

**UNIVERSITY OF GHANA BUSINESS SCHOOL (UGBS)**

**ASSESSING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF DECENTRALIZATION IN  
KPONE-KATAMANSO MUNICIPAL ASSEMBLY**

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**A PROJECT WORK SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF  
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FOR THE AWARD OF A MASTER OF ARTS IN MANAGEMENT AND  
ADMINISTRATION.**

**DECLARATION**

I do hereby declare that this work is the result of my own research and has not been presented for any academic award in this or any other university. All references used in the work has been fully acknowledged.

I bear sole responsibility for any shortcomings

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**CERTIFICATION**

I hereby certify that this project work was supervised in accordance with procedures laid down by the university.

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**DEDICATION**

I dedicate this piece of work to my Husband S. C. Adza-Yawo and our Daughter Senam.

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## **ABSTRACT**

This study assessed the effectiveness of decentralization in the Kpone Katamanso Municipality in the Greater Accra Region of Ghana. The study specifically examined the model of decentralization practiced in the assembly, the contribution of decentralization to development, the involvement of women and men in the decentralization process and the challenges associated with decentralization in the Municipality. A single case study design was employed for the study and primary data was obtained from twenty-eight elected, appointed members and employees of the Assembly using face to face in-depth interviews and focus group discussions. The members of the assembly were selected through the purposive sampling technique. Data obtained was analysed using the thematic data analysis technique. It was revealed that the Kpone Katamanso Municipal General Assembly is made up of nineteen elected members and nine members appointed by the government. Decentralization at Kpone Katamanso involves the transfer of power and authority to zonal councils and unit committees for effective local participation. The study revealed that both women and men are involved in the decentralization process but there are significant disparities in representation as only three women are part of the General Assembly. The contribution of decentralization to development is significant as it has led to infrastructural development and grassroots participation in local development. The main challenges to effective decentralization in the assembly include; inadequacy of funds, poor boundary demarcation, political inference, under representation of women and poor coordination of planning and development in the area. The study concludes and recommends that decentralization must be implemented fully as stipulated in the 1992 Constitution, but with emphasis on equal participation and local capacity development in order to address the many teething challenges that may arise during implementation.

## **SECTION ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1 Background to the study**

Decentralization as a concept defies a single definition. Decentralization refers to the transfer of authority to plan, make decisions, as well as manage public functions from a higher level of government to any individual, organization or an agency at a lower level (Boadway & Dougherty, 2018). Transfer of authority as used by in this definition means the sharing of part of governmental power by a central ruling group with other groups, each having authority within a specific area of the state. Another way of understanding decentralization is the devolution of political decision-making power to local level, small-scale entities (Bardhan, 2002). This definition emphasizes devolution as a mechanism for decentralization. This is germane because decentralization allows the devolution of power to lower levels of government and this gives them the possibility to get actively involved in development activities. In terms of analysis, what is common to the above definitions of decentralization are the fundamental areas in the decentralization process-power, authority and responsibility, which start from the center and are then diffuse to the periphery.

Ribot, Agrawal and Larson (2006) observe that with decentralization, the accountability of power-holding actors to their constituents is an important index as this broadens popular participation. Decentralization also increases resource use, efficiency and promotes equity along with accountability of the local government to local. However, it should be stressed that despite the benefits of decentralization, its implementation and effectiveness is not uniform in all countries.

The wide acceptance of decentralization has brought about political, fiscal and administrative reforms in many developing countries (Egbenya, 2009). Ghana as a country has had various experiences in decentralization (Odoom, 2016). These can be traced from the colonial period till

now. The current decentralization system in Ghana can be traced to 1988 when the government introduced the decentralization programme based on values such as empowerment, equity, stability, accountability and checking of rural-urban drift (Aryee, 1995). Decentralization has been advocated by development partners and agencies as well as civil societies in both developed and developing nations as an essential mechanism for broadening citizen participation and improving local governance. Its aim is the enhancement of the socio- economic conditions of the citizens to facilitate poverty reduction. As a result, many countries in sub-Saharan Africa including Ghana have adopted decentralization as a mechanism for ensuring local development (Aryee, 1995; Mohammed, 2016).

Although many countries have adopted decentralization, the implementation of the concept differs from one country to another. In addition, some of these countries have succeeded, some are getting success, despite the slow pace and others have failed. Mostly in the developing world, countries claim to have been decentralized but it is still normal to see some practices of centralization (Honyenuga & Wutoh, 2018). The success or otherwise of decentralization is therefore said to be dependent on the notion of development, the level of decentralization, central government attitude towards the local units and the degree to which the practice is allowed to continuously evolve itself (Boadway & Dougherty, 2018). For decentralization to be complete and significant, it is argued that it must entail a mixture of political, fiscal and administrative types (Opare, Egbenya, Kaba, & Baku, 2012). In Ghana, political decentralization involves District Assemblies and sub-district structures such as urban, town, area councils and unit committees which provides a platform at the local level for the people to deliberate, legislate and execute actions necessary for the development of their areas. Administrative decentralization in Ghana also involves decentralizing several government agencies such as health, education, agriculture and social welfare to the district level

and the district staffs of the sector departments take up the functions previously performed by the twenty-two central government agencies.

In addition, local authorities in Ghana also collect levies and can raise money through fines and fees as part of fiscal decentralization. However, in many local areas, the local governments or administrative units possess the legal authority to impose taxes, but the tax base is so weak, hence their inability to raise enough revenue (Agbenya, 2010; Bossert Bowser & Amenyah, 2007). Notwithstanding the well thought out decentralization structure in Ghana and the many years of implementation, the outcomes of decentralization in the different local assemblies is less even. As a result, this study is concerned with the effectiveness of decentralization in Ghana but with a focus on one particular district, Kpone Katamanso. This focus is necessary because the outcomes of decentralization can be different even in the same country owing to the differences in resources and local leadership.

## **1.2 Problem statement**

In Ghana, the main objectives of decentralization include empowerment, participation, accountability, effectiveness inter-alia and the stemming of rural-urban drift (Ahwoi, 2010). Specifically, decentralization in Ghana is purposed to promote participatory democracy to empower district assemblies to introduce an effective system which create access to the resources of the country and promote transparency and accountability. However, researchers have questioned the effectiveness of Ghana's decentralization. Opare et al. (2012) for instance suggested that there are enough indications of ineffectiveness of decentralization in the education, health and water sectors in Ghana. Another study (Sana, 2011) revealed that although, decentralization has been practiced since 1988 in Ghana and the populace have come to embrace

it as the best way to ensuring development and local participation in governance, there are significant challenges to the successful implementation of the concept.

The ineffectiveness of decentralization is particularly obvious in education, health and sanitation. These failures are also more evident in some areas than others. Rural areas in particular exhibit a lot of the failings of decentralization as development is yet to trickle down to these places. There is also lack of funding, limited managerial skills and too much interference from the national level, which all point to the ineffectiveness of decentralization in Ghana (Opare, et al., 2012; Bossert Bowser & Amenyah, 2007). Contrary to the claims of ineffectiveness of decentralization some studies have also revealed that decentralization has been beneficial to local development in Ghana. Oduro-Ofori (2016) observed that local governments promote local economic development through municipal development planning and implementation, provision of infrastructure, land use planning and physical development permitting, provision of extension services, training programme and skills provision.

Mohammed (2016) also revealed that decentralization in Ghana has only been somewhat successful even in terms of basic measures such as ensuring local participation. Although the avenues for participation have been established as part of decentralization, these are dominated by educated males with professional backgrounds who are influential and have access to power at the center. Women, the poor and disabled as well as people from rural peripheries are excluded from the process (Mohammed, 2016). The exclusion of women and less privileged groups defeats the purpose of decentralization.

It would be realized that different studies (Opare, et al., 2012; Bossert Bowser & Amenyah, 2007; Oduro-Ofori, 2016; Mohammed, 2016) have different verdicts on the outcome of the decentralization process in Ghana, particularly when it came to its effectiveness in the areas of

local development and grassroots participation. The inconsistency of previous studies points to the need for further researcher, in the light of this, this study seeks to address the inconsistency of previous studies by investigating the effectiveness of decentralization in the Kpone Katamanso District which is one of the sixteen (16) districts in the Greater Accra Region of Ghana.

### **1.3 Purpose of the study**

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the decentralization process in Kpone Katamanso District, particularly its contribution to grass roots participation and local development.

### **1.4 Research Objectives**

This study seeks to;

- i. Describe the decentralization model being used in the Kpone Katamanso District.
- ii. Investigate how decentralization promotes local participation of women and men in the Kpone Katamanso District.
- iii. Examine the contribution of decentralization to local development in the Kpone Katamanso District.
- iv. Investigate the challenges associated with decentralization in the Kpone Katamanso District.

### **1.5 Research Questions**

The study is undergirded by the following research questions

- i. What is the decentralization model being used in the Kpone Katamanso District?
- ii. How has decentralization promoted local participation of women and men in the Kpone Katamanso District?

- iii. What is the contribution of decentralization to local development in the Kpone Katamanso District?
- iv. What are the challenges associated with decentralization in the Kpone Katamanso District?

### **1.6 Scope of the Study**

This study is concerned with the effectiveness of decentralization in Ghana. It is essentially an evaluation of the decentralization process but with a focus on the extent to which decentralization promotes grass roots participation and contributes to local development. The study also focuses on only the Kpone Katamanso District in the Greater Accra region.

### **1.7 Methodology**

A qualitative approach was adopted for this study and under that the case study design was used. Case study is also referred to as case research; it is a qualitative research design which does not seek to generalize findings but rather to undertake a detailed investigation of a particular phenomenon (Creswell, 2014). Case study entails the use of multiple methods of data collection, such as interviews, observations and pre-recorded documents (Kusi, 2012). The use of case study for investigating the effectiveness of decentralization involved intensively studying the decentralization over time within its natural setting, Kpone Katamanso Municipal Assembly.

Primary data was obtained using in-depth interviews and focus group discussion. The protocol for conducting the focus group discussions and the interviews were developed by the researcher based on the objectives of the study and the scope to be covered. The focus group and interviews were all conducted on the premises of the Assembly. The case study design enabled the researcher to explore the challenges of women leaders in decentralization in detail using different techniques.

The study shall also involve sampling of respondents owing to the impracticality of soliciting information from every member of the Assembly. The purposive sampling technique used twenty-six (26) members of the assembly for focus group discussion and two (2) for in-depth face to face interview. The sample consisted of a proportional distribution of women and men. Purposive sampling is a nonprobability sampling technique employed to select respondents based on a predetermined criterion which ensures that the selected respondents are valuable to the study (Onwuegbuzie & Collins, 2007). The purposive sampling technique is suitable for the study as it enabled the researcher to select participants that are predisposed to have valuable knowledge about the topic of concern. The information obtained through the interviews and focus group was recorded and later transcribed for thematic analysis. This involved close reading of the text, identifying patterns and converting the patterns into themes based on similarities and trends in response patterns (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

### **1.8 Significance of the study**

This study investigates the implementation of decentralization in Kpone Katamanso District. The outcomes of the study will first of all be useful information for policymakers, policy implementers, and other stakeholders involved in the decentralization process. The assessment of the impact of decentralization on grass root participation and local development would also inform central government and local governance actors on the progress of decentralization and highlight positive and negative developments that accompany decentralization. Along with this, the study also proffers actionable solutions that can be implemented to address the challenges to effective decentralization. In addition, this study also provides insights into how local people perceive the decentralization process and its outcomes. This insight is significant for understanding the reception and perceptions about decentralization policies at the local level. Last but not the least,

the study also adds to the existing knowledge on decentralization in the Ghana and could be the basis for further research in this area.

### **1.9 Organisation of the Study**

This study is organized into Five Sections. The First Section provides a general background to the study. It includes the statement of problem, research questions, objectives and scope of the study. The Second Section reviews both empirical and theoretical literature, guided by the scope and objectives of the study. Section Three details the methodology adopted for the study. The section captures information on the research design, sampling strategy, data collection, and data analysis techniques. The Fourth Section of the study presents the analysis of findings. This involves the presentation and discussion of results obtained on the field. The analysis was presented in a manner that directly addresses the research questions. Section Five is the final section, it contains a summary of all major findings, conclusions and recommendations.

## **SECTION TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

This section presents a review of relevant literature related to the study. The literature review covers various themes of importance to the objectives of the study. The themes covered include; the concept of decentralisation, types of decentralisation, and challenges to decentralisation among others.

#### **2.2 The Concept of Decentralisation**

In many areas, for several reasons and with varying degrees of intention, sovereign states endeavour to establish or strengthen sub-national governments through decentralisation. African states are no exception to either the decentralisation trend or the reality of its complexity and diversity (Smoke, 2003). Decentralisation enjoys massive goodwill and intimate desirability on the continent because of the promises it holds. An often-cited definition of the decentralisation concept is that of Rondinelli et al. (1983) who describe it as the transfer of authority, power or responsibility for planning, decision making and resource allocation from the central government to district administrative units of local governments and other parastatal organisations. The main attraction of decentralisation is that it reverses the indifference of established bureaucrats to satisfying the needs of the local people.

Decentralisation can also be defined as the mechanism for enabling communities and regional bodies to manage their own affairs. This facilitates closer contact among local and central authorities and creates a governance system which is responsive to needs and priorities of the local people (UNDP, 1999). Decentralisation is conceptualised as comprising; devolution, delegation

and deconcentration. Decentralisation is can also manifest differently at district, regional and national levels (Ahoi, 2010).

Decentralisation is much more complex, diverse and dimensional. As a concept, decentralisation can be subdivided into territorial (vertical) and functional (horizontal) typologies, but there are broadly two types of decentralisation; political and administrative (Marume & Jubenkanda, 2016). The complexity of decentralisation is largely because of the tendency of disciplinary experts to compartmentalise the concept. Economists focus on fiscal and economic development, political scientists focus on intergovernmental relations, local elections and accountability mechanisms, and public administration experts work on institutional structures, processes and procedures (Smoke, 2003). However, decentralization is not so much an academic exercise as it is a common and variable practice in most countries to achieve a diverse range of governance and public sector management reform objectives (UNDP, 2009).

### **2.3 Types of Decentralisation**

Decentralisation is both vertical and horizontal. Decentralisation is described as horizontal when it diffuses power among units at the same level. Vertical decentralisation on the other hand is when the powers of a central government are dispersed downwards to lower units or tiers (Hope, 1997). Decentralisation can be further categorised into three types based on how power or authority is dispersed from higher to lower tiers of authority. Under that, there are delegation, devolution and deconcentration.

**Deconcentration:** This form of decentralisation is the least extensive. Deconcentration does not bring out any meaningful dispersal of power, as most decisions have to be referred to the centre. Utomo (2009) describes deconcentration as the weakest level of decentralisation because it does not involve any transfer of power.

**Delegation:** This involves the transfer of special decision-making powers and authority to institutions outside the mainstream bureaucratic structure. Institutions that receive delegated power are mostly only under indirect control of the central government. These are typically semi-autonomous agencies and parastatals. Ahwoi (2013) states that under this kind of arrangement, the central government maintains its right to overturn local decisions. As a matter of fact, the central government can take its delegated powers back at any time.

**Devolution:** This infers the granting of decision-making powers to local units and capacitating them to assume total responsibility without any interference from the central government. Institutions under devolution have financial power in addition to authority to design and implement local development programmes and projects. Suffice to say, devolution is associated with discretionary power. Kempe (2000) avers that this form of decentralisation is best for strengthening local governance. This is because under devolution, local government bodies have the legitimacy to make their own decisions and pursue particular objectives based on their own human and material capacities. The discretionary authority of local governments must however be in line with national policy guidelines.

Decentralisation can also take different forms. There are two main forms, political and administrative decentralisation. Administrative decentralization is concerned with the redistribution of responsibility, authority and resources among various levels of government for providing public services. It also entails the transference of responsibility activities such as planning, financing and management of certain public functions from the central government and its agencies to units of government agencies, or other semi-autonomous bodies (Hossain, 2015).

The transfer of political authority to sub-national bodies is also referred to as political decentralisation (Opare, Egbenya, Kaba, & Baku, 2012). The goal of political decentralisation is

to offer citizens and the representatives more power for decision making purposes. In concept, political decentralisation implies allowing the local people to elect their representatives and granting them more decision-making power (Hossain, 2015). This form of decentralisation operates with the assumption that participatory decision-making leads to greater consensus which is relevant for ensuring diverse interests than those made solely by the central government (Hossain, 2015).

#### **2.4 Decentralisation in Ghana**

The 1992 Constitution of Ghana in Chapter 20 makes it clear that local government in Ghana shall be decentralised as much as practicable. However, the earliest forms of decentralisation in Ghana can be traced back to the colonial era when the British colonial Government administered its authority through local officers (Chireh, 2011). Decentralisation continued as a mechanism for local government in Ghana, but it changed in form and structure. For instance, in 1972, the local governance structure was monolithic and sought to diminish the distinction between local and central government. This single hierarchy type of local government did not withstand the test of time (Chireh, 2011).

The next major reform in local government began in 1988, and since then, periodically tweaks are made to fine-tune the decentralisation process and local government in general but within a specific framework. The 1988 reforms sought to strengthen local governance through a redefinition of the functions and responsibilities of different levels of government. It also sought to harness the potential of the local people and to mobilise local resources for development. These ideals are now backed by the 1992 constitution which outlines Ghana's commitment to highest forms of decentralisation possible (Aryee, 2000; Chireh, 2011).

Subsequently, other laws and regulations have been enacted to ensure the realisation of Ghana's goal of optimal decentralisation. These include the Local Government Act, Act 462, 1993, the National Development Planning (System) Act 1994 and the revised Civil Service Law. The current decentralisation system practiced in Ghana is backed by the 1992 constitution and the aforementioned legislations (Ahwoi, 2010).

Under the current decentralisation system and as stipulated by Article 242 of the Constitution and the Local Government Act of 1993, the composition of district assemblies is as follows;

- a. Elected representatives
- b. Members of parliament form constituencies in the district (non-voting members)
- c. Not more than 30% of appointees nominated by the president and
- d. The District/Municipal/Metropolitan Chief Executive

Although the District Chief Executive is appointed by the president, the appointee requires the approval of two-thirds of assembly members through voting. Members of the assembly can also nullify the appointment of a DCE through a vote of no confidence by majority (two-thirds) of members of the assembly. As much as possible the system gives a lot of power to the local assembly membership (Ahwoi, 2010).

Another remarkable feature of the current system is the element of checks and balances as well as clear separation of powers. The position of the DCEs who is appointed by the president of the republic and presiding member who is an elected officer are clearly separated. Various governmental departments also have representations at the district level and they are encouraged to work closely with district level authorities rather than with the central government.

The current decentralisation system has its failings. First, Ahwoi (2010) credited as one of the architects of Ghana's decentralisation system contends that the meaning of decentralisation as used

in the constitution is inconsistent, especially when interpreted along with other related legislation. Ahwoi (2010) opines that this confusion is among the greatest challenges to the implementation of decentralisation in the fourth republic as it has led to divergent interpretations of decentralisation by various governments. Also, the establishment of super-structure agencies such as the Ghana Health Service and the Ghana Education Service and the passing of Public Procurement Act, are feared to be rather tacit means of recentralisation. This is because these agencies are centralised or are managed by the central government (Chireh, 2011).

Furthermore, there are challenges with human resource capacity and resource inadequacies. Ahwoi (2010) quips that many District and Municipal Assemblies do not have the requisite managerial and technical capacities to function as expected of them. This further worsens the state of the districts because of the likelihood of gross mismanagement. This also defeats the entire purpose of deploying decentralisation as a mechanism for more effective local governance. Meanwhile, in the absence of a central body to oversee and guide the implementation process, overall implementation is poorly managed. Related to this, inter-sectorial collaboration for the implementation of decentralisation is poor and sometimes non-existent. As a result, the shifts in power, changes in functions and the flow of resources are poorly managed.

## **2.5 Local Participation in Decentralisation in Ghana**

One of the main reasons for the adoption of decentralization in Ghana is for the promotion of local participation in the governance process. Therefore, it was expected that decentralisation would promote popular participation in local politics and bring the local governance process closer to women and men at the local levels. The active participation of women and other disadvantaged groups was also envisaged (Zaney, 2014).

However, after more than two decades of implementing the decentralization system in Ghana, these expectations have not been met. Policies and programmes are not initiated to respect, protect and promote women's interests and their rights. Gender equality has also not been sufficiently realised (Zaney, 2014). Equal representation and participation of women and men in local government decision-making processes is critical not only for tackling women's practical needs and issues at the grassroots level but also for the attainment of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Unfortunately, women are under-represented, and the participation is low at many levels of the local governance rung (Brody, 2009; Odame, 2010).

Moreover, women's under-representation at any level of governance and decision-making results in a democratic deficit. This is because diverse social groups make better decisions, this is even truer when it comes to a task as challenging as representing the interests of citizens at the local level (Odame, 2010). Women's participation in local government is in recognition of their inalienable right to speak and be heard. It is also a means to social transformation from the community to national level. Decisions and policies of governance institutions at the local, national and global levels variously shape perceptions of the roles that women and men play in society (Brenya, Mensah, & Nyarko, 2015). Such decisions and policies also determine women's access to rights and resources at different levels. Brenya et al. (2015) explained that getting women involved in the definition of these policies and processes, and capacitating women to contribute to the institutions that produce them, makes it more likely that such policies will be responsive to the diverse needs of society and contribute to gender equality.

In an investigation of women in politics in Ghana, Odame (2010) pointed out that the involvement of women in politics in Ghana is low, at national and local levels. This has been the trend for decades and progress at supporting women in politics seems quite slow (Asuako, 2017).

Unacceptable as it is, the situation in Ghana reflects a global trend of women's low participation in politics (Odame, 2010). As at December 2016, Ghana had 31 (11.3%) of 275 parliamentarians being women. This contributed to Ghana's poor performance of placing 150 out of 185 countries in the 2016 Inter-Parliamentary Union ranking on women representation in parliaments worldwide. In that same year only six out of 18 Cabinet Ministers were women and only 18 (8.3%) out of 216 District and Municipal Chief Executives (DCEs) were women (UNDP, 2016). Currently, 17% of MMDCEs are women although the government promised to 30% in its manifesto (Nyabor, 2017).

In spite of being signatory to several regional, continental and international roadmaps and frameworks for gender sensitive and inclusive governance, commitment is low and hence progress in improving women's participation in local governance is very slow (Asuako, 2017). For instance, Ghana is signatory to the Maputo Protocol and the African Charter on Human and People's Rights. At these forums and others, Ghanaian representatives pledged the country's commitment to the advancement of women on the continent, but much remains to be seen in terms of action (Asuako, 2017).

Local governance and decentralisation will be effective only when they are gender sensitive. Local governance cannot be effective if it does not lead to a more equal world where women and men have choices and are given opportunities to actualise their ambitions. It also cannot be effective until it takes into account and responds to the needs and priorities of women and men in public spending and legislation (UNDP, 2016). Asuako (2017) fears that Ghana may not achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), especially goal five if more women are not decisively roped into the local government system. SDG goal 5 seeks to ensure full and effective participation

of women and equal opportunities for political and economic leadership at levels in society. This is necessary to guarantee balanced and sustainable development that meets the needs of all people.

Brody (2009) opines that governance must be gender sensitive to cater for the needs of women and men effectively. Meanwhile, gender equality and the realisation of women's rights are necessary in order for the goals of gender sensitive governance to be realised. Policies and legislation must also address the differing interests, priorities and needs of both genders. This is not only a gender-based requirement, but it would also help restructure unequal socio-economic powers. Establishing clear, gendered perspectives of effective governance principles is important. Furthermore, the principles must be integrated into concrete approaches for local governance (Brody, 2009).

Greater participation in the political arena and in local development is considered essential for reversing the trends of inequality in the political socio-economic status of women and men. Political participation on various levels is influenced by factors such as social class, sex, caste, education, income, family background and age among others. Cobbina (2012) observed that decentralisation has failed to improve the social position of the underprivileged people in society, especially women because influence of the aforementioned factors is persistent (Brenya et al., 2015). Women's active participation and involvement in decentralised government is one way of reversing the trend and ensuring equitable development.

## **2.6 Challenges of Decentralization**

Local government is linked to a number of positive virtues including efficiency, responsiveness, accountability, and participation but it is also associated with numerous problems, especially in developing countries. Arthur (2016) observes that local government institutions in developing countries including Ghana are bedeviled with issues of misappropriation of funds and misuse of

authority. These problems are exacerbated by lack of local democratic practices due to unequal political participation and competition, absence of information available to citizens, incidence of high level of illiteracy, and absence of the central government's ability to perform regular oversight responsibilities on the work of the local government institutions in the state (Mbate, 2017).

Fridy and Myers (2019) also notes that decentralization in Ghana, and across sub-Saharan Africa, faces a number of challenges to successful local governance provision because there are a number of formal and informal actors. The multiplicity of actors makes it difficult for citizens to understand the concept effectively. As a result, citizens may take problems they want a governance provider to solve to a member of parliament or a district assembly person, a traditional chief or a police officer, a neighbour or an NGO because they do not know who is best suited to help.

Local governments also face serious challenges concerning the mobilization of internal funds. These include inadequate data on existing ratable and all economic entities and a list of properties and their owners that could be taxed. Property owners also default in paying property rates approved by the local government due to their non-involvement in the fee-fixing process (Arthur, 2016). Due to the absence of an advance (automated) system of revenue collection, revenue collectors are able to take advantage of the loopholes in the revenue collection process to dupe the local government by under-reporting what is actually collected. Again, the revenue collectors are not well equipped in terms of skills and logistics to be able to collect revenue effectively.

Furthermore, local governments in developing countries including Ghana have not be able to provide for the needs of grass roots. This is because in many developing countries, the management committees of the local government institutions are selected by the central government. Besides, local government institutions are also often reoriented and reshaped by the central governments in response to emerging constraints and opportunities in society (Kwon, 2002). In addition, local

government institutions are also consistently facing new challenges in the performance of their roles in society.

In Ghana, there is inadequate human capacity to manage the multiplicity of responsibilities of local government institutions. This challenge is exacerbated by the exodus of experienced local government staff to take employment in other well-paid institutions, and also appointments of the local government staff based on political patronage rather than the personnel's technical and management skills (Awhoi, 2010). This is a major challenge because efficient local government staff with requisite technical and managerial skills is critical for the delivery of the gains of local governance to the people.

In addition, Aryee (2000) observes that the implementation of fiscal decentralization in Ghana has been particularly poor. About 80 per cent of money spent by district assemblies in Ghana comes from the central government. This development creates a situation of over-dependence on the central government and therefore defeats the purpose of decentralized government.

## **2.7 Decentralization and local development**

Local government plays an integral part in development in both developed and developing countries. However, local government has been created to bring about development in rural areas. This is the main reason why over the past decades, many developing countries including Ghana have embarked on decentralization to promote democratic governance and participatory approaches in development (Arthur, 2016). As agents of rural development, local government helps to improve planning and implementation of national development programmes at the local levels (Fridy & Myers, 2019).

Local government also helps to promote greater flexibility in the implementation of local programmes and provide a means of co-ordinating the various agencies involved at the local levels

in the process of development. Along the same line of reasoning, Miodownik (2010) argued that local government offers opportunities to help neutralize some of the commonly accepted problems of centralized hierarchical and bureaucratic structures. Emphasizing the point further, Kempe (2000) also argued that local government system focuses on the totality of structures within the local community that comprises both state and society organizations to implement local development programme.

Decentralized governance also helps to reduce governance, inefficiencies, and the low level of responsiveness inherent in the over centralization of decision-making in the national capital in terms of the provision of basic public goods and services to improve the welfare of the local people (Ozmen, 2010). Local government thus enhances the responsiveness of the locally elected or appointed bodies towards local problems, because, local officials are mostly found at the local levels, thus, they are able to respond quickly to problems and pressures from the local people without waiting for the approval of agencies at higher levels.

In addition, decentralisation, which began in Ghana in 1988, has increased opportunities for citizens to democratically determine how they should be governed and to make choices regarding the type and quality of public services they want. Citizens are now empowered to elect on a periodic basis person's whom they think can serve their interests on local councils. These changes have caused a major realignment in central–local relations (Aryee, 2000; Awhoi, 2010)

The decentralisation process has also empowered local governments with some basic funds to promote the development of areas under their control. The central government supports them with grants including the District Assembly Common Fund (DACF) and the District Development Fund (DDF). The local assemblies also have the legal mandate to mobilizes revenue locally from their area. In Ghana, this is called the Internally Generated Funds (Adamtey, 2014).

## 2.8 Conceptual Framework

Conceptually, decentralisation is systematic process that takes input which is processed (throughput) and this results in outcome. As a system, decentralised process takes input in the form social group involvement, use of resources and devolved power. These inputs are then processed or churned into deliverables, mainly good governance. The quality of the outcomes depends on the input and the processes involved in churning the input into outcomes. The decentralisation process is depicted as a conceptual framework in Figure 2.

**Figure 2: Conceptual Framework of decentralisation**



**Source: Author's own construct (2019)**

It would be observed from Figure 2 that the inputs for decentralisation are social groups, local resources and power. Social groups consist of two or more people who have common identity and interest in society. Social groups include ethnic groups but also gender based groups. These groups have differing interest and needs that can be satisfied through effective decentralisation. Other key ingredients or inputs are local resources and power. These are all available at the grassroots level and can be fed into the decentralisation process.

Throughput is the decentralisation process itself. At this stage leadership is necessary to supervise the competing interests of the different social groups. Leadership itself must be attained through competition among the various social groups. In all of this, there should be no hindrance or limitation to participation of social groups. Constituents of all social groups must be allowed

unfettered access to the arena of competition in order to emerge as leaders because they are capable.

The final stage in the framework is the manifestation of the ultimate outcome of decentralisation; good governance. Good governance here means the provision of public goods and services to satisfy the interests of different social groups and then local development. These two are the main goals of decentralisation as a local governance mechanism.

## **SECTION THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

This section describes the methodological procedure that was employed to conduct the study. It contains details about the research design, sampling strategy, data types and sources. It also contains the information on the data collection and data analysis procedure among others.

#### **3.2 Research Design**

Research design refers to the general plan for linking or connecting conceptual research problems to empirical research procedure. It is a map-out or blueprint of the study which articulates the data required, methodology to be applied and the means of analysing data obtained (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003). This study made use of the single case study design which is one of the research designs under qualitative research approach.

Yin (2013) notes that case study is recommendable for studies that focus on answering *how* and *why* research questions. It is also useful in instances where the researcher has very little or no control over the events and behaviour of subjects to be investigated. Lastly, case studies are ideal for investigation of contemporary phenomenon in naturalistic context (Creswell, 2014). The phenomenon being investigated in the lived environment is what is referred to as the case. Case study research may involve one or many cases. Case studies involving one case are referred to as single case study and those involving several cases are multiple case studies (Yin, 2013). The rationale for choosing the case study design stems from the need to investigate and understand the nature of decentralization in Kpone Katamanso and how decentralisation contributes to local development in the area. The choice of this research design enabled the researcher to explore and to describe the issues in detail. The primary weakness of the case study design is its inability to

generate generalizable outcomes due to the focus on particular cases in specific context (Kusi, 2012).

### **3.3 Population**

Research population is the aggregation of all units or subjects to be considered in a study (Creswell, 2014). The population of this study consisted of members of the various branches or arms of local government in the Kpone Katamanso Municipal Assembly. The Kpone Katamanso General Assembly is constituted by eighteen (18) elected assembly members, nine (9) appointed members, including the Municipal Chief Executive (MCE). Kpone Katamanso is divided into four area councils. The area councils also consist of 20 members each. Therefore, the total population size is one hundred and seven (107) individuals.

### **3.4 Sample Size**

A sample size of twenty-eight (28) respondents was selected for the study. The sample consisted of elected members (including the MP) and appointed members (including the MCE and Presiding Member) of the Assembly. This sample size and members were selected because it was impractical to use the whole population and the targeted sample size provided information to answer the research questions.

### **3.5 Sampling Techniques**

This study made use of the purposive sampling technique to select participants. Purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling strategy that is useful for selecting study participants based on predetermined criteria such as their level of knowledge or expertise on a phenomenon being investigated (Kusi, 2012). Tongco (2007) also describes purposive sampling as a non-random sampling tool which is used when the researcher wants to make a deliberate choice of respondents

due to the qualities possessed by the respondent. Purposive sampling is also referred to as judgement sampling.

Purposive sampling is widely used for qualitative studies because of its flexibility and usefulness for selecting information rich respondents and cases for the most appropriate use of resources (Etikan, Abubakar, & Rakuyya, 2016). Besides its ability to aim straight for respondents who are most likely to have the quality data to contribute, this sampling strategy also rides on the willingness of respondents to participate and the availability of respondents express their opinions in a reflective and articulate manner (Etikan et al., 2016).

Purposive sampling has inherent limitations. This includes the high propensity of researcher bias as this kind of sampling is subjective. Purposive samples can be skewed and the margin of error substantial, particularly when sampling decisions are not well considered or are ill conceived. Also, owing to the dependence on criteria that are not necessarily theoretical or analytic in deciding the number of samples to include, purposive samples are inherently limited in their ability to lead to generalizable findings (Etikan et al., 2016). In spite of these limitations, purposive sampling was useful for the study as the intent the study was to investigate the particular phenomenon intensely but not to over generalise to apply to other populations.

### **3.6 Data Collection**

This research work involved the use of primary and secondary data. Primary data refers to data obtained by the researcher firsthand and purposely for an ongoing research (Hox & Boeije, 2005). In this study, primary data was obtained from members of the Kpone Katamanso General Assembly and counsellors of the area councils in the municipality through focus group discussions and interviews. Secondary data was also obtained from the Assembly's records at the Municipal office.

### **3.7 Instrumentation**

Focus group guide and interview guide were the main instruments employed for collecting data in this study.

Focus group discussion is among the very popular instruments for qualitative studies. This takes the form of guided discussions moderated by the researcher based on a set of questions designed to elicit responses meant to help address research questions. The underlying notion from which focus group discussions draw their value is that listening to the opinions and thoughts of others can stimulate personal views and perspectives that would otherwise be lost in a personal interview or through a survey. The set of questions that guide researchers in the conduct of focus group discussion is called the focus group guide. A focus group may consist of up to 12 participants and may last for several minutes or a few hours depending on the issues to be covered and the responsiveness of participants (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002). In all three focus group discussions were conducted two of them were made up of nine participants. The third consisted of eight participants. Focus groups are notable for revealing valuable information and deep insight when conducted in a relaxed and comfortable environment with carefully selected participants.

The main disadvantage of this instrument is that it is not suitable for collecting confidential information because of its public nature, it is also difficult to use this instrument when large populations are involved (Kusi, 2012). Notwithstanding, focus group discussion was useful for this study as the sample involved was sizeable and the nature of the information required was not confidential.

#### **3.7.1 Interview Guide**

Qualitative studies may make use of different kinds of interviews; structured, semi-structured or non-structured (Edwards & Holland, 2013). This study relied on semi-structured interview guides.

The interview guide for this exercise was designed by the researcher based on the objectives and scope of the study. The semi-structured interview means that there was a formal structure and set of predetermined questions, but these were also kept flexible to allow the researcher ask follow-up questions and also to enable the respondents express themselves freely. The interviews were however in-depth, and issue based, allowing for the objectives of the study to be well covered (Edwards & Holland, 2013; Kusi, 2012).

Interviews are beneficial for understanding how social institutions, discourses and process function. It is also more suitable for exploring and describing the personal experiences and perspectives of participants. However, interviews have limitations stemming mainly from the difficulty of replication. Interviews guide are also too easily influenced by social context environment. When interviews involve many people and last for long hours, the large amounts of textual data that emerge are also challenging to analyse (Edwards & Holland, 2013).

### **3.8 Data Collection Procedure**

At the initial stage of data collection, an introductory letter was obtained from the Graduate School of the University of Ghana and delivered to the administrative head of the Kpone Katamanso Municipal Assembly. This facilitated the site entry process and established the legitimacy of the researcher as graduate student. Subsequently, the researcher made appointments with the municipal authorities to explain the purpose of the study and also to establish further rapport which led to scheduling the periods for the interviews and focus group discussions based on the availability of participants.

The focus group discussions were conducted first. Three focus group discussions were conducted each consisted of eight or nine members. Interviews were conducted with the Member of Parliament of the Kpone Katamanso and the Presiding Member of the Kpone Katamanso

Assembly. Both interviews were conducted at the premises of the Municipality. The researcher prepared for the discussion by making sure the focus group discussion questions were properly worded to stoke discussion and obtain the necessary information. A digital recorder was also carried along to record the discussion for later transcription and analysis.

The researcher began the discussion by explaining the purpose of study and the discussion. Permission was sought from respondents before recording the discussion. They were also assured the information they give will not be used for any other purpose besides what was agreed which was for academic purpose only. Each discussion lasted for about 45 minutes. The researcher ended by thanking respondents for their participation.

Also, all interviews were personal and in-depth. In that appointments were made personally with the interviewees. The interviews were conducted with the help of an interview guide which was designed based on the scope and objectives of the study. Each interview lasted for 15 to 25 minutes. All respondents were assured that the information they give will not be used for any other purpose besides academic studies, and they gave their verbal consent for the interviews to be recorded.

### **3.9 Data Analysis**

The thematic analysis technique was employed to analyse data obtained. Thematic analysis focuses on identifying particular pattern among textual data set (Kusi, 2012). At the initial stage of the analysis the researcher read and re-read the transcribed data closely in order to herself familiarise with the data. Afterwards, clear labels or codes were developed that helped to identify and distinguish important features of the transcribed data. The next stage involved the search for themes.

The themes were identified based on similarities and pattern of responses. The themes were further reviewed or refined. The readjusted themes were then used for the analysis. The refined themes were used for weaving together data extracts and analytic narratives in relation to extant literature. The analysis process was followed sequentially, but it was also recursive in some instances as the researcher had go back and forth negotiating themes and finding extracts from the transcribed data to support the analysis (Braun & Clark, 2006).

### **3.10 Organizational Profile**

The Kpone Katamanso Municipal is one of the Municipal Assemblies in the Greater Accra Region of Ghana. Its capital is Kpone. The Kpone Katamanso District was established in 2012 by Legislative Instrument (L.I) 2031, when it was carved out of the Tema Metropolitan Assembly. It shares boundaries with Tema to the West, Dangme to the East, the Gulf of Guinea to the South and Akapim South to the North. It was elevated to a Municipal status in 2018. The Kpone Katamanso Municipal Assembly is the highest political authority in the Municipality and exercises deliberative, legislative and executive powers. In total the Assembly has a membership of about 105. The membership is made up of 18 elected, 9 appointed, 1 Member of Parliament and 1 Municipal Chief Executive (MCE), Civil Servants and Public Servants working together to promote the mission and vision of the assembly and the decentralization agenda of the country of bring governance to the people. The MCE is the Political head. The Municipal Coordinating Director is the administrative head. The Municipal Assembly has four (4) zonal councils.

## **SECTION FOUR**

### **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

This section presents the findings and analysis of the field investigation. The findings and analysis are presented in a way that directly addresses the research questions outlined in the first section of the study. The findings are responses obtained from three focus group discussions and two interviews with members of the Kpone Katamanso Assembly.

The Member of Parliament for Kpone Katamanso and the Presiding Member of the Assembly were interviewed. The remaining members of the Assembly participated in Focus Group Discussions (FGD). In all twenty-eight elected and appointed members of the Kpone Katamanso Municipal Assembly were considered for this study. This was made up of 19 elected members and 9 members appointed by the government.

In line with the need to keep respondents anonymous, the researcher used alpha-numeric case to replace the actual names of the respondents. In that, responses from participants from the first focus group discussion are presented as FGD-1, those from the second are presented as FGD-2 and the third FGD-3. The interview responses from the Member of Parliament are presented as MP, that of the Presiding Member was presented as PM.

#### **4.2 Respondent Profile**

The respondent profile is given to provide the descriptive background of the respondents that were involved in the study. The features included gender, tenure and portfolio of respondents which are presented below.

The gender composition had majority being males, 21 representing 75% and 7 females representing 25%. Though their ages were not asked due to sensitivity of such demographic feature

within work settings and their presence in public at the focus group discussions, a tentative guess via observation show majority in their middle adulthood (30-45yrs). On years of experience, most have worked in the District and Municipal Assembly units for more than 5years (57%), followed by those between 1 to 4years (32.14%) and the rest having tenure of more than 10years as employees (11.86%). Also, the study targeted key stakeholders with positions to learn from their perspective about their assessment of decentralization taking the case of Kpone-Katamanso Municipal Assembly. Their portfolio ranges from the Member of Parliament, Presiding Member, Zonal Council Members, Senior Administrative Staff, Assembly Members and other employees of the assembly to make up the sample size.

#### **4.3 Decentralization model.**

The first research question sought to describe the nature of decentralization as it is practiced in the Kpone Katamanso District Assembly. This research question was addressed through interviews and focus group discussions held with sampled members of the Kpone Katamanso District Assembly including the Member of Parliament for Kpone Katamanso Constituency. Thematic analysis of interview and focus group discussion responses revealed that decentralization in the Municipality entails transferring power, authority, functions, competence and resources to the grassroots level. Decentralization in the Assembly is also representative and participatory. The identified themes are explained further and supported with verbatim quotations from participants.

##### **4.3.1 Transfer of power and authority to lower tiers**

To decentralize literally means to move away or to transfer from the center. The focus group discussion and interviews revealed that decentralization at the Kpone Katamanso Municipal Assembly involves the transfer of power, authority, functions and resources from the national government to local units including the Kpone Katamanso Municipal Assembly (KKMA).

The Member of Parliament of the area who is also a member of the Assembly stated that;

*The decentralization process has a four-tier structure where Regional Coordinating Council is at the top, then the Municipal Assembly is the local authority and then the sub-district structures being the Zonal council and unit committees bringing governance to the doorstep of the people (MP).*

The response of the MP shows that the decentralization system has a tiered structure. This perspective was reinforced in during the focus group discussion.

*The nature of decentralization in the assembly is such that authority and resources are transferred to the local level by the central government. The local authority has its own political head (R-FGD-2).*

Another respondent stated in the focus group discussion that;

*Decentralization is basically about governance at the doorstep of the people. There is devolution where the resources, personnel and authority are transferred from central government to the local or sub-national level (R- FGD 2).*

The responses iterate the view that decentralization in the municipality is ordered on levels. Power, authority and resources are then transferred to the various levels. In that, the position of the Municipal Assembly as the second tier after the Regional Coordinating Council makes it a very powerful and essential mechanism for government. The municipal assembly is further closely knit with the zonal and unit committees who are the lowest but very significant tiers on the decentralization structure.

#### **4.3.2 Representative grassroots governance**

Another theme that emerged in relation to the nature of decentralization at the Kpone Katamanso Municipal Assembly is ‘representative grassroots governance’. The research participants considered decentralization as heavily centered on representative grassroots governance. This means that people are selected at the grassroots to lead local government at that level.

A focus group discussant expressed this perspective succinctly;

*The Assembly has both elected and appointed members likewise the Unit committees. Some unit committee members and Assembly members whose area of jurisdiction fall within the zone serve on the zonal council (FGD-2).*

The representative nature of decentralization was also explained as:

*We have the assembly made up of 18 elected members and 9 appointed members. Under the assembly we have the zonal councils and the unit committee. The unit committees also have elected members and appointed members (PM).*

It is evident from the responses that decentralization in the Kpone Katamanso Municipal Assembly involves the transfer of power and authority to local units for effective local participation. Decentralization in the assembly also involves representative local governance as local authorities have their own heads and members who are either elected or appointed. The findings of the study confirm earlier studies (Ahwoi, 2013; Kempe, 2000) that decentralization is representative and involves the transfer of power and authority to local units.

The outcomes of the study are particularly in tune with Opare et al. (2012) who explained that decentralization involves District Assemblies and sub-district structures such as urban, town, area councils and unit committees which provided a platform at the local level for the people to deliberate, legislate and execute actions necessary for the development of their areas.

The tier nature of decentralization and the transfers of power and resources also support the views of Ahwoi (2013) and Kempe (2000) who describe decentralization as the transfer of authority, power or responsibility for planning, decision making and resource allocation from the central government to district administrative units of local governments and other parastatal organisations. The main attraction of decentralization is that it reverses the indifference of established bureaucrats to satisfying the needs of the local people.

The nature of decentralization in the research area was vertical because it involves the transfer of power from the central government downwards to lower units or tiers. In addition, both political and administrative decentralization are evident in the municipality. Hossain (2015) explains that administrative decentralization is concerned with the redistribution of responsibility, authority and resource. Political decentralization on the other hand involves the transfer of political authority to sub-national bodies.

#### **4.4 Decentralization and local participation**

The second research question focused on how decentralization has enhanced the participation of women and men at the local level. This is a germane question because the disproportionate participation of women compared to men at the local level is matter of concern. The field study revealed that women and men participate in decentralization but there is significant disparity in terms of representation.

##### **4.4.1 Participation of women**

The interviews and focus group discussions revealed that decentralization has enhanced the participation of women by opening up and exposing more women to local governance. It has also given women the chance to play active roles in the local governance process. Additionally, some women have been appointed to influential positions in the assembly where they are able to shape policy decisions significantly.

In explaining the participation of women, one participant in the third focus group discussion stated that:

*Decentralization has helped women to take part in governance. I know three women who are now appointed members of the Assembly. Women get the opportunity to stand for elections and also be appointed to serve on the local assembly. This gives*

*them the chance to showcase their capabilities and advocate for their wellbeing (FGD-3).*

The role of women was further explained in a separate discussion group:

*Women who are also appointed by the government to serve on the Assembly educate other women in the communities on government policies and programmes. (FGD-1).*

The participation of women in local elections has also improved as a result of decentralized governance, as one participant explained in a focus group discussion;

*Decentralization has given women exposure and the platform to stand for local elections. It has also empowered them through financial assistance and advocacy programmes (FGD-2).*

These responses show that women are playing important roles in the assembly as appointed representatives. However only three out of the twenty-eight members of the assembly are women. All three are also government appointees who serve as committee members and not in active leadership roles.

#### **4.4.2 Participation of Men**

Regarding the participation of men, respondents admitted that men dominate the public space including local government. Men participate in local government by taking up leadership roles at the assembly, they are also exposed to capacity building and training programs that further reinforce their positions in the assemblies.

The presiding member of the assembly explained that:

*Men have the opportunity to stand for local elections and take part in decision making. They also benefit from skills training which empowers them and makes them self-reliant (PM).*

A participant in the first focus group discussion corroborated and stated that:

*Men have assumed leadership roles in decentralization, and this shaped them to be up and doing even in different places. It has made them more responsible and involved in decision making. (FGD1)*

These responses show that men play influential roles as leaders at the local government level.

In a separate interview with the Member of Parliament for the assembly, he stated that:

*Men have dominated the local government platform. Men are participating and have become vocal on issues of local development. Some have understood the decentralization process better. It leads to empowerment of the leaders who appreciate national issues even better and contribute to debates on improving living standards of both men and women (MP).*

Taken together, the findings of the study regarding the second research question demonstrate that both women and men partake in the decentralization process. However, the decentralization process has given women in particular the chance to participate in local government. This is because whilst men have always had the chance to operate in the public arena, women at the local level have historically been marginalized partly because of the sociocultural milieu and partly because of capacity limitations (Asuako, 2017). As such, whilst the participation of women is not at par with their colleague men, decentralized government has offered the opportunity to play important roles in local government either as elected or appointed representatives.

The findings of the study confirm Zaney (2014) and Brody's (2009) findings; that equal representation and participation of women and men has not been achieved in the current state of decentralization in Ghana. The disproportionate participation of women and men in decentralization is a sticky point because, participation in local government decision-making processes is critical not only for tackling women's practical needs and issues at the grassroots level but also for the attainment of Sustainable Development Goals (MDGs), particularly Goal 5 on achieving gender equality and empowering of women.

The outcomes of the study have implications on local development because Brenya et al. (2015) explained that under-representation and low participation of women at any level of governance and decision-making results in a democratic deficit. This is because diverse social groups make better decisions, this is even truer when it comes to a task as challenging as representing the interests of citizens at the local level.

#### **4.5 Contribution of decentralization to local development**

Decentralization is attractive because of the promise of local development. The third objective of the study investigated the contribution of local government to development in the Kpone Katamanso Municipality. Participants in the focus group discussions and interviews indicated that decentralization has led to the provision of basic infrastructure as well as participatory and responsive governance.

##### **4.5.1 Provision of basic infrastructure**

Many respondents pointed out that carving the Kpone Katamanso Municipal Assembly from the Tema Municipal Assembly has greatly inured to the benefits of the inhabitants of the Kpone Katamanso Municipality mainly because of infrastructural development.

During the first focus group discussion, one respondent quipped:

*In fact, KKMA was neglected under TMA but there has been some appreciable level of development since it was carved out of TMA. There has been improvement in infrastructure such as schools, health centers and road network. (FGD-1)*

This point was echoed by another respondent in the second discussion:

*There has been some development in the municipality over the past seven years. Provision of infrastructure in terms of schools, health posts, markets and roads have improved (FGD-2)*

A more specific example was given during the interview with the presiding member

*when Kpone was under TMA it did not have a police commander, but this has changed when it was carved out. Kpone now has its own police command. To also enhance justice delivery a court has also been constructed which would not have been the case if Kpone were still under TMA.*

#### **4.5.2 Enhanced Local Participation**

It was also realized that decentralization has contributed to local participation which is an essential element of sustainable development. The ensuing responses are views expressed by respondents in explaining how decentralization contributes to local development.

*The Zonal Council and Unit Committee are able to educate community members about their rights and responsibilities. We organize clean up exercises and sensitize people so now the people see themselves as being part of whatever happens in the communities and participate (FGD-2).*

During the interview with the presiding member, it emerged that:

*Participation in local government has improved as people can just walk to the officers of the Assembly and the zonal council and demand services. They also contribute to decision making projects and programmes being owned by the people for success (PM).*

The perspectives expressed by respondents show that the municipal assembly is doing a good job at involving the people in local development. This is significant because a municipal assembly can be set up but not much will be achieved if the elected and appointed officials do not do what is expected of them.

#### **4.5.3 Increased local control and ownership of projects**

From the data analysed, it came to the fore that through decentralization, local people at Kpone Katamanso now have the chance to be involved fully in local projects. The Member of Parliament for the area explained that;

*The electorates have a better say in choosing which projects are priorities and where such projects should be situated (MP).*

There presiding member of the assembly also stated that:

*There has been improvement in infrastructure development and monitoring and supervision of projects has become easier, further enhancing development (PM).*

Both responses show that local control and sense of ownership of development projects has increased as a result of decentralization in the area.

The outcomes of the study regarding the third research question demonstrate that decentralization leads to grassroots development as several studies including Fridy and Myers (2019), Zaney, (2014) and Smoke (2003) have earlier indicated. At Kpone Katamanso, decentralization has led to the speedy provision of development infrastructure such as schools, market center and roads.

Additionally, decentralization has led to improvements in local participation in development. These findings are not surprising as earlier works including Zaney (2014) have explained that improved local participation and development are some of the axiomatic outcomes of decentralized local government. One of the main reasons for the adoption of decentralization in Ghana is for the promotion of local participation in the governance process. Therefore, it was expected that decentralization would promote popular participation in local politics and bring the local governance process closer to women and men at the grassroots levels. The active participation of women and other disadvantaged groups was also envisaged.

The outcomes of the study also confirm Smoke (2003) and UNDP (1999) findings that decentralization enjoys massive goodwill and intimate desirability on the continent because of the promises it holds. In the present study participants have hailed the decentralization process in the Kpone Katamanso District as being responsible for local control and ownership of development projects. This acquiesces with the assessing of UNDP (1999) that in addition to being the

mechanism for enabling communities and local authorities to manage their own affairs, decentralization facilitates closer contact among local and central authorities and creates a governance system which is responsive to needs and priorities of the local people.

#### **4.6 Challenges associated with decentralization**

The final research question focused on the challenges associated with the implementation of decentralization in the Kpone Katamanso Municipal Assembly. This research question like the previous ones was addressed using responses obtained during the interviews and focus group discussions with selected elected and appointed members of the assembly. It was revealed that the main challenges to effective decentralization are poor planning, unclear physical boundary of the municipality, inadequate financial resources, political interference and limited understanding of decentralization at the local level.

##### **4.6.1 Unclear demarcation of physical boundary**

Members of the Kpone Katamanso Municipal Assembly explained that being a newly created assembly, they face a major problem from the unclear physical boundaries of the Assembly.

*One of the main challenges of implementing decentralization in the Assembly is that the Assembly is the creation of the assembly without clear boundary demarcation. This is leading to boundary disputes with the mother assembly- Tema Metro (FGD-1).*

Another respondent reiterated the challenges associated with boundary demarcation and stated that:

*There are no properly demarcated boundaries which leads to boundary disputes between neighbouring Assemblies and this does not augur well for Kpone Katamanso because it has implications for revenue mobilization and development (FGD-2)*

#### **4.6.2 Inadequate financial resources**

Respondents lamented over the inadequacy of financial resources to run the activities of the Kpone Katamanso assembly. The Presiding Member (PM) stated that:

*The 5% of tax revenue that is remitted to sub-national structures, the local authorities are woefully inadequate. Coupled with the inadequacy, there is also delay in the release of the District Assemblies Common Fund. When it is even released there are some deductions at source which further depletes the amount that finally gets to us here (PM).*

During the first focus group discussion with zonal councils, a participant remarked that:

*Development goes with planning and resources, but the resources has not been adequate and the vast geographical area of the assembly also makes it difficult to make an impact with less financial resources (FGD-1)*

#### **4.6.3 Poor coordination of planning and development**

Elected and appointed members of the assembly were also concerned over the poor co-ordination and planning of development in the assembly. The poor coordination stems from multiple interests such as local chiefs and the national government who all want to influence local development in different ways.

One respondent explained:

*You see because of poor planning and administrative lapses, like the government giving contract on behalf of assemblies, monitoring becomes difficult. For example, sanitation contract given to Zoomlion by the Ministry instead of the Assembly taking charge to manage waste within the municipality (FGD-3).*

The Member of Parliament for the area also expressed another dimension of the issue when he stated that:

*Some traditional authorities are not cooperating with the assembly. The chiefs dispose of lands and do not make provisions for infrastructure development. As a result, there have been challenges with getting land to build schools, clinics etc (MP)*

#### **4.6.4 Political interference**

It was also realized that there was political interference in the decentralization process the assembly. A participant in the third focus group discussion indicated that:

*Over politicization of every activity is leading to lack of interest from especially those who do not want to be entangled with the party politics. Also, the Municipal Chief executive's appointment by the President makes him tend to be accountable to the government rather than the people (FGD-3).*

Another respondent stated:

*There are some bottlenecks when it comes to implementation of the decentralization policy. The assembly is supposed to be non-partisan, but it has been dominated by party cronies. Executives of known political parties also stand for elections at the local level (FGD-2).*

Further still, another respondent indicated that

*I just want to say there is so much political inference, and because local politics has been bedevilled with the characteristics of national party politics of promise and fail, a lot of people do not show interest in participation in the elections (FGD-1).*

#### **4.6.5 Limited understanding of decentralization**

The interviews and focus group discussions also revealed that many people at the grassroots do not understand the decentralization process adequately.

*The people are not well informed about the decentralization process. If they are not seeing the development they expect, they do not pay their fees, levies and rates to the local authority. The needed revenue in terms of internally generated funds will be difficult to mobilize (FGD-1).*

The findings of the study with regard to the challenges of decentralization shows that the main challenges in the assembly are administrative and financial. In terms of administration, the land boundaries of the assembly have not been demarcated clearly and this makes it difficult for the

assembly to assert its authority fully. Similarly, there are also challenges associated with the provision of land for public infrastructure because the traditional authorities who are also the custodians of local lands keep selling land at prime locations without recourse to urban planning.

The financial challenges identified have to do with the inadequacy of internally generated funds and the delays in the disbursement of the District Assembly Common Fund (DACF). Related to this, the central government also continues to award some contracts from the national capital contrary to the dictates of full decentralization. Since contracts have financial implications, such actions end up reducing the financial allocations to the municipality because some of the funds are deducted at source.

The findings of the study support the position of Chireh (2011) who takes the view that the establishment of super-structure agencies such as the Ghana Health Service and the Ghana Education Service and the passing of Public Procurement Act, are rather tacit means of ‘recentralisation’. This is because these agencies are centralised or are managed by the central government. In the present study, the sanitation contracts given to Zoomlion were awarded by the Ministry of Sanitation at the national level without recourse to the availability of local suppliers in the Kpone Katamanso assembly.

The lack of proper coordination between local chiefs and local government authorities stems from the fact that local governance has many formal and informal stakeholders which sometimes complicates the decentralization process because of the multiplicity of relationships that have to be managed. This outcome of the study however confirms the position of Fridy and Myers (2019) who noted that decentralization in Ghana, and across sub-Saharan Africa, faces a number of challenges to successful local governance provision because there are a number of formal and informal actors.

Additionally, the financial challenges identified by this study confirm several earlier researches including Arthur (2016) and Kwon (2002). Arthur (2016) suggests that the financial challenges of local government authorities will persist long as local governments are not able to mobilize enough funds on their own. This is not far from right because as local governments take on power, they also need to take on more responsibility. This includes the responsibility to raise enough revenue to support development projects.

## **SECTION FIVE**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

This final section of the study contains a recap of major finding of the study along with conclusions drawn and recommendations for improving the effectiveness of decentralization in the Kpone Katamanso Municipal Assembly.

#### **5.2 Summary**

This study assessed the effectiveness of decentralization in the Kpone Katamaso Municipality in the Greater Accra Region of Ghana. The study specifically examined the model of decentralization practiced in the assembly, the contribution of decentralization to development, the involvement of women and men in the decentralization process and the challenges associated with decentralization in the Municipality.

A single case study design was employed for the study and primary data was obtained from twenty-eight elected and appointed members of the Assembly using face to face in-depth interviews and focus group discussions. The members of the assembly were selected through the purposive sampling technique. Using the thematic data analysis technique, several important findings were realized.

It emerged that decentralized local government which the Kpone Katamanso Municipality is a part of has a four-tier structure. The assembly is on the second rank from top and there are zonal councils and the unit committees' underneath it. The General Assembly which was the main focus of this study is made up of 18 elected members and 9 members appointed by the government. Decentralization at Kpone Katamanso was found to involve the transfer of power and authority to local units for effective local participation. Decentralization in the assembly also entails

representative local governance as community members are appointed to positions of local authority.

The study revealed that both women and men are involved in the decentralization process but there are significant disparities in representation as only three women are part of the general assembly. However, it is important to note that whilst men have always had the chance to operate in the public arena, women at the local level have historically been marginalized partly because of the sociocultural milieu and partly because of capacity limitations. These notwithstanding, the few women are playing important roles in the Assembly as appointed representatives.

Regarding the contribution of decentralization to development, it was realized that decentralization has led to infrastructural development and grassroots participation in local development. The municipality has benefited from infrastructure projects such as schools, clinics and roads. The people at the grassroots are also able to participate more directly in the decision-making process and they also hold their elected representatives accountable.

Meanwhile, the decentralization program is fraught with challenges. The findings of the study with regard to the challenges of decentralization show that the main challenges in the assembly include inadequacy of funds, poor boundary demarcation, political inference from the national level, weak understanding of decentralization and poor coordination of planning and development in the area.

### **5.3 Conclusion**

The tiered nature of decentralization and the transfer of power and resources as found out in this study support the views of Ahwoi (2013) and Kempe (2000) who describe decentralization as the transfer of authority, power or responsibility for planning, decision making and resource allocation from the central government to district and administrative units of local governments and other parastatal organisations.

Also, consistent with Zaney (2014) and Brody (2009), this study revealed that equal representation and participation of women and men has not been achieved in the current state of decentralization in Ghana taking Kpone Katamanso Municipal Assembly as a case. The disproportionate participation of women and men in decentralization is disturbing because, participation in local government decision-making processes is critical for tackling women's practical needs and it also has implications for sustainable and equitable development.

Meanwhile, decentralization has mainly led to grassroots development and local participation in decision making as earlier works (Fridy & Myers, 2019; Smoke, 2003; Zaney, 2014) have suggested. This is particularly consistent with the position of Fridy and Myers (2019) that the main reasons for the adoption of decentralization is for the promotion of local participation in the governance process.

Again, consistent with Arthur (2016) and Kwon (2002), the challenges associated with decentralization at the municipal level are mainly administrative and financial. The geographical boundaries of the municipality are not clear enough, there is political interference and the Municipality is unable to raise enough funds to support development initiatives.

#### **5.4 Recommendations**

The ensuing recommendations are made based on the discussion of findings and the conclusions drawn.

First, local authorities require training in revenue mobilization in order to raise enough money to support local development. Related to this, the District Assemblies Common Fund should also be released timely and possibly adjusted upwards.

Also, the Ministry of Local Government in collaboration with all relevant stakeholders must ensure that geographical boundaries of new assemblies are clearly laid out in order to avoid boundary disputes that emanate after the creation of new districts.

In addition, decentralization must be implemented fully as stated in Chapter 20 of the 1992 constitution and other subsidiary legislation. In that, political parties and their appendages must be encouraged to stay clear of local government. Along with this, the central government must also cede the powers of contracting and awards to the assemblies.

Furthermore, affirmative action such as reserving a quota of elected representatives for local government should be considered in order to address the disproportionate participation of women and men in local governance.

Further research is necessary to properly understand the main issues surrounding and limiting the participation of women in local government. Future studies may also consider comparing the practice of decentralization in different assemblies in order to identify best practices in local administration.

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## APPENDIX

### UNIVERSITY OF GHANA, LEGON

#### Interview Guide

Kindly introduce yourself stating your designation and the number of years you have served in this position.

1. Describe the nature of the decentralisation process in this assembly?
2. How has decentralisation contributed to the participation of women in local governance in this assembly?
3. How has decentralisation contributed to the participation of men in local governance in this assembly?
4. What is your assessment of the level of local development in the assembly over the past seven years?
5. What do you think are the main challenges faced in the implementation of decentralisation in this Assembly?
6. What can be done to address the challenges associated with decentralisation?

#### Focus Group discussion guide

##### *Personal introduction and pleasantries*

1. Describe the nature of decentralised government in the Kpone Katamanso Municipality
2. How will you describe the level of development in the Municipality over the past seven years that it has been carved out of the Tema Metropolitan Assembly?
3. Please describe how decentralisation has contributed to local participation in this area council and in the municipality as a whole.
4. What are some of the challenges faced in the decentralisation process?
5. How do the challenges you mentioned affect development in the area?
6. What can be done to address the challenges associated with decentralisation in this assembly?