolve an elected Assembly (Act 462, section 43). That is a controlling instrument as it might push the assemblies into a state of docility. Again the splitting of the leadership role of the Assembly between the Presiding Member (PM) of the assembly (who is elected by the house) and the District Chief Executive (DEC) who is appointed by the President as the Chief Executive Officer of the district is another controlling factor. Furthermore, between 60 and 70 percent of the District Assembly funds are provided by the central government. This enables the Centre to control some of the activities of the Assemblies.

The small number of Traditional Leaders in the Assemblies makes it impossible for them to present policy alternatives to the Assemblies. For example, the survey revealed that, appointed Traditional Leaders in the Assemblies in Ashanti region are only 70 out of a total of 1101 assembly members in the region, representing six per cent.

Traditional Areas, District Assemblies and Conflicts

There are conflicts among some paramount areas and Assemblies. For example, recently the people of Adaklu traditional area in Volta region declared publicly that they have disassociated themselves from the Adaklu-Anyigbe District Assembly because of disagreement over the sitting of the capital of the District (Daily Graphic, Monday, August 22, 2005). One main reason that has given rise to this situation is the limited participation of the Traditional Leaders in the creation of districts in Ghana and sitting of their capitals.

Furthermore one may argue that the recent creation of additional 28 Districts was meant, in the main, to resolve conflicts between some Traditional areas within existing Assemblies. A case in point is the former Nanumba District Assembly in Northern region of Ghana where Nanumbas and Konkombas are the two major ethnic groups. These ethnic groups had violent conflicts in 1981, 1994 and 1995 which affected negatively the development of the District as the Assembly found it difficult to operate effectively. Consequently the District has been divided into two new Districts namely Nanumba North and Nanumba South with capitals at Bimbila and Wulensi respectively.

Again the survey revealed that since the number of paramount areas in a region is not considered as a factor in the creation of District Assemblies (Table 4), there is no correlation between the numbers of paramountcies and District Assemblies in a region. The computed correlation of 0.42 confirms that assertion.

Table 4 Paramount Areas and District Assemblies

Region	Number of Paramount (1)	Number of District Assemblies (2)
Ashanti	21	18
Brong Ahafo	45	13
Central	33	12
Eastern	12	15
Greater Accra	7	5
Northern	5	13
Volta	15	12
Upper East	6	6

Source: Chieftaincy Act, 1971 and Ghana: The New Local Government System, 1996

Legal System, Traditional Authorities and Marginalization

Although the chieftaincy institution in Ghana is a grassroots one with almost every territorial entity having its own traditional leader similar traditional entities form a paramountcy with the head as paramount chief. However by way of incorporation, the Chieftaincy Act 1971, Act 370 makes provisions for the establishment of National and Regional Houses of Chiefs whose membership is made up of paramount chiefs only. The Houses of Chiefs are charged, among others, with the responsibility to:

"undertake the progressive study, interpretation and codification of customary laws with a view to evolving, in appropriate cases, a unified system of rules of customary law.... an evaluation of traditional customs and usage with the view to eliminating those customs and usage that are outmoded and socially harmful" (Ghana 1992: 165).

The law eliminates several Traditional Leaders from participating in these traditional for a as only paramount chiefs are qualified to be members. This might be termed as marginalization of majority of traditional leaders in national affairs by legal means. Considering chiefs as agents of local development and the current emphasis on the district as the basic unit of development in Ghana, the absence of a District House of Chiefs (DHCs) as a forum for Traditional Leaders for deliberating on local problems affecting a District, is considered a serious omission.

Traditional Areas, District Assemblies and Revenue Sharing

Perhaps revenue sharing is one major area where marginalization of Traditional Leaders by the Central government is apparent. The paramountcy is the custodian of the territorial resources from which revenues are derived. Major sources of traditional council incomes include levies imposed on commercial activities such as farming, hunting, logging, small scale mining, incomes from commercial ventures and land tax. In spite of poor accountability people pay those taxes to Traditional Leaders to preserve a formidable institution that provided dependable leadership for them and provide security and stable enabling environment for economic activities to flourish. As intimated earlier, this authority and taxation rights of the traditional councils were taken away by the colonial administration and vested them in the Native Treasuries and later transferred to the Local Governments as pertains to date.

Although the traditional councils are the custodians of the land and should be resourced from that, the central government has taken over the ownership of the several resources in the name of public interest. Government distributes part of the total revenue generated from land resources to the shareholders according to some legislated arrangements as outlined in Table 5.

Table 5: Distribution of Timber Royalties and Ground Rent in Ghana, (Percentage)

Type	Land Owner's Share	Public Coffers
------	--------------------	----------------

Timber Royalties from Forest Reserves	40	60
Off-Forest Reserve Timber Royalties	60	40

Source: *Field Survey (2004)*

The survey showed that as a result of persistent degradation of the off-forest reserve areas majority of the timber harvested is from the forest reserves. By implication higher percentage of the timber royalties goes into public coffers. Again, since the ground rent paid in rural areas is low majority of rural traditional councils do not receive any significant benefit from type of rent.

Apart from timber royalties and ground rent all other revenue from stool lands is shared according to a legislated formula that allocates 10 percent of total revenue to the Administrator of Stool lands and the remaining shared as follows: 25 percent goes to the Stool, 20 percent to the Traditional Authority and 55 percent to the District Assembly (Act481 Section 8). In other words the Traditional Council is given 45 percent while the District Assembly takes 55 percent of the revenue. How can one justify the bias towards District Assemblies in the sharing of revenue from stool lands especially where District Assemblies use that allocation to finance part of their recurrent budget?

Although the traditional councils are completely left out in sharing the District Assemblies Common Fund (DACF), District Assemblies are given 55 per cent of the revenue from stool lands. In addition the Local Government Act.462, 1993 (Part VIII and Schedule 86) makes District Assemblies the rating authority in each District. This gives them the power to generate additional internal revenue for their operations.

In Table 6 the annual DACF (Grants) from Central Government to the District Assemblies is compared with revenue from stool lands.

Table 6: Comparison between Stool Land Revenue and DACF (1997-2001) Billion Cedis

Year	Stool Land Revenue (SLR)	DACF	SLR as Proportion of DACF (%)
1997	9.4	100.1	9.3
1998	9.6	134.7	7.1
1999	7.1	153.4	4.6
2000	18.1	171.9	10.5
2001	10.1	266.9	3.7
Total	54.3	827.0	6.6

Source: *Author's Construct. Data Base ASL and ADACF*

The comparative figures show that SLR is on average about 7per cent of DACF. This is one explanation for the poor conditions of traditional councils in Ghana.

The inability of many Traditional Leaders to promote growth in their paramountcies in spite of personal expertise has been a major source of conflict in some areas. The fact that the central government has appointed many Traditional Leaders to chair public boards and companies and the fact that many Traditional Leaders are well educated and are working as top managers in public and private sectors is an indication that Traditional Leaders have skills that could be tapped for local development. The World Bank has appreciated this fact in Africa and has chosen to give financial support to some Traditional Authorities for local development under the "Partnership with Traditional Authorities Project". A case in point is the

Asantehene's development vision(Daily Graphic, November 9, 2004) in the areas of education, health and sanitation and conflict resolution which has attracted \$4.5 million from the bank. This amount is for building capacity of chiefs, rehabilitation of schools, provision of sanitation facilities in 41 pilot communities and education on HIV/AIDS among others. Again there is another facility from The World Bank under the said partnership project, for the provision of Water and Sanitation facilities for 500,000 people in 1000 communities in Brong Ahafo, Ashanti, Volta and Central regions in Ghana. This approach of The World Bank is a challenge to Central and Local governments in Africa to reconsider the current limited roles of Traditional Leaders in planning, implementing and management of development programmes. Perhaps the slow nature of local development in Ghana is partially attributable to the center stage occupied by District Assemblies in the development process (Act 462, Section 3) and the marginalization of the Traditional Leaders.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The foregoing discussions are meant to press home the point that the time has come for Ghana to amend particularly the Chieftaincy Act, 1971 Act 370 with the view to introducing District House of Chiefs (DHCs) in consonance with the decentralized system of governance in the country. In line with Part II Section 6 of Act 370, it is recommended that each district should have a District House of Chiefs (DHC) whose membership shall be defined in an amendment and specified, in relation to its status, by legislative instrument made by the President acting in consultation with each Regional House of Chiefs and the Council of State. The amended law should give authority to the DHCs to perform some development roles such as local afforestation, environment and sanitation and conflict management(Alternative Conflict Resolution) and to partner with the Metropolitan/ Municipal/ and District Assemblies.

Again, the DHCs should create a common platform for Traditional Leaders to discuss identical local problems and share experiences in local administration for good governance. Also it could complement the district assemblies as fora for formulating local development policies which would be more acceptable to the people as they look more to the Traditional Leaders for local leadership. Furthermore, that platform would broaden the development outlook and articulate the thoughts of many Traditional Leaders who currently know only about the problems of their areas. The DHCs could play more progressive roles in local development than the National and Regional Houses as they would be closer to the communities. This amendment would complete the decentralized institutional framework for chieftaincy (Act 370) by creating a lower structure that links the chieftaincy and the modern local government institutions.

With the creation of DHCs, the formulae for sharing Stool Land Revenue and the DACF should be reviewed to minimize the bias for District Assemblies. For example, the maximum 20 per cent of DACF utilized by Districts for poverty reduction should be transferred to DHCs for financing sustainable livelihoods and development projects for employment generation and sustainable development in Traditional areas.

CONCLUSION

The paper has painted a general picture of the development of local public administration in Ghana. What central governments have failed to appreciate is that "strong local governments are needed not to share political power but to distribute more evenly the burden of political responsibilities" (Bird 1980) for rapid local and national development. However the way modern local government system was introduced in Ghana made it an "alien" institution representing the interest of the central government. Therefore, the institution finds itself in an uncomfortable power relation with the indigenous system of government which the citizenry still look to for leadership, administration of justice, allocation of land, and provision of social services. Hence to marginalize them in local governance is a disadvantage to the development process.

The historical and current evidence suggest that the local government system in Ghana was introduced in place of traditional authorities to serve the interest of the central government. Therefore strategies backed by legislations were introduced to marginalize the traditional authorities. Some of the strategies included limiting their authority to tax, the systematic reduction of their numerical strength in the local councils and taking over of lands and other natural resources in the name of the public interest. This has resulted to apathy of the traditional authorities towards the activities of local councils. But the time has come to reexamine this colonial heritage of modern local governance and involve the traditional councils in local development in a more proactive way. The contention is that the authentic time tested traditional system of governance should be made an integral part of the local administration for accelerated development. The advocacy for the creation of DHCs is in support of this contention on partnership.

REFERENCES

- Ahin, K and Afari-Gyan, K (eds, 1992), *The City of Kumasi: Past, Present and Future*, Accra, Institute of African Studies, UG.
- Bird, R.M (1980) *Central – Local Relations and Provision of Urban Public Service* Canberra, ANU
- Burton, J. H. (1984), *Local Authority Finance, Account and Auditing* London Gee and Corporation (Publishers) Ltd.
- Combs, H. M. and Jenkins, D. E. (1995), *Public Sector Financial Management*, Oxford, Chapman and Hall.
- German Foundation for International Development (1983), *Development Administration and Management* Harare, Public Administration Promotion Centre.
- Hicks U.(1961) *Development from Below: Local Government and Finance in Developing Countries of the Commonwealth* Oxford, Clarendon Press
- Kessey, Kwaku D. (1995), *Financing Local Development in Ghana: Mobilization and Management of Fiscal Resources in Kumasi Metropolis*. Dortmund SPRING RESEARCH Series 12.
- Obeng, E. E. (1986), *Ancient Ashanti Chieftaincy* Tema, Ghana Publishing Corporation.
- Otumfuo Osei Tutu II (2004) “Traditional Systems of Governance and the Modern State” November 9, Daily Graphic Edition, Accra, Graphic Communications Group Ltd.
- Republic of Ghana (1962), *Administration of Lands Act, 1962 Act 123* Accra. Ghana Publishing Corporation (Printing Division)
- Republic of Ghana (1971), *Chieftaincy Act, 1971 Act 370* Accra. Ghana Publishing Corporation (Printing Division)
- Republic of Ghana (1979) *Republican Constitution, 1979* Accra, Ghana Publishing Corporation (Printing Division)
- Republic of Ghana (1993), *The District Assemblies Common Fund Act, 1993 Act 455*, Accra. Ghana Publishing Corporation (Printing Division)
- Republic of Ghana (1994), *Office of the Administrator of Stool Land Act, 1994 Act 481* Accra. Ghana Publishing Corporation (Printing Division)
- Republic of Ghana (1994), *Local Government Act, 1993 Act 462* Accra. Ghana Publishing Corporation (Printing Division)
- Republic of Ghana (2002) *The Coordinated Programme for Economic and Social Development of Ghana (2003-2012)* Accra, GPC.
- Republic of Ghana (1996), *Ghana: The New Local Government System*. 2nd Edition Accra, MLGRD.
- Royal Institute of Public Administration (1995), *Development of Local Government in the Colonies* London, Haldane House.
- The Institute of Statistical Social and Economic Research (2002). *The State of the Ghanaian Economy in 2002*. Accra. University of Ghana.
- Wight, M.(1947) *The Gold Coast Legislative Council* London, Faber and Faber Ltd.