

**POLITICAL CLIENTELISM AND POVERTY ALLEVIATION
PROGRAMMES IN DEVELOPING DEMOCRACIES: AN
EXAMINATION OF GHANA'S LIVELIHOOD EMPOWERMENT
AGAINST POVERTY.**

BY

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**THIS THESIS IS SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF
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DECLARATION

I Desmond Tweneboah-Koduah do hereby declare that except for references to other scholarly works which have been duly acknowledged, this work is the result of my own field investigation conducted under the supervision of Emeritus Professor Kwame A. Ninsin, Dr. Maame A.A. Gyekye-Jandoh and Dr. Isaac Owusu Mensah, all of the Department of Political Science, University of Ghana.

I also declare that as far as I am aware, this thesis has not been presented in whole or in part for another degree elsewhere.

Finally, I declare also that beside the assistance obtained from other works and from my supervisors, I am entirely responsible for any misrepresentation and misinterpretation of facts that may occur in this thesis.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my dear wife Florence; my children Adiel and Lois; and my grandmother Ama Danquah, through whose inspiration I was able to complete this thesis.

ABSTRACT

Ghana's steady progress toward democratic consolidation has received significant applause worldwide. Notwithstanding this achievement, the selection of beneficiaries of poverty alleviation programmes by incumbent government has often been compromised for political gains. Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty (LEAP) programme was introduced a decade ago by the state with the aim of using it to alleviate the suffering of the extremely poor and the vulnerable. This study set out to examine the role of political clientelism in the implementation of LEAP. With this objective, the study addressed a number of issues including the examination of the processes involve in the selection of LEAP beneficiaries in practice and the extent to which the LEAP programme has been characterised by clientelistic politics. Concurrent Mixed Methods approach was employed to collect and analyse data from the field. Quantitative data was obtained from 360 beneficiaries of LEAP and 12 officials selected from government institutions and civil society organizations associated with LEAP implementation provided the qualitative data. The study area covers 8 selected districts from Greater Accra and the Northern region of Ghana. The districts included Shai Osudoku, La Dade Kotopon, Ga East and Ga West Municipalities in the Greater Accra region and the districts from the Northern region were East Gonja, Tamale Metropolis, Kumbungu and Yendi Municipalities. Besides, the study was designed around Rational Choice Theory which contends that political actors like economic actors act rationally in the pursuit of their self-interest. At the end, it was established that the mandated eligibility criteria for the selection of the beneficiaries were observed more in breach than in compliance. The study also found that political clientelism has been a key feature of LEAP implementation, and that the provision of LEAP benefits has become contingent on the individuals political support for the party of the ruling government. To tackle the

pervasive political clientelism associated with LEAP, the study recommends an active involvement of the media and civil society organizations in the implementation process. Regular and effective monitoring of the programme by these institutions will help to expose most of the abuses carried out by politicians. Finally, for LEAP to be able to achieve its intended purpose and for the above suggested measures to yield results, it was further recommended that the political class must show strong political will and sustained commitment toward the realization of the goals of LEAP by exhibiting culture of openness and transparency in the selection process.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Content	Page
DECLARATION.....	i
DEDICATION.....	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT.....	v
TABLE OF CONTENTS	vi
LIST OF TABLES.....	ix
LIST OF FIGURES	x
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	xi
CHAPTER ONE.....	1
INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Background of Study	1
1.2 Statement of Problem	9
1.3 Research Objectives.....	13
1.4 Research Justification and Rationale	14
1.5 Organization	18
CHAPTER TWO.....	19
LITERATURE REVIEW	19
2.0. Introduction.....	19
2.1. General Studies on Political Clientelism	19
2.2. Studies on Political Clientelism in Africa	28
2.3. Studies on Political Clientelism in Ghana	33
2.4. General Studies on Poverty Alleviation Strategies.....	38
2.4.1. Economic Growth as a Poverty Alleviation Strategy.	40
2.4.2. Biodiversity Conservation as a Poverty Alleviation Strategy.	44
2.4.3. Education as a Poverty Alleviation Strategy.	47
2.4.4. Social Protection as a Poverty Alleviation Strategy.	51
2.5. Poverty Alleviation in Ghana	54
2.6. Studies on Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty in Ghana.	57
CHAPTER THREE.....	62
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK.....	62
3.0. Introduction.....	62
3.1. Competing Theories for the Study.....	62

3.2. Evolution of Rational Choice Theory	64
3.3. Key Assumptions of Rational Choice Theory	66
3.4. Criticisms of Rational Choice Theory	68
3.5. Usefulness of RCT to the Study	71
3.6. Research Questions.....	76
CHAPTER FOUR	78
METHODOLOGY	78
4.0. Introduction.....	78
4.1. Research Design	78
4.1.1. Purpose of Research Type	79
4.2. Method of Study	80
4.2.1. Sources of Data.....	80
4.2.2. Selection of Study Areas and Respondents	80
4.3 Data Collection Instruments and Procedure	92
4.4. Data Analysis.....	93
4.4.1. Data Analysis Procedure.....	93
4.5. Ethical Considerations	95
CHAPTER FIVE	96
DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS	96
5.0. Introduction.....	96
5.1 Data Analysis.....	98
5.1.1 Demographic Profiles of Respondents.	98
5.1.2 Demographic characteristics of survey respondents.....	100
5.1.3 Gender of respondents	100
5.1.4 Age of respondents	101
5.1.5 Educational levels of respondents	102
5.1.6 Occupation of respondents	103
5.1.7 Marital status of respondents	104
5.1.8 Religion of respondents	104
5.1.9 Response Rate.....	105
5.2 Study Objectives and how they were achieved.	107
5.2.1 Assessment of the processes involve in the selection of LEAP beneficiaries	107
5.2.2 A measure of Political Clientelism as a feature of LEAP implementation ...	111

5.2.3 The reciprocity of beneficiaries and the electoral fortunes of incumbent government	123
5. 2.4. Incumbent governments’ ways of exploiting LEAP for electoral gains.....	127
5.2.5a. Impact of Leap Programme on Beneficiary Households	129
5.2.5b. Sustainability of the LEAP programme.....	136
5.3 Dilemma of an Exit Plan.....	140
CHAPTER SIX.....	144
DISCUSSION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS	144
6.0. Introduction.....	144
6.1 Discussion of Key Findings.....	145
6.2 Conclusion	157
CHAPTER SEVEN	158
SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	158
7.0. Introduction.....	158
7.1. Summary of key findings.....	159
7.2. Limitations of the Study	161
7.3. Conclusion	162
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	169
APPENDICES	189
Appendix A: Questionnaire for Leap Beneficiary Households	189
Appendix B: Interview Guide for Government Officials Related to LEAP.....	193
Appendix C: Interview Guide for the Officials from Civil Society Organizations Associated with Poverty Alleviation.	194
Appendix D: Letters	195

LIST OF TABLES

Table 4. 1: Selected Regions and Districts for the study based on poverty level:.....	88
Table 4.2: Share of Votes in Parliamentary Elections in Ghana (2004-2016)	89
Table 4.3: Summary of the sample frame and size with gender ratio.	91
Table 4.4: Summary of Data Collection Method.....	93
Table 5.1: Demographic characteristics of officials.	99
Table 5.2: Gender Distribution table.	100
Table 5.3: Age distribution of respondents.....	102
Table 5.4: Occupational distribution of respondents.....	103
Table 5.5: Marital status of respondents.....	104
Table 5.6: Final Sample	106
Table 5.7: Source of assistance towards LEAP selection.....	110
Table 5.8: Do political party leaders influence selection of LEAP beneficiaries?.....	113
Table 5.9: Knowledge of other qualified applicants than respondents.....	114
Table 5.10: Regime under which respondents benefitted from Leap.	115
Table 5.11: Length of time respondents have been benefiting from LEAP	116
Table 5.12: Possession of political party card	117
Table 5.13: Beneficiaries and Political Party they follow most in the media.....	118
Table 5.14: Have previously attended political party campaign rally	119
Table 5.15: Beneficiaries active participation in Ghanaian politics due to LEAP	119
Table 5.16: Should elected political leaders be biased in distributing state resources? .	120
Table 5.17: Beneficiaries' Preferred Politician	121
Table 5.18: Which of the following parties will you vote for if elections were held today?	125
Table 5.19: The Loyalty of LEAP beneficiaries are for the Political Parties	126
Table 5.20: Main uses of LEAP cash	132
Table 5.21: Extent of improvement in the living condition of LEAP beneficiaries.....	134
Table 5.22: LEAP serves as an income security tool	135
Table 5.23: Does LEAP influence your trust in government as caring for your welfare?	136
Table 5.24: Sustainability of LEAP.....	138

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 5.1: Gender Distribution chart.....	101
Figure 5.2: Educational distribution of respondents.....	103
Figure 5.3: Religion of respondents.....	105
Figure 5.4: Language used by respondents.....	107
Figure 5.5: Political Clientelism as a sustainable tool to establish political support.....	122
Figure 5.6: Uses of LEAP Cash.....	133
Figure 5.7: Challenges faced in accessing leap benefits.....	139
Figure 5.8: Leap components to be changed	140

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CCT-	Conditional Cash Transfer
CDD-	Center for Democratic Development-Ghana
CSOs-	Civil Society Organizations
DLIC-	District LEAP Implementation Committee
GDP-	Gross Domestic Product
GLSS-	Ghana Living Standard Survey
GOG-	Government of Ghana
GPRS-	Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy
GSGDA-	Ghana Shared Growth and Development Agenda
GSS-	Ghana Statistical Service
IDEG-	Institute for Democratic Governance
IEA-	Institute for Economic Affairs
ILO-	International Labour Organization
IMF-	International Monetary Fund
LEAP-	Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty
MDGs-	Millennium Development Goals
MoGCSP-	Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection
NDC-	National Democratic Congress
NDPC-	National Development Planning Commission
NPP-	New Patriotic Party
NSPS-	National Social Protection Strategy
OVC-	Orphaned and Vulnerable Children
PAMSCARD-	Programme of Action to Mitigate the Social Costs of Adjustment
RCT-	Rational Choice Theory

SAP-	Structural Adjustment Programme
SDGs-	Sustainable Development Goals
UN-	United Nations
UNICEF-	United Nations International Children Emergency Fund
UNRISD-	United Nations Research Institute for Social Development

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of Study

The inability of most governments in developing democracies to provide credible political commitment to alleviate poverty has been a concern for generations, and continues to be high on the global policy agenda ((UNRISD,:2010). According to the World Bank (2015) without strong political commitment, even the best-designed poverty alleviation programmes are bound to fail to achieve the intended outcomes. Unlike the established democracies where patterns of political behaviour are institutionalised, the developing democracies are the emerging democracies whose political environments are widely considered to be characterised by political uncertainty, and there is sometimes a strong tendency to engage in unlawful activities prevailed in the old undemocratic regimes (Diamond, 1999; Noam and Riedi, 2012; Osei-Asibey, 2016). The developing democracies among others include: Brazil, Argentina and Mexico in Latin America (Weitz-Shapiro, 2014, Rocha, 2001), Turkey in Europe, India and Indonesia in Asia (Piccone and Miller, 2014) and the African lists include Lesotho, Malawi, Zambia and Ghana (Devereux and White, 2010). Generally, the study is interested in the kind of politics associated with poverty alleviation programmes in these countries with special focus on Ghana.

The attempt by the governments in such parts of the world to alleviate extreme poverty started long time ago and it continues unabated. This is because poverty has always been one of the oldest and greatest enemies to the survival of all citizens. For this reason, anyone who cares about equitable social development and the stability of the world in general, cannot help but will always be concerned about why poverty remains

an enduring puzzle. Today, no nation, be it developed or developing, can claim to be completely free from poverty. (Abbas, 2013). The global community has now become extremely interconnected than ever, due to the advancement in transport, communication and technology. This interconnection as good as it appears has also led to the global crimes such as terrorism and cyber-crimes. Generally, there is a strong belief that poverty reduces the tolerance level of the victims and therefore the upsurge in terrorism and violent crimes worldwide, have largely been explained within the context of the growing level of poverty and inequality in recent time (Leva 2004). In consequence therefore, poverty alleviation has increasingly attracted the attention of all governments, Non-Governmental Organizations, researchers and donors, and they have all considered the quest for its realization as the foremost development challenge. This indeed has necessitated the formation of grand alliance by all governments to tackle the phenomenon holistically and of course it has also been the ultimate goal of United Nations in recent years (United Nations, 2008). The fight against poverty has not been easy simply because poverty has many dimensions which can be manifested in many ways such as low income, illiteracy, ill-health, malnutrition among others (GSS, 2018). According to Social Watch (2006), the individuals and groups in a country's population are said to be in poverty if their conditions are characterized by "sustained or chronic deprivation of resources, capabilities, choices, security and power necessary for the enjoyment of an adequate standard of living and other civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights." Drawing from the above definition it can be argued that poverty is man-made and therefore it can take human effort and commitment to alleviate it. Certainly, the people who find themselves in this difficult condition cannot all by themselves utter such status of deprivation, unless there is a deliberate governmental efforts to rescue them from the shackles of poverty. It is against this

backdrop that there have been numerous calls on the governments of these developing democracies to show concrete evidence of their willingness and commitment to carry through the goals of poverty alleviation programmes they introduce. The set of well-coordinated activities and measures that are designed and implemented by governments to provide both economic and humanitarian support to the poor in order to come out of poverty, constitute poverty alleviation programmes (World Bank 2015). In the opinion of Varshney (1999:), unlike the developed democracies where less than five percent of the population is considered as poor, it has never been in doubt that the poor in the developing democracies constitute a significant portion of the entire population and this makes it easy for politicians to make political capital out of the business of poverty alleviation hence their engagement in political clientelism. Himanshu (2015) provided explanation as to why most developing democracies do not have good track records when it comes to poverty alleviation. In his study on India's politics and the poor, he revealed that in countries where majority of the population live in extreme poverty, nothing gets quite political as alleviation of poverty. He further added that in India for instance, the votes of the poor and the disadvantaged are far more than the rich and the upper castes, therefore for the political class, the issue about poverty alleviation cannot just be treated as an economic imperative but rather a political need for the maximization of votes in elections. In contributing to the discussion on the practice where elected political office holders use poverty alleviation programme as a tool to mobilize political support, Adato and Hoddinott (2010) have intimated that most of such programmes implemented in Latin American countries have highly been influenced by patronage system, especially during the selections of the beneficiaries, the institutions and the staff to manage the programmes. In their view, this is done simply because the incumbent governments consider the programmes as fertile ground

to court the support of the poor majority. They do this for the obvious reason that without the support of the poor masses, the victory of no government in developing democracies could be guaranteed in competitive elections. It on the basis of this mindset among the political elite in these countries which made Kurer (1995) to conclude that the persistence of many failed home-grown development strategies can best be attributed to political clientelism.

Generally, the concept of political clientelism like almost all social science concepts is a contested one, and has over the years generated a lot of argument among scholars. The argument has arisen due to the fact that the term accommodates a wide range of all politically motivated exchanges for personalised favour and benefits. However, a reasonable amount of consensus appears to be emerging among scholars from different persuasions around the definition given by Stokes. In the words of Stokes, political clientelism is “the proffering of material goods in return for electoral support, where the criterion of distribution that the patron uses is simply: did you (will you) support me?” She further emphasized that it is the distributive criterion of electoral support that significantly differentiates clientelism from other known materially oriented political strategies (Stokes, 2009). Indeed a classical and succinct definition of politics within the discipline of Political Science, has been the one given by Lasswell (1936), as “governmental determination of who gets what, when and how”. Reliance on this definition will lead to a reasonable suggestion that politics is all about solving the question of who gets what resources, when to get it and how the distribution is to be done. However, any attempt by governments to selectively distribute state resources to the poor in exchange for political support in any democratic environment ought to be discouraged. This is because such practice poses a serious threat to electoral politics and the wellbeing of the poor. (Berenschot, 2015). Oddly enough, scholars such as

Hicken, (2011) have noted that the phenomenon appears to be universal as it exists in both autocratic and democratic countries.

In spite of the universal nature of political clientelism, it appears to be a dominant feature in the politics of most emerging democracies. The persistence of the phenomenon in these countries obviously has made it extremely difficult, for them to fully realise the goals of many poverty alleviation programmes. Despite the fact that there appears to be a considerable pressure on the countries by the international community, particularly, the United Nations and its affiliate institutions, including International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank to ensure that they place priority on poverty alleviation, the commitment of the governments in these nations has not yet measured up to the programmes they have implemented so far (Van-Arkadie, 2004). In his study on the purported strong positive association between political clientelism and poverty alleviation in some of these countries, Wong (2015) found that the type of poverty alleviation strategy a country pursues to fight poverty is undoubtedly important. He however reiterated the point earlier made by World Bank that no strategy can ever be successful if the commitment of the political class is low. He therefore suggested that a high level of political commitment by governments is required to open up the possibility of addressing the structural roots of poverty in all poverty stricken societies.

Wong's study though did not focus on the problem of clientelism. However, it appears that clientelism has become a common feature of the implementation of poverty alleviation policies in most developing democracies (Auyero, 2000). That is; poverty alleviation programmes have become a tool for mobilising political support. As a result, many excellent poverty alleviation programmes have failed woefully to achieve their intended objectives (World Bank, 2015). This is because they are usually distorted by

some politicians who take advantage of these programmes and divert state resources to nurture political support and loyalty. It has also been revealed that almost every poverty alleviation strategy implemented in these new democracies have to a large extent been shaped by the politicians' imperatives to achieve electoral gains: and this has significantly motivated them to rely on the distribution of particularistic benefits rather than the provision of public goods (Diaz-Cayeros et al. 2016).

Scholars such as Stokes,(2009), Robinson and Verdier(2001) who have done extensive work on poverty alleviation in these parts of the world, have consistently reported that clientelistic politics have almost become an integral part of their political processes. The practice has grown to an extent that whilst the politicians consider the network as a convenient way of locking the beneficiaries of anti-poverty interventions into a long term political alliance, many citizens on the other hand, see both political and personal networks as safer, easier, more trustworthy and an efficient way of dealing with survival related needs, as they do not trust the state institutions for efficient delivery of such needs (Montoya, 2011, Auyero, 2000). The unwillingness and the inability on the part of governments to deal with the root cause of this norm of political reciprocity comprehensively, has greatly contributed to the deepening level of poverty in many of these new democracies.

Indeed, there is an inescapable evidence from the majority of the existing literature on clientelism which suggests that the existence of high level of poverty in a society is a strong predictor of the existence of clientelistic relationship between politicians and the poor citizens (Kitschelt and Wilkinson, 2007; Calvo and Murillo, 2004). On the account of the above assertions, I would argue that there is sufficient grounds to suggest the prevalence of political clientelism in most developing democracies and Ghana which is considered as an emerging democracy is no exception.

Africa in particular, the literature overwhelmingly highlights how political clientelism has been a significant part of routine politics across the continent. As observed by Berenschot (2015) “if one would have to pick a single word to describe the nature of African politics, then clientelism would be a good contender-with perhaps corruption as a close runner-up”. This assertion by Berenschot significantly reinforces a widely held view about African politics which suggests that clientelistic politics has become so endemic that those politicians who fail to engage in it are likely not to be able to advance in politics. Robinson and Verdier (2001) also provide an interesting explanation for the spread of clientelistic politics across the continent by showing empirically that most voters in Africa, invariably, have a much stronger preference for private transfers than they have for public goods. For this reason, the politicians take advantage of the situation to engage them in implicit clientelistic contracts. Besides, it has further been established that most voters in Africa, usually choose their representatives based on how good these representatives are as patrons but not the level of their competence with regard to the delivery of public goods and services (Chabal, 1986).

Ghana, like many other countries in Africa, is still nurturing her young democracy and as Lindberg (2010) pointed out, political clientelism will continue to be a prominent feature of such country’s political process until the cost reaches a crescendo where the politicians will then be forced to concentrate on the provision of collective goods, through political policy making as a way of properly managing the limited resources at their disposal. This view expressed by Lindberg suggests that until such time the political class comes to the realization that clientelistic politics is hitting the country’s economy so hard, the phenomenon is not going to disappear from Ghana’s body politics.

Since the country’s independence in 1957, succeeding political classes specifically, those under civilian regimes, have benefited largely from some sort of a winner-take-all

system of democracy, and therefore have shown no or little commitment in making political clientelism an unattractive venture. This is because the practice has reasonably served as an effective strategy particularly for the mobilisation of political support and loyalty (Ryan, 2012). In the light of this, many well formulated poverty alleviation programmes implemented with the aim of increasing the earning opportunity of the genuinely poor have produced disappointing outcomes. This is due to the fact that the targeting mechanisms instituted to limit the leakage of benefits beyond the targeted groups have been seriously distorted for political gains, thereby robbing the poor majority of benefitting from the intended relief as expected.

The Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty (LEAP) initiative which was launched in 2008 under the New Patriotic Party (NPP) government provides an interesting case for exploring the politics of poverty alleviation activities in Ghana, as it represents one of the most innovative and progressive social interventions ever implemented in the history of the country. It is against this background that this study examines the implementation of LEAP. The overarching question for the study is how, and how well has the government provided the LEAP benefits to benefit the poor and the vulnerable who are the target of the programme. In order to examine the situation on the ground, eight districts were carefully selected from two regions of Ghana as the study areas since it was practically impossible to cover all the 216 districts in the country. The eight selected districts for the study included East Gonja, Tamale Metropolis, Kumbungu and Yendi municipalities all in the Northern Region, and Shai Osudoku, La Dade Kotopon, Ga East and Ga West municipalities in the Greater Accra Region.

1.2 Statement of Problem

As stated earlier, over the past two decades or more, successive Ghanaian governments under the Fourth Republic have pursued various poverty alleviation policies with the central objective of providing an effective response to the rising level of poverty and inequality in the country. However, the implementation of these poverty alleviation initiatives have largely proved to be ineffective and problematic. The major reason has been that they were hugely associated with misaligned political incentives and as a result they have not been able to deliver outcomes that were beneficial to the poor (Abdulai and Hicky, 2016). This undesirable situation has generated a growing credibility gap among Ghanaians toward political office holders, and since then governments over the years have had to live with some sort of public mistrust and suspicion regarding their commitment to fight poverty (Whitefield, 2011). Ghanaian governments under democratic regimes have been implementing a wide range of social intervention policies, both in-kind - such as free primary education, school feeding and free school uniforms, as well cash transfers such as the LEAP programme. A review of the available literature on all the social intervention programmes in Ghana has revealed that the LEAP programme stands tall among all the others (NDPC, 2015). The LEAP which is the focus of this study has been the government's flagship social intervention programme being used to reduce extreme poverty in Ghana. It is basically a cash transfer programme instituted to enable the extremely poor and the vulnerable households to meet their basic needs by offering them a specific amount bi-monthly. As at July 2018, a household with one beneficiary received Ghc 64.00 (*equivalent to \$ 13.3 at the rate of Ghc.4.8*), two beneficiaries-Ghc 76.00, three beneficiaries- Ghc 88.00 and four or more beneficiaries received Ghc 106.00 respectively (Department of Social Welfare, 2018)

In the LEAP policy document, the criteria for the selection of eligible beneficiaries were clearly stated. It included:

- Extremely poor household,
- Orphaned and Vulnerable Children (OVC),
- Persons with severe disability and without any productive capacity,
- The elderly persons who are 65 years and above.
- Very poor pregnant and infants below the age of one year (*this is a priority category in a selected districts under the LEAP 1000*)(UNICEF,2001)

In addition to the above stated criteria for beneficiary's eligibility, there are also a number of conditionalities expected to be adhered to by the beneficiary households. These conditionalities include: the enrolment and the retention of all school going age children in the household in public schools; the registration of all members of the household under the National Health Insurance Scheme; all newly born babies in the household must be registered with the Birth and Death Registry within five months of birth; attend post-natal clinics and complete the Expanded Programme on Immunization; and lastly, the household heads must ensure that no child in the household is involved in child trafficking or to engage in any activity which constitutes Worst Form of Child Labour (Agyemang et al. 2014).

The operation of the LEAP programme generally expected to focus on households as the unit of support (MoGCSP, 2015). In order to determine the right beneficiary or beneficiaries from a household, a system known as the Proxy Means Test (PMT) has been developed and is supposed to be used to collect data on all potential beneficiaries for further assessment. The collection of data for the assessment of the poverty status of families is carried out by a Non-Governmental Organization staff or government

officials with the support of a community focal person (MoGCSP, 2015). This exercise is not only intended to distinguish the poor from the non-poor but also to facilitate the identification of the targeted groups. One key element of the process which many, including the World Bank, have noted with concern is the part of the selection process which provides some amount of discretion to the community leaders to propose households to benefit from the programme (Tsimpo and Wodon, 2012). The implication of this provision, which is also a major loop-hole associated with the programme, is that such discretion could lead to a serious abuse in the selection process. This is so because it appears it could be used by local politicians as a tool to establish clientelistic networks with the potential beneficiaries. Earlier poverty alleviation initiatives implemented in the country over the years have failed to achieve their intended objectives due to political manipulation in the targeting process (Whitefield, 2011). In contrast, the LEAP from its inception has been rated as one of the best poverty alleviation programmes ever executed by the government, and it is highly regarded as a game changer with regard to poverty alleviation because the country has the benefit of past experiences.

Curiously enough, the programme which began less than a decade ago with a total beneficiary households of 15,000 in 50 districts, has been expanded exponentially to cover 213, 043 households in all the 216 districts in Ghana by the end of the 2016 (MoGCSP, 2017). Approximately, an increase of more than 1,320 percent. Additionally, LEAP is considered to be the top-most priority of government in relation to all other pro-poor activities in the country, and for that reason it has attracted a huge financial investment from the government over the years. According to Handa et al. (2013), the programme operates an annual expenditure of approximately USD 20million (Ghc 80million) and the figure is expected to rise as the number of households keep increasing yearly.

Despite the huge investment and the apparent political support committed to the LEAP programme by the government, almost all the studies on Ghana's poverty situation consistently points to the conclusion that the investment in LEAP does not commensurate with reduction in poverty. Yet the question of what accounts for the disparity has been left unanswered. For example the summary of the Ghana Poverty and Inequality Report authored by Cooke et al. (2016), using the 6th Ghana Living Standard Survey-2016 (GLSS 6) revealed the following details:

- Inequality has been increasing in the country. Thus, the existing inequality between the poorest and the wealthiest has significantly increased and also poverty remains prevalent in many areas.
- Annual rate of reduction of poverty slowed substantially from an average of 1.8 percentage point per year in the 1990's to 1.1 percentage point between 2006 -2016.
- Urban poverty dropped in recent years much faster than rural poverty and as a result, the gap between urban and rural areas has doubled. Thus the rural poverty is now almost four times as high as urban poverty as compared to twice as high in the 1990's.
- Northern, Upper East and Upper West regions continue to have the highest poverty rate.

More so, the latest analysis of the living conditions of Ghanaians titled Ghana Living Standard Survey 7 (GLSS7) released by Ghana Statistical Service (2018) revealed that the number of people living in extreme poverty increased from 2.2 million in 2013 to 2.4 million in 2017 based on the 2010 population projection. The report states that even where there is a reduction in poverty it has been minimal. The above reports confirm the prevalence level of poverty and inequality in the country which had been established by earlier studies such as: the 2015 Millennium Development Goals Report (NDPC, 2015), Ghana Living Standard Survey Round 6 (GSS, 2014) and Human Development

Report 2015, (UNDP, 2015). Meanwhile, there is an overwhelming body of evidence that suggests that the general political processes in Ghana are clientelistic (See for example Paller, 2014, Whitfield, 2011, Lindberg, 2010). Besides, most cited studies on the implementation of LEAP have focused primarily on the impact the programme has had on the beneficiaries (Debrah, 2013; Handa and Park, 2014; and Abbey et. al.2014). Studies that have addressed the issue of political clientelism or the implementation of LEAP programme have also dealt with them as if they are mutually separate. The issue of concern is that whilst the government invests heavily in the programme as the number of the beneficiaries keep increasing, all the above cited reports have unanimously reported an increasing level of poverty and inequality. This points to a serious discrepancy between the increase in the number of beneficiaries of LEAP and the level of reduction in both poverty and inequality in the country. In short, this clear discrepancy which exists between what the outcomes of LEAP implementation have been and what it ought to be, provides an interesting area of research which no researcher has explored fully. To date, no strong evidence exists to confirm whether the LEAP benefits are getting to the right people. In this case the question of whether political clientelism plays any role in LEAP implementation or not still remains problematic in Ghana.

1.3 Research Objectives

The general objective of the study is therefore to examine whether political clientelism plays a role in the implementation of LEAP. In the pursuance of the general objective, the study has the following specific objectives. These specific objectives to be addresses in this study include the following:

- (1) To examine whether the process of selecting the beneficiaries is in consonance with the laid down procedure prescribed in the LEAP document.
- (2) To investigate the extent to which LEAP implementation has been characterised by clientelistic politics.
- (3) To examine whether the beneficiaries feel obliged to reciprocate the gesture by supporting the implementing government electorally.
- (4) To identify ways by which the incumbent government exploits the programme for electoral advantage.
- (5) To find out the extent to which the programme has helped to improve the living conditions of the beneficiaries and how can it be sustained.

1.4 Research Justification and Rationale

The pervasiveness of political clientelism in Ghanaian politics, and its effects on effective implementation of poverty alleviation programmes, continues to be a major cause for concern. This therefore makes the current subject matter a worthy topic for study. As Ghana consolidates her democratic gains, there are a number of reforms that are necessary to be carried out in order to build a political system that is more responsive and accountable to the needs of the citizens particularly the poor. Such reforms will not be achieved in the midst of pervasive political clientelism. This study may serve as a guide to fashion out strategies for reducing political clientelism in poverty alleviation programmes so as to make them more effective and transparent.

Furthermore, the test of a country's democratic resilience must not only be measured in terms of its ability to conduct free and fair elections as claimed by Lijphart (1994) and Ojo (2007), but must also include the level of the government's accountability to the people, taking the extent of clientelistic practices into consideration (Gerxhani and

Schram,2009). The practice of political clientelism does not allow poverty alleviation programmes to fully achieve their intended objectives as it distorts the targeting criteria which ought to be rule-based and politically neutral. The outcome of this study will help to improve knowledge and understanding of the extent of political clientelism in poverty alleviation programmes such as LEAP, and serve as a basis for better policies to address problems affecting poverty alleviation programmes.

This study is motivated by the belief that its outcome will help to ensure that the benefits of poverty alleviation programmes such as LEAP will definitely get to the people who are really poor, rather than those who are engaged in clientelistic networks. To this extent the study will contribute to making Ghanaian governments more accountable to the people without subjecting them to political manipulation arising from the distribution of state resources.

Again, it appears that many scholars such as Abdulai and Hicky (2016) have expressed their views with disappointment on why various poverty alleviation strategies in Ghana are not able to achieve the intended objectives, however, the clientelistic relationship which is usually perceived to shape the implementation has so far been neglected, and this is where this study becomes even more relevant as it tries to focus on one aspect of the LEAP implementation process which has been overlooked by previous studies.

The effects of poverty can be many and devastating as they may include hopelessness, violent crime and even untimely death among others. On the basis of this a strong case is made for any study that seeks to find effective way to alleviate the phenomenon and particularly at a time when poverty alleviation has become a central focus of all global development strategies, such study can rightly be considered as imperative and timely.

Again, the concept of poverty alleviation in all its forms has always been the greatest challenge to all Ghanaian governments. The reason is that it continues to be an indispensable requirement for the attainment of a just, free and prosperous society. Until proper investigation is carried out to unravel what exactly impedes the realization of agreed-upon goals in poverty alleviation initiatives, and corrective measures are provided or put in place, the country's quest for a dramatic reduction in the level of poverty will continue to remain a mere dream.

It is further hoped that the results from the study will serve as evidence which can enable stakeholders and scholars alike in poverty alleviation business, ground their argument about LEAP in particular and other related programmes in general on hard facts and not on speculations going forward.

It also seeks to draw the attention of stakeholders of the programme to areas that require urgent attention so as to make the programme more effective. Through a comparative study involving the implementation of the programme within eight different districts, the findings of the study are intended to provide possible explanation as to why there are differences in the failure or success rate of the programme in these selected districts.

In addition, the extent to which clientelistic politics impedes the effective implementation of this laudable programme must also be brought to light. In line with this, the study seeks to provide an explanation as to why these kinds of social programmes continue to be used for clientelistic purposes by ruling governments. Even though, the rationale for using these poverty relief programmes for political clientelism may seem to be obvious, it is crucial to get a better understanding of the processes involved. Besides, there is no doubt that the future of any developing democracy largely depends on how well the country is able to tackle the issue of political clientelism. It is

therefore important to identify the extent to which the phenomenon has characterised the LEAP implementation. Once this is highlighted it can trigger national discussion on the need to search for permanent solution or actions to reduce the presence of political clientelism in Ghana's body politics. Indeed the outcome of the fight against poverty and political clientelism is going to be a critical factor in determining the political future of Ghana.

Another rationale for the conduct of such a research emanates from the realization that citizens must be interested in how judiciously their countries resources are utilised and it is against this backdrop that this study expects to establish at the end in whose interest the LEAP is being pursued, who actually benefits and what have been the outcomes both the intended and the unintended ones. This is very important because in politics what matters most is what matters to the people whose interest government represents.

Finally, the findings will serve as a reference material for academic and other purposes, provide additional literature on the topic and also widen the opportunity for further studies.

In conclusion, it is a common knowledge that clientelistic politics is prevalent in an environment where poverty and inequality levels are high, and the only way to determine the extent to which the LEAP programme in Ghana has been characterised by this phenomenon, is to evaluate its implementation. While the study hopes to provide the poor and the beneficiaries the platform to express their concerns, it is also believed that the outcome will subsequently benefit all stakeholders associated with the business of poverty alleviation in general and Ghana in particular.

1.5 Organization

The study is organized as follows: the background of study, statement of problem, objective and significance of study form Chapter one. There is a detailed review of the relevant literature on the topic in Chapter two, followed by the theoretical framework of the study in Chapter three. The methodology for the study is addressed in Chapter four; data analysis is done in Chapter five. Chapter six is a discussion of the research findings and Chapter seven concludes the study with the Summary of Findings, Conclusion and Recommendations.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0. Introduction

The growing evidence on the negative impact of political clientelism on poverty alleviation particularly in developing democracies, has for decades grabbed the attention of many scholars from different academic persuasions. Despite the fact that political clientelism has become the subject of several studies, it is still a contested phenomenon regarding its nature, and continues to generate confusion because it has been described by many to embrace a wide range of political exchanges. This chapter reviews some of the relevant literature on the subject of political clientelism. The review is structured along six thematic areas namely: General Studies on Political Clientelism, Studies on Political Clientelism in Africa, Studies on Ghanaian Politics and Clientelism, General studies on Poverty Alleviation, Poverty Alleviation Studies on Ghana, and Studies on the implementation of LEAP in Ghana.

2.1. General Studies on Political Clientelism

Political clientelism is not a new phenomenon in politics. Students of democratic elections and poverty alleviation have written extensively on it. This is largely so because the spread of democratic governance across the globe has necessitated the corresponding demand for democratic accountability and responsiveness from governments by their citizens. This request obviously cannot be met in a pervasive clientelistic environment. Consequently, there has been a number of scholars who have tried to explain its origin, the nature, causes or conditions of its growth and effects on the general wellbeing of citizens.

Political clientelism was previously thought of as a product of traditional societies and expected to have disappeared in the process of modernization and democratic governance. Many regarded the practice largely as a relic of the least developed societies and was labelled as a passing phenomenon (Kitschelt, 2000; Diamond and Brun 2014). Hopkin (2006), describes clientelistic politics as some kind of traditional social and political exchange which is based on the general principle that a superior person provides a favour to an inferior person. According to him this is done with the expectation of future return which usually is not specifically stated. Piattoni (2001) who has extensively discussed the origin of political clientelism has intimated further that the practice dates back to the feudal societies where patron-client relationships were part of the political arrangement and usually manifested as a continuous pattern of unequal and hierarchical system of exchange.

Since scholars have associated political clientelism with traditional societies, the expectation has been that the practice should have long become obsolete with the advent of modern societies. On the contrary, recent studies, have increasingly revealed that political clientelism has become a global problem. It has also proved to be resilient and exists in both traditional and modern societies, developed and developing as well as both democratic and autocratic political regimes (Kopecky and Mair, 2006). A study by Remmer (2007), and Levitsky and Helmke (2006) have confirmed the above assertion. They argue that the practice has become a feature of both developed and developing societies, and that there is no hope that the practice will ever be completely eradicated. In the same vein, Van de Walle (2014) has emphasized that the practice of political clientelism must be understood as omnipresent and an inevitable feature of every modern state, and therefore the presence of the phenomenon in many developing democracies should be seen as a natural occurrence. He argues that the mere presence of clientelism

in a country's political process should not be the greatest source of concern but rather it is the pervasiveness that poses threat to political accountability and responsibility. In his attempt to further highlight the dynamics of clientelistic relationship in modern societies, Hicken (2011) notes that the practice thrives well in a large variety of cultural contexts which are faced with economic difficulties and that it does not matter whether the political system is democratic or autocratic. Even though all these studies have made important contributions to enhance our understanding of the nature and the origin of political clientelism, they were all virtually silent on how the phenomenon may be a prominent feature in the implementation of poverty alleviation interventions. This study will build upon the existing literature by focusing on this particular area which has long been neglected by the existing studies. The focus of this current study is therefore on the implementation of Ghana's LEAP programme.

Regarding the nature of political clientelism, various analyses of the subject matter clearly show that throughout history there has been one form of patron-client relationship or the other between political office holders and citizens. In such instances, the network has been used as a tool to establish loyalty and political support. There appears to be consensus in the literature among scholars that the changes in the political structure of a state also changes the nature of the existing political clientelism over time (Kettering, 1988). An important recent study carried out by Kitschelt and Wilkinson (2007) largely agrees with this assertion by stating that even though there is a number of differences between the old and the modern forms of political clientelism, there is a basic body of characteristics that do not change easily with time. For instance, it has been argued very strongly that every clientelistic relationship involves exchanges of political rights for social benefits, and that it is always been characterised by a reciprocal exchange between two parties with unequal powers (Fox 1994). All the studies have also to a large extent

established that while the old clientelism was primarily regarded as asymmetrical, hierarchical, durable, face-to-face, and was underpinned by a normative framework, the modern form of political clientelism, according to them, is mostly symmetrical, less hierarchical, intermittent rather than stable and continuous, instrumentally-rational, and broker-mediated instead of face-to-face based exchange relationship (Kitschelt and Wilkinson 2007, Fox 1994). What makes this study different is that whilst the previous studies primarily focused their attention on the differences and similarities of the old and modern clientelism which are of course relevant to this study, the current study departs from the existing literature by focusing on the nature of the relationship that exists between the public officials involved in the implementation of LEAP and the beneficiaries of the programme.

In a very basic terms, the modern era political clientelism has been described by Wikipedia as “the distribution of benefits targeted to individuals or groups in exchange for electoral support” Diamond and Brun (2014) take the description of the modern political clientelism a little further by differentiating it from other related concepts such as pork-barrel politics and patronage politics which are often used interchangeably by many people. They revealed that pork-barrel politics involves the narrowly defined provision or construction of public good such as a hospital or road to a group of people or territory, and all the members of the group benefit from the material reward equally. With regard to patronage politics they argue that the provision of such material reward is generally in the form of jobs which can be particularistic or group-based. From the description, it can be argued that in terms of the intention behind the provision of such favours, patronage politics resembles both pork-barrel and clientelistic politics as well. In the light of this the authors are right in indicating that pork-barrel, patronage politics

and clientelistic politics are all political tools used by politicians to promote political loyalty of some sort irrespective of when and where they are used.

Furthermore, in their attempt to distinguish political clientelism from other political exchanges Diamond and Burn provide vividly other key features of the phenomenon as follows:

- (1) It is a set of asymmetric dyadic relationship that consists of the exchange of private occasionally access to club goods.*
- (2) It also involves political influence which ensures that even non-excludable public goods reach the beneficiaries in a relatively expeditious manner in exchange for political support and/or loyalty that include but not limited to voting.*
- (3) The relationship persists over time and tends to take the form of extended network*
- (4) But as result of the generalization of electoral politics it may also take the form of a one-time interaction (Diamond and Brun, 2014)*

As rightly pointed out by Hopkin (2006) almost every researcher who has ever done work on political clientelism has come to the conclusion that the practice is detrimental to any poverty alleviation effort; because the key criterion for the distribution of poverty alleviation benefit is the beneficiaries' preparedness to support the politician during elections (Stokes, 2009). The study by UNRISD (2010), also highlights the important role political clientelism plays in determining the success or otherwise of poverty alleviation programme by intimating that poverty can only be alleviated when the governing class is committed to changing the existing power structure in favour of the poor and the vulnerable in a country. Other scholars like Corbett and Firkkert (2009) have effectively argued that politicians in their desire to assist the poor must not do anything that makes the poor more dependent on the political class but must rather work

hard to tackle the root cause of poverty. They further state that any effort to help the poor out of poverty must not hurt them the more as it has been the norm in many countries. The practice of using poverty alleviation programme as a means to a political goal is certainly undemocratic. The consequence is that it offers the politician the opportunity to tie the poor recipients into a reciprocal relationship which weakens the individuals' ability to hold the political class accountable for their stewardship. It is rather sad to note that the entrenchment of clientelistic network in poverty alleviation programmes does not only undermine the legitimacy of the governance process in developing democracies but has also become part of the public expectation of how governance works (Domingo, 2005). All the above studies reviewed admit that political clientelism determines the extent to which a poverty alleviation programme succeeds. On the basis of this the current study examines how clientelistic relationship impedes the successful implementation of Ghana's LEAP programme.

Despite the huge condemnation and negative publicity against clientelism in the distribution of public resources, the practice continues to exist among many political leaders particularly those in developing democracies. In finding answers to this issue of the persistence nature of political clientelism even under democratic regimes, a number of scholars have tried to understand why this practice persists. For instance Schneider (2014), found that weak state institutions in a democratic environment provides the greatest incentive for politicians to manipulate the implementation of poverty alleviation programmes for electoral gains. He argues that strong democratic institutions usually ensure democratic accountability. As part of the search for the best way to overcome clientelism in Mexico, Montambeault (2011) suggests that clientelistic relationships should not be expected to disappear simply because a country has adopted the democratic system of governance but rather the proper functioning of democratic

institutions at the local levels is crucial to the fight against the phenomenon. This line of argument has further been fine-tuned in the study by Diamond and Brun (2014). Analysing the effects of clientelism on the quality of democracy, they argued that the logic of political clientelism defies the principle of democracy which promotes the rule of the citizens. They explained that when politicians are able to use selective distribution of state resources to hold voters hostage, then voters become mere clients instead of citizens. This in their opinion weakens the citizens' ability to use their votes to hold the politicians accountable for their performance on behalf of the general citizenry. The views expressed by the above scholars point to the fact that wherever the quality of democracy is compromised, the growth of clientelistic relationship becomes inevitable.

Regarding the vulnerability of the poor population to clientelistic politics, Chandra (2003) extensively discusses the results from a survey she carried out in India and reports that the poor voters particularly those in the rural areas fall victim to political clientelism due to the difficulty they encounter in accessing state services. She explains that politicians usually take advantage of their suffering and distribute state resources to them using clientelistic criteria. In a similar vein, Oliphant (2016) has intimated that the tendency for the people who are trapped in the cycle of poverty to fall for clientelistic association is always high. This because of the fact they are always desperate to find the easiest route out of their precarious living condition, they are usually compelled to become dependent on the charity of politicians. For Brusco et al. (2004), in their analysis of the study on vote-buying in Argentina they came to a conclusion that poverty is a strong predictor of the existence of clientelistic politics. According to them wherever poverty is pervasive, clientelistic network naturally grows. From the above narratives, it has been clear that the distribution of the state resources by the politicians to the poor in all the cases cited have been done within the framework of gathering political support.

Ghana's democracy is still young and the majority of the poor population are concentrated in the rural areas and this makes LEAP programme a potential tool for the mobilization of political support and loyalty.

In his study on the relationship between political competition, poverty and social welfare policy in Argentina, Weitz-Shapiro (2008), found that when governments perform poorly in their quest to deliver public goods to their citizens in a highly competitive political environment, clientelistic politics become the only strategy used by most of such politicians to hold on to power, more especially when the poverty level in the country is high. The study further concludes that the use of clientelistic network as a tool for the establishment of political loyalty with the poor becomes less attractive to governments that effectively deliver goods and services to the citizens even where the political competition is high. Robinson and Verdier (2013) have also studied the conditions that help political clientelism to flourish. They found that clientelistic politics become highly attractive in an environment with a high level of poverty, inequality and low productivity. They also identified that where the stakes to stay in power or lose political power are high, and where money matters more than ideology in politics political clientelism thrives well. In their concluding argument they stated that the presence of these conditions make voters more dependent on politicians and make it easier for the politicians to buy their political support. Poguntke and Webb (2005) have effectively shown that the declining nature of ideological differences among political parties in many developing democracies has promoted the growth of political clientelism at the grass-root levels. They have argued that lack of clear-cut ideological differences among political parties have reduce the significance of ideology in determining the success of a political party in elections. They pointed out that the focus has now shifted more to what they termed as “personalised presidential style leadership at the top” and

for them this personal rule system has given rise to pervasive clientelism. It is important to note that all the factors that provide conducive condition for the growth of political clientelism identified in different countries, as described by these scholars prevail in Ghana and this makes LEAP a potential tool for clientelistic politics. This provides a good opportunity for this study to confirm or to counter the above assertions using the experience of LEAP implementation in Ghana.

Another strand of studies on political clientelism have primarily focused their attention on the effects of the practice on effective policy implementation. Calvo and Murillo, and Chandra focused on the impact of clientelistic practices on the quality of public policy implementation. They discovered that when government focuses the distribution of state benefits largely on the voters instead of the general public, it distorts effective implementation of well-designed programmes (Calvo and Murillo, 2004). This position has also been supported by Chandra (2004) by reporting that when the government uses the implementation of the programme to mobilise political support, the quality of policy implementation is adversely affected; and this is likely to lead to “distortive implementation of public policy”. This study seeks to validate or refute the findings of Schneider, Weitz-Shapiro, Robinson and Verdier, Calvo and Murillo as well as Chandra, In other words the study therefore seeks to contribute to the existing knowledge by investigating whether the politicians in practice capitalise on the implementation of the LEAP programme in Ghana to nurture political support, and compare the outcome with the existing literature as a way of extending the scope of knowledge on clientelistic politics.

2.2. Studies on Political Clientelism in Africa

In Africa, there is enough evidence in the literature to show that clientelistic exchanges are pervasive. Even at the time democratic governance appears to be taking root in the continent, majority of the countries still have an unimpressive record on transparency which is the most obvious way to counter political clientelism. In the words of Berenschot (2015) “clientelism would be a good contender with perhaps corruption as a close runner-up”. According to him the practice of distributing state resources to a targeted group of people in exchange of political support and loyalty has long been associated with African political systems. Leonard and Straus (2003) reject colonialism as the sole explanation for Africa’s stalled development. They state emphatically that the continent’s development problems are inseparable from the nature of its politics which have clientelism and personal rule as key features. According to them states in Africa operate more on an incurable personal relationship and less on procedural rules; and that this has seriously worked against majority of policies that would have triggered a speedy and sustainable development. Their conclusion is that clientelistic practices and personal rule which are the main form of politics in Africa have for a long time become in their own words “...the standard basis for understanding African politics” (Leonard and Straus, 2003). Their assessment of the nature of politics in Africa in general gives an indication that the cause of the continent’s slow pace in development largely comes from within rather than external influence. This therefore means that the trend can easily be reversed if the political elite across the continent has the will to do so.

Increasingly, the position underscored by Leonard and Straus appears to be supported by a number of other influential studies carried out on the continent. For example, in examining the degree of clientelism and voting behaviour in Benin, Wantchekon (2003) concludes based on the observation that African voters generally have strong preference

for private transfer than for public projects of national interest. For them this kind of attitude contributes in making African politics in general inherently clientelistic. These and other manipulative practices in African politics made Ake (2000) to question the legitimacy of most governments in the continent. According to him voting in African elections does not necessarily amount to choosing because the activities of the leaders have made democracy become a game of deception. For him this kind of political behaviour exhibited by the politicians have denied the citizens to benefit from the dividends of true democratic governance. This view has also been supported by a study conducted by Ayee (2005) on public sector management in Africa. According to the study the political leaders in the continent rely heavily on clientelistic relationship as the primary means of maintaining political power. He concluded that until such attitude is stopped, achieving effective implementation of poverty alleviation programmes in the continent will be very difficult. This view expressed by Ayee gives an indication that most of the leaders in Africa are not committed to the cause of the poor and therefore the regular introduction of poverty alleviation interventions are more driven by politics rather than economic need. The narratives from these studies seem to paint a gloomy picture, which is a major concern for many. Thus, it appears that one of the greatest threat to Africa's development is political clientelism, the very phenomenon which is endemic in almost all the countries on the continent. This therefore suggests that African governments have no option than to make a swift transition from clientelistic politics to politics of providing programmes to serve the interest of all citizens. This will help to ensure that African voters select their representatives based on their record of effective management of the countries' economic resources. Until this is done democratic elections to select representatives across the continent will lose their relevance and sustainable development in general will be held in a state of perpetual abeyance.

Commenting on the endemic nature of clientelistic politics in Africa from a different perspective, Omobowale and Olutayo (2010) maintain that the clients in the clientelistic networks do not operate as separate individuals but rather as members of associations which have always been created by the politicians with the intention of making them a constituency of power and influence. The intention is that by so doing, such associations become a determining factor as to who gets or retains political power during general elections.

For scholars interested in the democratic development of Africa, this is a major concern because democracy is not only about winning elections as most politicians in the continent may think, but must also be able to build a system which is accountable and responsive to the needs of the entire citizens rather than the favoured few. Isaksson and Bigsten (2013), identify with this position and have stressed that citizens of Africa must demand of their governments to formulate policies that place the common good ahead of the narrow and personalised interest which promotes clientelistic practices. Drawing from the above discussions it is obvious that there is a widespread political clientelism within the continent despite the spread of democracy in Africa. This situation goes a long way to give credence to the position that proper evaluation of the strength and degree of a country's democratic consolidation requires looking beyond just elections but more importantly, the degree of pervasiveness in the spread of clientelistic politics within the country's political environment, must also be taken into consideration.

On the other hand, many scholars have associated the root cause of clientelistic politics in Africa with the continent's cultural systems, and have argued on the score that many politicians take advantage of culture to justify their actions. The conventional wisdom has been that the culture of pre-colonial African traditional societies which still prevails to a large extent provides a huge avenue for gift giving and an informal system of

reciprocity which are key features of modern clientelistic practices. However, some scholars have also argued that there is a contradiction between the requirements of modern states and the cultures of African traditional societies (Aiyede and Igbafe, 2017; Chabal, 2013; MacLean, 2010; Chabal and Daloz, 1999). For this reason it has been suggested that any attempt to eradicate clientelism from African political processes will not bear any meaningful outcome. This kind of thinking rests on the assumption that African politics cannot be separated from her cultural practices and therefore clientelism will continue to be part and parcel of her politics. But contrary to this position which has been championed by Chabal and others, Bach and Gazibo (2003) and Van de Walle (2009) have argued that the above assertion cannot be true on a number of grounds. First, without a doubt clientelistic politics exists in all political systems even though it may appear in different shapes and forms. Second, the practice has now become a dominant feature of all modern states and that as long as political leaders continue to have discretion in the allocation of public resources, clientelistic politics will be inevitable, and therefore the phenomenon cannot be restricted to African states simply because of some components of their culture which support the growth of clientelism. This view is instructive because it deviates markedly from the long held perception that the nature of African cultural practices is the root cause of the continent's persistent and pervasive clientelistic politics. So far all the studies on political clientelism have focused on the nature, causes, conditions of its growth, the effects on poverty alleviation and democracy without providing solution to how the phenomenon can be brought under control. However, a recent study by Lawson and Greene (2014) revealed that political clientelism can be curbed through civic education and the elimination of the discretionary powers of governing elites. They have suggested that a deliberate and effective civic education to instil civic values into citizens will help them to view clientelistic exchanges as

illegitimate and therefore feel obligated to vote according to their conscience. They also added that once governing elites are allowed too much discretion in the distribution of state resources it gives them the leeway to decide who to benefit and who is to be denied. They argued that the elimination of the excessive discretionary powers in the hands of the political class regarding the distribution of state resources will be a serious challenge against the growth of political clientelism. This particular view has strongly been supported by Diaz-Cayeros and Magaloni (2009) in their study titled “Aiding Latin American Poor” when they suggested that measures must always be in place to check the politician in the exercise of their discretionary powers to prevent abuse.

In a null shell, what has become apparent in the review of these literature is that political clientelism is a universal problem associated with all modern societies. Looking at the behaviour of both the political class and the citizens it appears that clientelistic politics is not going to disappear from the politics of Africa and other modern societies that share similar attitude anytime soon. Besides, it has become clear from the existing literature that the nature of the phenomenon may vary depending upon both the level of a country’s economic development and the type of regime. With regard to those literature on Africa, it can also be argued that the studies have been useful in highlighting the root cause of the endemic nature of clientelistic politics in Africa from different perspectives. Their main weakness has been that they have collectively overemphasized the role African culture plays in the entrenchment of clientelism in African politics. Besides, they failed to explain how the manipulation of the distribution of poverty alleviation benefits by politicians can impact on effective implementation of poverty alleviation programmes such as LEAP. Such aspects which have been overlooked by the above reviewed literature will rather be the focus of the present study.

2.3. Studies on Political Clientelism in Ghana

Within the continent of Africa, Ghana is generally regarded as a model of successful democratic consolidation. This is because for more than two decades the country has displayed in many ways a resolve to comply with democratic principles. As a way of making democracy a reality, the 1992 constitution of the republic of Ghana under the directive principles of state policy put some measures in place to control discrimination and selective distribution of state resources. These measures which are to be observed by government to achieve the above goals include the following:

- (i) *“The state shall actively promote the integration of the peoples of Ghana and prohibit discrimination and prejudice on the ground of place of origin, circumstances of birth, ethnic origin, gender or religion, creed or other beliefs” (Article 35 (5)) and*
- (ii) *“The state shall take all necessary action to ensure that the national economy is managed in such a manner as to maximise the rate of economic development and to secure the maximum welfare, freedom and happiness of every person in Ghana and to provide adequate means of livelihood and suitable employment and public assistance to the needy” (Article 36 (1)).*

It may be a surprise that a country with such strong and explicit constitutional provisions against discrimination be faced with widespread political clientelism. However, the reality is that the literature on Ghana has shown that the country’s politics is dominated by political clientelism. The politics of bread and butter issues in the opinion of many have been one of the major causes of political clientelism in Ghana. For example, Debrah (2009) has emphasized that politics in Ghana right from independence has been shaped by bread and butter concerns of citizens more than the issues of ethnicity, regionalism and personal ambitions of politicians which are dominant features

of politics in many developing countries. In his view, the political transitions which have taken place in the country both civilian and military have been engineered by economic issues such as the high level of poverty, high cost of living and other indicators of macroeconomic instability, among others.

Other scholars such as Whitfield, (2011) and Oduro et al. (2014) describe Ghanaian politics as highly competitive due to the presence of a strong opposition party at any point in time. As argued by Whitfield, the existence of a strong opposition party puts pressure on the position of ruling government which compels her to engage in policy choices that are largely shaped by their political survival strategies. Like many Africa countries, Ghana has been cited as a place where government officials selectively provide public goods to particular groups of citizens in exchange for political support. This practice has been attributed to the politics of exclusion popularly known as the “winner-takes-all system” (Abdulai. 2015). As part of the governance practice in Ghana, the election victory of a political party signifies that the party in government completely takes charge over the state resources, the prestige and the prerogative of office and this contributes immensely towards the highly competitive nature of general elections in the country (Annan, 1998). This situation which has become a recurring phenomenon in the country’s electoral politics has seriously undermined various policies and programmes which would have helped to fast-track the attainment of Ghana’s developmental goals. In a similar vein, a recent scholarly work done by Ninsin (2016) on electoral mobilization in Ghana vividly captures the environment within which LEAP is being implemented. He pointed out that electoral mobilization is an unending practice in Ghanaian politics. He intimates that winning an election does not only provide the ruling government and her supporters the opportunity to become what he describes as “privileged beneficiaries of financially rewarding patronage, but also comes with the power to monopolise public

resources. Ninsin further explains that in order to sustain or snatch this benefit, members of political parties collectively work tirelessly toward a permanent electoral mobilization which is hardly driven by alternative policies and ideas. On the face of the discussions, it can be argued that the politicians in Ghana appear to cherish the introduction of LEAP for reason other than poverty alleviation in its true sense. This study is also interested in finding out how this winner-takes-all attitude highlighted by the above scholars influences the implementation of LEAP in Ghana.

Several other scholars, including Montoya (2015), Crook (2017), and Mohan and Asante (2015), have demonstrated that the country's political process is largely clientelistic. Elections have become a tool for the distribution of patronage and public resources to reward supporters (Paller, 2014). They are unanimous in emphasising that the selective distribution of resources in exchange for political support by the country's politicians does not start and end with elections. The practice has become a dominant feature of Ghana's political process. Mohan and Asante for example have argued that clientelistic networks have become an incurable part of the routine politics of the country to the extent that even the discovery of oil in commercial quantities has not been able to transform the nature of the country's political settlement. Crook argues that the pervasiveness of clientelistic networks in Ghanaian politics greatly undermines the legitimacy of local taxation to the extent that majority of the citizens at the local government level expect their political representatives to provide a specific pay-back either to them or their communities in exchange for political support and payment of taxes.

The persistence of clientelistic practices in many developing democracies has been attributed to the absence of strong state institutions. Such institutions, if available, are expected to restrain governments in the use of discretionary powers, regarding the

distribution of state resources. In this connection, numerous comparative political analysts have come to the conclusion that the weakness of political institutions provides fertile grounds for political clientelism to flourish (Camelia, 2015; Rothstein, 2011; Stokes, 2011; Banful, 2009, and Alence, 2004). Consequently, the general belief has been that the best way to overcome clientelism in Ghana's political process is to strengthen the state institutions. This notion has to a large extent led to many reforms all geared towards empowering Ghana's state institutions to carry out their oversight functions effectively. On the other hand, evidence from a study conducted by Lindberg (2010) on the accountability pressures Members of Parliament in Ghana face and how they respond to them, does not support such assertion. Lindberg found from this study that even though the office of Member of Parliament (MP) is strong, it is shaped by informal norms to an extent that it promotes the distribution of private goods in clientelistic networks. The study particularly revealed that the provision of personal benefits, favours, cash handouts and others to constituents is considered as another key duty of a member of parliament. Hence every MP is expected to discharge such duties in addition to the formal duties such as legislation and executive oversight. Such demands, according to the study, emanate from the fact that the office of the MP is equated to the traditional notion of the "head of family" whose responsibilities among others include taking good care of constituents who are in need. Therefore, this has become the standard norm by which the MP is evaluated, and failure to comply with this duty attracts damaging consequences at the next elections.

A similar study by Paller (2014) on Ghana titled "Informal Institutions and Personal Rule in Urban Ghana" also provides evidence which corroborates the findings from the work done by Lindberg. According Paller, despite the strengthening of liberal democratic institutions in Ghana, such institutions have not been able to reduce the spread of

political clientelism. The study explains that this is due to the fact that the informal institutions of leadership and norms which heavily thrive on relationships of reciprocity have become fused with the formal institutions. Clientelism has therefore become the “rule of the game”, the defining characteristic of Ghanaian politics. The above discussed studies have collectively explained why the patron-client model of politics is intimately associated with the Ghanaian political processes in general. They also provide sufficient evidence that clientelistic politics has notoriously become the standard basis for understanding Ghanaian politics. These studies, however important they are for the understanding of contemporary Ghanaian politics, have overly concentrated on the nature of the country’s electoral politics, which they have unanimously described as clientelistic. The weakness of these studies have been that they have contributed a little or nothing to our understanding of how LEAP has been implemented over the years. This study examines how the clientelistic political environment as described by the earlier scholars have influenced the implementation of the programme in Ghana.

Another important evidence emerging from a recent study conducted by Appiah and Abdulai (2017) casts doubt on the preparedness of the Ghanaian political class to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of state institutions to check political clientelism. The authors emphasized that numerous reform initiatives that have been carried out by various governments have not been motivated by genuine desire to enhance the performance of public institutions. Rather they are driven by a “strategic incentive to maintain power.” The study concludes that the nature of Ghanaian politics which has been aptly described as one of competitive clientelism is so crucial in explaining the reason for Ghana’s disappointing achievements when it comes to public sector reforms. The study further provided empirical explanation for the limited success of several public sector reform initiatives implemented in the country.

Although it has been established by a large body of literature on Ghanaian politics that the political process in the country is generally clientelistic, a study by Weghorst and Lindberg (2011) shows that for citizens of Ghana, vote-buying and clientelistic appeals are not sufficient to win elections in the country. The study reveals that though political clientelism may continue to influence the distribution of state resources, Ghanaian voters generally reward politicians who do well in the delivery of public goods and severely punish those who act more as patrons trying to buy votes with public resources. This study provides refreshing evidence about the image of Ghanaian voters in general.

In spite of this finding, there has been a growing concern about the perceived level of clientelistic politics associated with the LEAP implementation. This will mean that if the perception is true the poor and the vulnerable in Ghana in whose name the programme was introduced may not benefit from it as expected. The current study seeks to use both quantitative and qualitative approaches to investigate the extent to which clientelistic networks have played a role in the selection of LEAP beneficiaries.

2.4. General Studies on Poverty Alleviation Strategies

The poverty is multi-dimensional in nature. This makes it quite difficult for anyone to use a single policy as strategy to alleviate it. Several scholars have suggested a range of policies that can be used to improve the quality of life of the poor. Analysis of the effectiveness of each policy has centred on the extent to which the fruits of a particular strategy can benefit the poor who are the target of the poverty alleviation policy. Within the current literature, the poverty alleviation strategies which have attracted scholarly attention include economic growth, biodiversity conservation, education and social protection strategies. This section concentrates on some of the scholarly works on these strategies from the global perspective

Historically, efforts by states and non-state actors to alleviate poverty was as a point in time not considered as a legitimate enterprise because poverty was viewed as a social good. According to Ravallion (2013), within the period between 16th and 18th century Europeans in particular held the belief that poverty was “socially useful” as the poor were used as workers. Taking them away from poverty was therefore considered as an attack on the status quo. He argued further that the labelling of poverty as a social evil and a barrier to success is a recent development, which has not lasted for more than 200 years. For Nwachukwu and Onwubiko (2008), the issue of poverty alleviation took centre stage in the global politics from 1944 when the International Labour Organization (ILO, 2008) in its historic Philadelphia declaration stated that “poverty anywhere constitute a threat to prosperity”. In their view this singular act triggered efforts by many states to pay special attention to poverty alleviation exercise.

Today, poverty alleviation has become a global agenda, as it is pursued in both developed and developing nations. Consequently, the international community has recognised poverty alleviation as an essential goal for economic development. The recent declaration by the UN on the Millennium Development Goals and the Sustainable Development Goals as universal goals with special emphasis on the elimination of poverty worldwide, attests to this fact. The key issue now is no longer about the goal of poverty alleviation but rather how effective poverty can be alleviated. In this regard, Sachs (2008) argues that poverty cannot be alleviated by sheer will power and ethical commitment alone, though these are important. Rather it requires the thinking of scholars, scientists and practitioners from the vast range of human knowledge. This section of the review looks at the various positions taken by scholars from different academic persuasions on what strategy is best suited for the alleviation of poverty in the developing democracies.

2.4.1. Economic Growth as a Poverty Alleviation Strategy.

As governments in many developing democracies and other stakeholders continue to wage war against poverty, many development economists have consistently suggested that economic growth strategy must always be at the heart of every poverty alleviation effort. This approach has come to be known as pro-poor growth strategy. According to Ravallion and Chen (2003) growth can only be described as pro-poor when it is able to bring down the incidence of poverty. It is this kind of economic growth which the advocates of the strategy consider to be an ideal tool. The term economic growth is simply an increase in the amount of goods and services produced by the people living in a country over a specific period of time. The proponents of this strategy generally have examined the question whether economic growth has any impact on poverty alleviation, and have come to a conclusion that the level of poverty in a country is a reflection of the total wealth of the country. They are of the view that any nation's economic development is manifested as an improvement in the quality of life of its people (DFID, 2008). As observed by Ijaiya et al. (2011), poverty is best alleviated when greater attention is focused on rapid economic growth. They argued that once people are deprived economically in the areas of income, access to property and factors of production, such people are bound to be poor. In their opinion the lack of these economic resources are the root cause of all forms of poverty, and that the non-economic causes of poverty are only secondary. For most economists the main purpose for any poverty alleviation endeavour is to empower the poor economically. This is done by increasing national productivity to create wealth to help the poor to own assets, as well as providing them the avenue to generate sustainable income rather than giving them money directly (Jalbani, 2011).

A number of studies, for example Lin (2003), Bhanunurthy and Mitra (2004), Arndt and Simler (2006), etc. have also provided sufficient evidence to prove that there is strong

relationship between economic growth and poverty alleviation. Lin, for instance, has reported that China's sustained rapid economic growth between 1979 -2001 has lifted more than 450 million people in the country from poverty. Similarly, the outcome of a study carried out by Bhanumurthy and Mitra shows that the significant reduction in the level of poverty in India since 1980 is attributable to the country's spectacular economic growth achieved over this period. Generally, the proponents of this strategy believe that economic growth creates employment opportunities for the poor as well as increases real wages.

On the other hand, Roemer and Gugerty (1997) analysed data from 26 developing countries from 1960-1993, concluded that GDP growth of ten percent annually was associated with ten percent income growth of the poorest forty percent of the general population. Edwards (1995) clarifies the circumstance under which this strategy works best. He states that economic growth must be accompanied by an increase in productivity in the sectors of the economy where the poor segments of the society are mostly found. And Nora (2002) in particular has emphasized that growth has greater impact on poverty alleviation when it concentrates in the rural areas where the bulk majority of the poor are located.

Although many studies have proved that economic growth can increase the earning opportunities of the poor, the realization of this growth dividend has eluded many countries in recent past. This situation has led many to raise legitimate questions about the effectiveness of the use of the economic growth strategy to alleviate poverty. The answer to this puzzle is that the achievement of spectacular economic growth does not necessarily lead to poverty alleviation unless it occurs in a sustainable manner over a long period of time. The experiences of the countries of East Asia such as Singapore and Malaysia have always been cited to buttress this point (Akhtar, 2006, Ghani, 2011).

Collier (2007) also argues that countries may have doubt about the effectiveness of economic growth as the best route out of poverty simply because have not ever experienced the right type of growth. He therefore urges policymakers in such countries to pursue genuine growth and trust that the alleviation of poverty will definitely follow.

So far the evidence from the above literature suggests that economic growth has proven to be a powerful tool for poverty alleviation especially when it is able to generate employment and also create opportunities for the poor to engage in productive activities. In spite of this, there is a second school of thought in the literature that postulates that economic growth alone can never be a sufficient condition for poverty alleviation. The proponents of this view admit the impact of economic growth on poverty but consider it as only one of the numerous factors. According to them, the gains from growth do not automatically trickle down to the poor (Basu, 2013; Melamed, 2013)). This school of thought anchors their argument on the premise that poverty persists in many middle-income countries where reasonable and impressive economic growth have been recorded. These scholars who do not consider economic growth as an automatic poverty alleviation tool and most effective answer to the problem of poverty also include Shorrocks and Vander Hoeven (2004). They particularly argue that where income inequality is high, the impact of growth on poverty alleviation is minimal. This is because when the attainment of economic growth raises the incomes of all the people in the country in an equal proportion, the gap between the rich and the poor remains same. For this reason they conclude that economic growth cannot not automatically bring change in the country's income distribution structure. There is therefore the need to note that the extent to which increase in growth rate leads to poverty alleviation is significantly dependant on how much the country's income distribution shifts in favour of the poor. This view indicates that economic growth can only be relevant to the poor

when it comes along with more equitable distribution of income. This position obviously suggests that the fruits of economic growth do not always trickle down to the poor, and that, if proper care is not taken an increase in the level of a country's economic growth can become anti-poor as it may widen the inequality level. McKay (2008) vividly sums-up the views of those who do not accept the claim that economic growth as the best tool to pull people out of poverty. He asserts that growth by itself is not sufficient to bring about poverty alleviation but must be considered only as one of the various tools for the fight against poverty. . He therefore concluded that growth should not be seen as an end in itself but rather a means to other end. This view appears to be in agreement with the widely held view that poverty is multi-dimensional therefore no single strategy can ever eradicate it completely anywhere.

The review of the growth-poverty alleviation literature has revealed that there is a raging debate over the level of impact rapid economic growth has on poverty alleviation. While a small section of the literature believes that economic growth is not a sufficient tool to reduce poverty by itself particularly when it occurs in a high income inequality economy or when it occurs at the sectors of the economy where the poor are not located, the overwhelming majority of the scholars in this area of study consider economic growth as fundamental to the success of any poverty alleviation endeavour because it has more pronounce effect on poverty. This group of scholars have gone ahead to empirically prove that there is a strong correlation between rapid economic growth and poverty alleviation. Though they concede that for growth to make significant impact on poverty alleviation it must be all inclusive, sustainable and above all should be able to dramatically reduce income inequality among others.

2.4.2. Biodiversity Conservation as a Poverty Alleviation Strategy.

While it is generally agreed that there cannot be a single poverty alleviation strategy that has all the answers to the eradication of poverty, the use of biodiversity conservation as an effective tool for such enormous task has come up strongly in some of the existing literature. Biodiversity in the words of Guyer and Richards (1996) simply refers to the variety of environments in which a variety of rare species are to be found. For some time now it has been the view of many researchers that there is a strong correlation between a reduction in biodiversity and poverty alleviation particularly among the rural poor. This position is grounded on the evidence that the poor in most developing countries depend directly on the natural environment for their survival therefore their living condition is adversely affected when the environment is degraded. A study conducted by Nadkarni (2000) confirms this. He found that any time biodiversity loss increases, the living condition of the poor is aggravated. This is due to their high dependence on the natural environment for their livelihood. If this claim is true then there is a compelling argument that a significant measure of success in the conservation of the biodiversity can go a long way to improve the livelihood of the poor.

The dependence of the poor on the natural environment as their main source of livelihood has been identified by Rasul et al. (2008). They argued that this dependence is not limited to income and job creation but in also the forest serves as a major source of fuel, food, medicine and construction materials for the rural poor. Adams et al. (2004) have also argued that biodiversity loss and poverty are interconnected and must therefore be jointly tackled. They are of the view that poverty alleviation can significantly be achieved if a country's biodiversity is properly conserved. This is a view shared by scholars such as Bille et al. (2002), Bojo and Reddy (2002), and MEA (2005) who attribute the inability of many governments to successfully alleviate poverty to lack of

the recognition that biodiversity conservation is crucial to the fight against poverty. Timmer and Juma (2005) have reported that proper management of the environment helps to reduce the economic shocks associated with ecosystem degradation which usually confronts the poor. The outcome of this study confirm the believe that since the poor depend on the environment for their food, health particularly herbal medicine and employment, any attempt to delink the alleviation of poverty from the conservation of biodiversity leads to a disastrous outcome. It is on the basis of this seemingly strong link between environmental conservation and poverty alleviation that in 2001 the United Nations made environmental sustainability a crucial component of the Millennium Development Goals (Agarwala et al. 2014). Studies by Sachs et al. (2009) have also underscored the fact that the failure of most governments in developing countries to achieve significant reduction in biodiversity loss has undermined the realization of the entire Millennium Development Goals particularly poverty reduction goal in those countries. They conclude by stating that countries that are serious with their poverty alleviation agenda must pay particular attention to biodiversity conservation as it has proven to be one of the best tools to address the issue of poverty.

Adrian et al. (2013) have opined that even though both biodiversity conservation and poverty alleviation goals complement one another in many respects, they often appear to be in direct conflict. This conflict in their opinion arises when the conservation programme which aims at protecting the natural environment ends up restricting access by the poor to the natural resources which hither to have served as a source of livelihood to them. This situation has raised a great deal of concern about why after several years of advocacy for a concerted effort to promote judicious use of the natural environment to bring about poverty alleviation, the effort has not yielded any significant success. According to Tallis et al. (2008), the outcome of a critical analysis of World Bank's

projects that aimed at achieving both biodiversity conservation and poverty alleviation revealed that as low as 16 percent of all the projects studied made significant progress in achieving these twin objectives. They believe that this problem is attributable to the fact that most governments and other development practitioners have failed to recognise a necessary factor which requires that any attempt to maintain biodiversity must not be done to the detriment of the poor peoples' livelihood. What these scholars seek to suggest is that always there must be a conscious attempt to ensure a delicate balance between the two objectives so that such programme would end up promoting a win-win outcome.

Cao et al. (2009) in their attempt to provide a possible way of resolving the above puzzle suggested that in order to assist the poor to escape the poverty trap, there is the need to provide time tested long term measures such as planting of fruit trees. According to them this would help the poor to generate a sustainable and long lasting benefit, instead of the usual direct payments which only provide short term relief to the poor and quickly return to destroy the environment as soon as the payment ceases. This conclusion by Cao and others enhances our understanding about why the biodiversity conservation and poverty alleviation nexus has not been effective in many developing countries. They have proved that the conventional way of approaching this strategy lacks a long term sustainability perspective. According to Kareiva et al. (2008) the failure of many governments to pursue this delicate balance has led them to the conclusion that the strategy of integrating environmental conservation and poverty alleviation in development projects is unwise and a recipe for putting the affected poor into a perpetual poverty trap.

The debate seems to be settled by Barrett et al. (2005) when they suggest that people must be careful not to jump to the conclusion that once the natural resource conservation is linked to poverty alleviation, win-win outcome is bound to occur. Gjertsen (2005),

agrees with the observation made by Barrett and others when he intimated that there is high possibility of achieving the two goals at the same time. He however, added that the most difficult task associated with this intervention is how to identify the right strategies for the realization of this win-win outcome. In short what all these authors seem to convey is that even though there is synergy between biodiversity conservation and poverty alleviation, programmes meant to jointly achieve them must be well thought through to ensure that the required conditions are available before they employ this poverty alleviation strategy.

2.4.3. Education as a Poverty Alleviation Strategy.

Globally, education has been considered as one of the critical tools that can help to empower the poor and the vulnerable to gain their economic independence. This type of argument has always reflected the thinking within the United Nations and its affiliated institutions such as World Bank, UNESCO and UNICEF. Though the thought that education plays important role in poverty alleviation had been in existence for a long time, it particularly gained prominence in the mid-1990s after the rapid economic transformation of the Asian tigers. The World Bank (1993) for example has noted that the impressive economic development experienced in the Asian countries such as Taiwan, Singapore, and Hong Kong among others was primarily due to their huge investment in education. Indeed, most of the international development agenda such as the Education for All (EFA), the Millennium Development Goals and the Sustainable Development Goals have all provided an impetus to this position in recent times. For instance, all these international policy documents have made a strong case for the need for developing countries to make heavy investment in education because it has proved to be the best tool for poverty alleviation (UNESCO, 2002, UN 2000, UN, 2015). In highlighting the central role education could play in achieving the poverty alleviation

goal of the Millennium Development Goals, UNICEF (2010) pointed out that provision of quality education which comes with relevant knowledge and skills enhances the opportunity for the individuals to raise their living standards and improve the quality of life. It has also been argued that education is not only a powerful tool for the alleviation of poverty but also a key to wealth creation, and for this reason no country can ever succeed in winning the fight against poverty if it has not educated its citizens (UNESCO, 2001). Ozturk (2011) shares the same view by arguing that for a country to achieve a sustainable economic development, there must be a considerable investment in the education of its human capital. In a study by Roberts (2011) titled 'Mechanics of Economic Development' he emphasized that the standard of living of a country can best be determined by its ability to educate majority of the citizens, and the extent to which the country utilises the skills and knowledge acquired by the people. It is also intimated that increasing education levels of the citizens in a country does not only decrease the number of households that are likely to fall into poverty but it also improves the quality of life of the entire citizenry (Gounder and Xing, 2012). Chatterjee (2014) also contributes to this view by maintaining that purposeful and relevant education which equips the poor with the required skills, has the potential to empower the beneficiaries to escape chronic poverty. Other scholars have moved the argument further and stated that when the heads of households are able to achieve higher education, not only does it increase their productivity and earnings, it also reduces the chance of the members of the household becoming poor. In other words, they are of the view that increased education of the individual head of households' raises their own productivity as well as the productivity of others they interact with (Qureshi and Arif, 2001, Abuka et al. 2007).

Within the context of Africa, many scholars have attributed the slow pace of development and the widespread poverty to the failure on the part of African political

leaders to invest in education. As Kwakye (2011) rightly points out, the investment in education and training is probably the most prudent investment that a country can make towards its development. He however, noted that instead of African governments paying particular attention to the development of the continent's human capital through education and training, they rather continue to invest disproportionately large amount of public resources on security. He therefore concluded that this practice explains why the continent's human capital stock is among the least developed in the world. Supporting this line of argument, Ghana National Development Planning Commission (2005) notes that the single most critical key to the attainment of economic development is the educational quality of a country's workforce. It was based on this conviction that Ghana's recent educational sector reforms have largely focused on poverty alleviation. Dauda (2009) emphasized in his concluding argument that education should not be seen only as a key to poverty alleviation and promotion of social justice but also as a tool for the supply of essential human capital which is a pre-requisite for sustained economic growth. In his study to explain the nexus between education and poverty alleviation in Nigeria, Echigiamusoe (2013) found that even though education has a long term impact on poverty reduction, this is not automatic. He intimated that the mere provision of universal basic education to the citizen is not enough to alleviate poverty but the quality of education being provided is crucial in this regard. This assertion is in agreement with the finding of the study conducted by Wedgwood (2007) in Tanzania. According to her, the Tanzania's public education provides a clear evidence that provision of mass education does not necessarily guarantee poverty alleviation. She explains that the country's attempt to provide mass access to education for the children of Tanzania, has compromised the quality of the public education system. For this reason, the provision of basic education to majority of the population has not led to any noticeable poverty

reduction in the country. Kabeer (2005) argues that the fact that there are limitations to the extent to which education can help to alleviate poverty, does not mean people can underestimate the efficacy of education in the fight against poverty. In her opinion, the limitations are just to provide a caution to people who may think that the effects of education can be taken for granted or that they are automatic across all contexts. In their concluding argument, Palmer et al. (2007) intimated that for education and training to make a meaningful impact on poverty alleviation, both the education and the training provided should not be of low quality, and that the state of environment within which the knowledge and skills are provided must also be supportive.

Traditionally, most of the arguments made by the supporters of this view have been done within the contest of education and earnings relationship. For instance, in a study to find out the relationship between education and poverty alleviation, in Pakistan, Nasir and Nazli. (2000) noted that there is a direct linear relationship between education and earnings. They explained that education has the power to increase the earning potential of the poor. This is because it empowers the individuals to become productive which subsequently reduces the likelihood of becoming poor. For Mihai et al. (2015), poverty as a global phenomenon is multidimensional and therefore there cannot be a single formula that can eradicate it completely. However, they were quick to suggest that even if education is not sufficient to eradicate poverty, it should be considered as the single best vaccine that can break the vicious cycle of poverty in a family. They further argue that of all the strategies to alleviate poverty, education is the most effective long term approach which does not only break the vicious cycle of poverty but also vital in reducing social exclusion which is the reality faced by many poor people.

In all the arguments for the use of education as a critical tool for poverty alleviation, there is a widespread agreement that just investing in the education of the citizens of a

country alone does not automatically lead to a reduction in a poverty level, but rather the quality of education provided is core to successful execution of the poverty alleviation agenda in such country. Besides, there is also a consensus that the objective of using education as way of poverty alleviation strategy is mostly driven by long-term interest. In conclusion, the review of the above studies has provided useful understanding of the fact that there are multiple causes of poverty therefore there cannot be a single strategy that can be used as a magic formula to fight it. Some of the strategies like education and economic growth are meant for long term while social protection strategy such as LEAP is to provide a short term relief to the poor and the vulnerable in the country. The current study therefore focuses on how effective LEAP as a poverty alleviation strategy has been in the promotion of poverty alleviation agenda in Ghana. This aspect of poverty alleviation in Ghana has not been the focus of the above studies. The study therefore seeks to contribute to the existing knowledge on poverty alleviation in general and LEAP implementation in Ghana in particular.

2.4.4 .Social Protection as a Poverty Alleviation Strategy.

In recent years, there has been an emerging consensus across the global community that social protection as a strategy provides a more effective remedy to the perennial problem of poverty and vulnerability. The proponents of this view Hulme and Barrientos (2008) believe that social protection constitutes a practical response to poverty, inequality and vulnerability particularly in developing countries. Social protection as a poverty alleviation strategy is not recent. It takes its roots from the traditional/informal practice where the poor relied on community, family members, clan and other forms of social arrangements for survival. However, the growth of urbanization and industrialization have gradually undermined the effectiveness of the traditional social protection mechanism and thereby has given way to the new forms of social protection. (Long and

Sabates-Wheeler, 2017). The work by Holzmann et al. (2003) has also attributed the rapid spread of the formal social protection approach toward poverty alleviation to the World Bank when its Social Protection Unit shifted attention from social security and privatization to social risk management in the early 2000s. Garcia and Gruat (2003), consider the emergence of this formal social protection as one of the most significant social achievements of the 21st century because the approach helps countries to protect their citizens from poverty and deprivation.

In this review, social protection is understood as a policy framework which describes all “public actions taken in response to reduce the levels of vulnerability, risk, and deprivation which are deemed socially unacceptable within a given society” (Conway et al, 2000:1). Meanwhile, it be noted that many of the social protection literature have concentrated on what it is, including what it covers, the types, impact on poverty alleviation and the challenges. Whilst Barrientos (2011) Giang, (2012), and Plagerson and Ulriksen (2016) have looked broadly at social protection as a system that covers all efforts to alleviate poverty and vulnerability. Sabates-Wheeler and Devereux (2007) consider it as an approach used to provide “protective , preventive, promotive, and transformative” function for the poor and the vulnerable in society (ibid). For them, social protection goes beyond the mere provision of a safety net for the poor but rather plays multiple roles like promoting and transforming their lives too. This position is supported by Brooks (2015) who notes that the approach has undergone a profound transformation in terms of form and function. Other scholars ((Holzmann and Jorgensen, 2001; Cecchini, 2014; Ramesh, 2014) remind us that despite the broader focus the current social protection strategy has assumed, it was initially conceived to have three main components namely: labour market intervention which sought to protect the individual and collective rights of workers, social insurance which is a contributory

social protection generally referred to as social security, and the social assistance which provides safety net for the poor toward risk prevention, mitigation and coping. In spite of the various components of the social protection strategy, the social assistance aspect has become widespread, particularly within the developing democracies, as an effective instrument for the provision of the immediate needs for the extreme poor and the vulnerable in society.

Within the literature, one explanation given to the widespread acceptance of the social protection strategy is that it works in tandem with the right-based approaches to development. The approach basically considers the poor and the vulnerable as holders of rights including economic right, and governments have the responsibility to protect, promote and to assist the poor to fulfil such inalienable rights (Ulriksen and Plagerson, 2014). Besides, other scholars have provided a litany of reasons for the emergence of social protection as a policy. As argued by scholars such as Norton et al. (2001); Gentilini and Omamo (2011) and Ananta (2012), these reasons include the need to provide social support to make economic growth meaningful and sustainable, the advancement of social justice and equity, the constitutional obligation on governments to provide all citizens with a minimum and acceptable livelihood among others.

The attempt to advance the efficiency of the new form of social protection delivery has led to the adoption of anti-poverty direct cash transfers to the beneficiaries. The cash transfer can be conditional when the offer requires the beneficiary household to meet certain behavioural conditions like regular health check-ups and children's school attendance. This is what is known as the Conditional Cash Transfers (CCT). Cash transfers become unconditional when the beneficiaries are not required to fulfil any condition after meeting the eligibility criteria. This form of social protection programme is referred to as Unconditional Cash Transfer (UCT) (Brooks, 2015; Adato and

Hoddinott, 2010). Several scholars have assessed the efficacy of the cash transfers system as a tool for social protection, and provided sufficient evidence to confirm that the practice has been effective in a significant way to reduce poverty and vulnerability among the poor (Davis and Davey, 2007; Barrientos and DeJong, 2006; Farrington and Slater, 2006, and Lindert et al. 2007).

In spite of the impressive achievements of social protection strategy as a tool for poverty alleviation, there is abundant evidence to prove that its implementation can be associated with many problems. This is because many of the social protection programmes implemented particularly in developing democracies have achieved limited success due to problems like insufficient funding, limited coverage, and overdependence on the part of beneficiaries (Galasso and Ravallion, 2004). The implementation of the strategy also faces the problem leakages to non-poor because of the manipulation of targeting process for political support among others (ADB, 2003; Barrientos and Stantibanez, 2009; and Barrientos, 2011). Unlike the Latin American and the Asian countries, the growth of modern social protection programmes in Africa appears to have attracted sufficient attention only in recent years (Guush et al. 2014). This implies that implementing social protection programme such as LEAP in Ghana is likely to face many problems mentioned above, and this study seeks to focus on the link between political clientelism and the implementation of the programme.

2.5. Poverty Alleviation in Ghana

The level of poverty in Ghana has generally been described as endemic. To address this problem successive governments since independence have implemented many social protection programmes. The Social Security Act of 1965 sought to provide a lump sum of money to contributors at their old age. This scheme later changed to a pension scheme

under the Social Security Law of 1991 (Abebrese, 2010). Until 2007 the country had a number of separate social protection schemes to address pervasive poverty, but these initiatives were not harmonised and coordinated. These included tax redistribution in favour of the poor, National Health Insurance Scheme and the Capitation Grant among others (NDPC, 2010). The launch of the country's National Social Protection Strategy in 2007 which provided a comprehensive framework for the delivery of social protection initiatives gave a big boost to the country's poverty alleviation effort (Asante-Asare, 2008). However, available evidence indicates that the massive investment of both public and private funds in poverty alleviation programmes has not significantly translated into successful outcomes.

Various studies have been conducted into the reasons for the limited success of poverty alleviation initiatives which have so far been implemented in the country. For example, the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) implemented in Ghana according to Sowa (2002), focused more on macroeconomic stabilization than poverty alleviation. Therefore any impact it made on poverty alleviation was merely an extra gain made from the programme. In the 1980s, the Programme of Action to Mitigate the Social Costs of Adjustment (PAMSCAD) was specifically introduced to protect the poor from the negative effects of SAP. Even though PAMSCAD was meant to ameliorate the social costs of the SAP, the assessment made on it revealed that the programme did little to achieve the intended objective simply because it was poorly designed (Brydon and Legge, 1996).

In 1995, the government introduced a well-coordinated programme of economic and social development called Vision 2020. This programme aimed at growing the Ghanaian economy to make the country a middle-income country within 25 years. Poverty alleviation was the end game. The failure of the Vision 2020 to achieve its objectives has

been attributed to financial constraints as well as poor planning (IEA 2002). When the New Patriotic Party led by Kuffour took over power in 2001 the Vision 2020 was terminated and an entirely new poverty alleviation programme dubbed Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy 2003-2005 (GPRS I) was introduced. The key objective of the GPRS I was to create wealth through the transformation of the Ghanaian economy so as to engender sustainable growth, accelerated poverty reduction and the protection of the vulnerable, among others (Yankson, 2007). To consolidate the gains made through the implementation of GPRS I, another medium- term development policy framework namely Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy 2006-2009 (GPRS II) was implemented. The available evidence indicates that the mainstreaming of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) into both the GPRS I and GPRS II helped Ghana to achieve the MDG 1, thus the target of halving the proportion of people living in extreme poverty in 2006 ahead of time (GOG and UN-Ghana, 2015). Despite the impressive growth performance Ghana achieved under GPRS I &II, a review by Carr (2008) revealed that the GPRS II did not live up to the ideals which triggered its creation. He argued that the document which sought to address poverty from all sectors of the economy failed to develop an integrated implementation plan to ensure a coordinated action.

The latest major poverty reduction strategy documents Ghana has implemented include the Ghana Shared Growth and Development Agenda (GSGDA I), 2010-2013 and the Ghana Shared Growth and Development Agenda (GSGDA II), 2014-2017). The overall goal of these two development strategies was to accelerate the growth of Ghanaian economy with the view to ensure sustainable poverty reduction (NDPC, 2013).

A cursory examination of almost all the country's poverty alleviation policy documents revealed that the country has always concentrated on stabilising the economy through appropriate macro-economic policies and turning it towards accelerated growth with the

ultimate aim of raising the living standard of the people. However, after years of rapid economic growth the evidence suggests that poverty levels remain high. The World Bank (2011), has stressed that Ghana's poverty reduction success story has always been the success story of its southern sector. Therefore until dramatic effort is made to improve the standard of living in both the North and South, the problem will persist. In spite of this advice from the World Bank the analysis of the Ghana Poverty Mapping report (2015) shows that the three regions in the north namely Northern, Upper East and Upper West still remain poorest in Ghana. This finding from the report is evident that the country has not been able to get the issue of proper targeting right in her poverty alleviation agenda. In analysing the shortfalls of Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategies, Allah-Mensah (2006) concludes that when governments become unaccountable to the citizens and the programmes instituted to alleviate poverty are not beneficiary-centred, people should not expect such programmes to make any significant impact on the poor and the vulnerable.

The review of the above studies on poverty alleviation activities in Ghana have revealed that they have focused mainly on the strategies, their objectives, the impact and their challenges. But what is missing in these previous studies is a particular study which focuses on LEAP, and the extent to which clientelistic networks have played a role in the alleviation of poverty in Ghana. The current study focuses on this aspect of poverty alleviation in Ghana which has been neglected by the existing literature.

2.6. Studies on Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty in Ghana.

Ghanaian governments over the past decade and beyond appeared to have shown a considerable commitment not only to reduce poverty and vulnerability but more importantly to also empower people to leave poverty. In line with this commitment, the

government since 2008 has implemented the LEAP social grants programme through the Ministry of Gender Children and Social Protection (MoGCSP). This is in fulfilment of the objectives of the country's National Social Protection Strategy of 2007. On the face value LEAP programme generally appears to be an effective tool for poverty alleviation. It also appears to have the potential to contribute greatly towards the government's long term strategy to eradicate poverty completely as required by the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's). According to Hicky (2007) programmes like LEAP and other social protection initiatives have always been shaped by clientelistic politics. This is because the process of identifying who deserves the material benefits, and the decision to expand the number of beneficiaries are all political in nature. However, for a poverty alleviation programme like LEAP to serve its purpose, the benefits ought to be targeted as precisely as possible so that they get to the people who need them most.

Since the inception of the implementation of the programme, a considerable amount of studies have been done on it. While some of the scholars such as Park et al. (2017) have highlighted the unique nature of LEAP by pointing out how the beneficiaries are made to benefit from free health insurance scheme in addition to the cash transfers, others have focused on the impact it has made on poverty alleviation in Ghana among others. For instance, an independent impact evaluation carried out by Korboe (2011); Park et al. (2012); Handa et al. (2013); Ragno, (2013); Thome et al. (2013); OPM, (2013) and Davis et al. (2014), have all come to a unanimous conclusion that the programme has largely impacted positively on the beneficiary households particularly in the areas such as the well-being of the people, improvement in the beneficiary's children education in terms of school enrolment, grade repetition, absenteeism, food consumption and frequency of utilization of healthcare facilities among others.

Some further studies conducted by Agbaam and Dinbabo (2014) and Abbey et al.(2014) revealed that the key challenges facing the programme include irregular payment, weak linkage of the programme to other pro-poor interventions, inadequate staff with limited operational capacity and low coverage of poor family. Similarly, Jaha and Sika-Bright, (2015) identified perceived political manipulations and political interferences as other major challenges confronting the smooth implementation of the programme. According to the World Bank (2011), the LEAP like any other social assistance programme has always been bedevilled with the issue of lack of proper targeting and that various attempts have been made to improve the targeting procedures of the LEAP programme in Ghana. In a related development, the issue of the absence of properly designed exit plan for the beneficiaries of LEAP has thoroughly been discussed in the work of Martei (2015). She argues that the fact that the LEAP document does not come with a sustainability measures, exiting criteria as well as indicators of success, the programme has now practically moved from being a short term intervention to life time benefit making beneficiaries overly dependent on LEAP. She further explained that the absence of definite indicators for measuring success has led to a situation whereby in her own words “the key measure of progress is a ballooning number of the beneficiaries”. Indeed, what Martei has presented in her studies clearly indicates that if immediate steps are not taken to correct this inexcusable and apparent anomalies, not only will the beneficiaries become permanently dependent on the LEAP benefits but will also pose a serious threat to the sustainability of the programme as well.

Groot et al. (2015) focused their attention on the impact of LEAP on schooling. They observed that the programme has significantly improved school attendance particularly that of the girl child. The key reason for this achievement has been that LEAP cash is now used by many beneficiaries to purchase schooling items like stationary and uniforms

which hitherto were difficult for them to get for their children. In their study to assess how the LEAP programme has empowered the beneficiaries to manage risk and re-engage with informal social networks, Daidone et al. (2015) found that the inability of the government to ensure that the beneficiaries receive the cash on a regular basis has negatively affected the realization of LEAP stated objectives. As part of the eligibility criteria, LEAP has a number of conditionalities which include children enrolment and retention in schools, registration of births, elimination of child trafficking and children engaged in worst form of child labour among others (Gbedemah et al. 2010) A study conducted by Park et al. (2012) partly to assess the level of LEAP beneficiaries adherence to these conditionalities revealed that as many as 83 percent of the beneficiary households interviewed in the study stated that they do not have to comply with any conditionality before they receive their cash payments. This implies that even the conditionalities that were put in place to ensure that the beneficiary households are held in constant checks are not properly enforced.

In conclusion, having reviewed the available literature on the implementation of LEAP, the evidence suggests that the scholarly works on it have primarily concentrated on the impact it is making on the life of the beneficiaries. Other studies were interested in focusing on the challenges associated with the implementation of the programme in Ghana. The aspect of the programme which has received little attention in the literature has been to explore the role played by clientelistic politics in the selection of the LEAP beneficiaries. It is important to note that the goal for which LEAP was introduced will be undermined if the issue of whether the benefits are getting to the right people or not remains uncertain. Practical steps need to be taken to ensure that the process of selecting the beneficiaries of the programme become open, transparent and accountable to the interests of the poor and the vulnerable in Ghana. This is where this study becomes

important as it seeks to highlight the processes involve in the selection of LEAP beneficiaries in practice. The results from this study will contribute specifically to the body of knowledge in the area of the role played by political clientelism in the implementation of LEAP and poverty alleviation in Ghana.

CHAPTER THREE

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.0. Introduction

The duty of every public official is to promote the interest of the general public. However, the use of public resources by the political office holders to serve their private political interest appears to have plagued almost all poverty alleviation interventions ever implemented in Ghana (Appiah and Abdulai, 2017). The practice which has a negative impact on poverty alleviation has become a political disease. This calls for an urgent surgery to remove it from the Ghanaian body politics in order to ensure that the poverty alleviation policies achieve their intended objectives. This goal can be realised if the motivation of political actors to engage in any kind of unlawful relationship is properly established. The knowledge acquired from such an exercise can help to bring about policy changes. Political Scientists over the years have been interested in the study of human behaviour and have developed many theories to explain why political actors behave the way they do. In order to settle on a suitable theory which could be used to make sense out of the data to be gathered, I examined many existing theories however two key theories emerged as dominant and well-established behaviour based theories.

3.1. Competing Theories for the Study

The selection of an appropriate theory to explain and interpret human behaviour has always been one of the difficult tasks in social science research. For me to explain the findings of this study in a meaningful way, two competing theories were evaluated. The competing theories were Impartiality Theory and the Rational Choice Theory.

(i) Impartiality Theory

One of the theories which possibly could have been used to provide theoretical lens to examine the implementation of the LEAP is the impartiality theory. The theory is also known as the theory of Impartial Political Institutions (IPI). The theory was propounded by Rothstein Bo and Teorell Jan to explain a linear relationship between the quality of government and successful implementation of policies. (Rothstein and Teorell, 2008). The theory contends that “what enables well-working governments to achieve policy goals is their capacity to exercise political authority impartially and that the principle of treating every one with equal concern and respect is the most important feature of quality government”. The theorists defined impartiality to mean that “when implementing laws and policies, government officials shall not take into consideration anything about the citizen that is not beforehand stipulated in the policy” (ibid). The theory further argues that the recruitment of the public bureaucracy and the beneficiaries of social programmes should be driven mainly by meritocratic criteria as opposed to personal or partisan loyalty. This argument is centred on a specific notion that the issues of corruption, clientelism and political patronage become entrenched when public office holders consistently breach the impartiality principle and that impartiality should be the central principle of quality of government (Teorell, 2008). The theory to some extent would have been useful because it tries to explain the root cause of political clientelism in the implementation of social policy which is an aspect of this study. It also provides a general formulae for assessing the quality of government in a country. However, the assumptions of the theory do not have the ability to sufficiently explain the research problem. The theorists basically focus on only how those in political authority ought to behave in order to achieve the goals of policies they implement. It is also too general and therefore its application to explain why and how public officials breach the impartiality

principle in order to achieve selfish interest will be difficult. Thus, not only does the theory fail to explain the behaviour of the beneficiaries of social policies, it also falls short in explaining why those involve in the implementation of social policies manipulate rules in order to achieve a preferred outcome. Unlike the impartiality theory, the rational choice theory throws more light on the importance of self-interest as a critical factor in politics and policymaking process. This provides better understanding of how and why political actors behave the way they do in the implementation of social policy like LEAP in Ghana. Based on the evaluation of the two theories in terms of their suitability and explanatory power the study settled on the rational choice theory. Besides, human behaviour is extremely complex and between the two theories, the rational choice theory has sufficient propositions that are relevant in addressing the questions of why and how in the study.

(ii) Rational Choice Theory

This study adopts Rational Choice Theory (RCT) as a theoretical tool to evaluate the actions of both the public officials and beneficiaries involve in the implementation of LEAP programme in Ghana. RCT has been one of the most influential theoretical frameworks which seeks to explain what motivates the political actors to do what they do. Besides, the theory has been used extensively by researchers over the years to provide useful insight into the actions of politicians, voters and lobbyists. Therefore in order to put this study into right perspective I employed this theory to explain the findings of the study.

3.2. Evolution of Rational Choice Theory

Tracing the exact origin of Rational Choice Theory has been a difficult enterprise among scholars over the years. This is because the neoclassical theory has been transformed

significantly through the works of numerous contributors from different academic disciplines. The attempts by these scholars to conduct experimental tests on the initial assumptions of the traditional theory have led to fundamental changes in the original structure of Rational Choice Theory (Oppenheimer, 2008). As noted by Oppenheimer (2008), there is no doubt that the current theory takes its central intellectual position from Thomas Hobbes' *Leviathan* (1651), when he tried to explain the fundamental functions of institutions of state through the individuals' choice. He adds that other authorities such as David Hume, Adam Smith and Jeremy Bentham who continued the works of Hobbes by championing the principle of individual self-interest have all contributed greatly to the development of the current rational choice theory. Anthony Downs also played a key role in throwing more light on the Rational Choice Theory with his *Economic Theory of Democracy*. Downs premises his theory on the idea that actors in a democracy make choices that are beneficial to themselves in a rational (predictable) manner. According to Downs "political parties are entrepreneurs in a profit seeking economy who act to maximize votes and voters too are utility maximizers (Down, 1957).

In the view of Amadae (2003), the most frequently held idea by practising researchers about the origin of the rational choice tradition has been the seven canonical works which by consensus continue to hold the tradition and the belief of the rational choice theorists. These include authors such as: von Neumann and Morgenstern (1944); Duncan Black (1948); Kenneth J. Arrow (1951); Anthony Down (1957); James M. Buchanan and Gordon Tullock (1962); William H. Riker (1965); and Mancur Olson Jr (1965)¹. Considering the fact that all these scholars have contributed to the development

¹ Von Neuman, J. and Morgenstern, O (1944). *Theory of Games and Economic Behaviour*. Princeton University Press, Duncan, B. (1948). "On the Rationale of Group Decision-Making" *Journal of Political Economy* 56(1).pp23-34, Kenneth, J.A. (1951). *Social Choice and Individual Values*, Anthony, D. (1957). *An Economic Theory of Democracy*. Harper and Row. Buchanan, J.M. and Tullock, G. (1962). "The Calculus of Consent" *Logical Foundation of Constitutional Democracy*. University of Michigan Press,

of the rational choice theory from different perspectives, it is therefore not a surprise that the theory has many faces as well as different variants. Largely, the theory has been developed within different historical periods and disciplines such as economics, psychology and political science among others. However, the economist James Buchanan has over the years been credited as the leading proponent of Rational Choice Theory (Anderson, 2011).

Central to all forms of rational choice theory is the assumption that human beings are self-interested creatures, and that when it comes to decision making, individuals always make prudent choices which provide them with the maximum satisfaction (Patracca, 1991). Again, the tradition postulates that all political outcomes and behaviour ought to be explained within the context of individual actors (Hindmoor, 2006) The rational choice theory is also known in other circles as Public Choice, Social Choice and Formal theory though each may slightly differ from one another depending upon the level of adherence to the neoclassical assumptions (Heywood, 2004).

3.3. Key Assumptions of Rational Choice Theory

Rational Choice Theory is without question, one of the political theories that has attracted a variety of scholars with each promoting one version or the other, depending upon the extent to which they adhere to neoclassical assumptions. However, there are two major rational choice explanations referred to as the “thin” explanation which is strictly based on the neoclassical assumptions and the “thicker” explanation where the strict neoclassical assumptions are relaxed (Witteck, 2013). This section of the study focuses on three “thin” assumptions of the theory which have been the consistent themes

Riker, W.H. (1965). *The Theory of Political Coalitions*. Yale University Press and Mancur, O.Jr. (1965). *The Logic of Collective Action*. Harvard University Press.

throughout the development of the theory. The assumptions² are presented here as discussed by Anderson, 2011; and Wittek, (2013).

➤ **Rationality:** According to this assumption *all individuals are fully informed about all their decisions, alternatives, the probabilities of their outcomes and their consequences. And that they base their decisions on cost-benefit calculations and choose the alternative which generates the highest expected utility* (Wittek, 2013). In essence the theorists are of the opinion that individuals always make wise and logical decisions whenever they are confronted to choose a course of action.

➤ **Self-interested individuals:** *This assumption states that political actors, like economic actors, act rationally in pursuit of their own self-interest. This central assumption of the theory according to James Buchanan assumes that “politicians are always guided by their self-interest rather than by an altruistic commitment to the public or national interest. This should be no surprise says Buchanan because governments are made up of individuals, and individuals operate from self-interest when they are engaged in an exchange relationship whether this is in the market or in politics” (Roger, 1986).* In short, the rational choice theorists believe that individual political actors are egoistic. Besides, they always seek to maximise their gains and minimize their losses (Wittek 2013; Patracia, 1991; Downs, 1957). This assumption according to the theorists also indicates that in our attempt to understand political behaviour, culture and history do not matter; it is enough to know the individual’s interest and to assume that such individuals would act rationally.

➤ **Methodological individualism.** *This third major assumption states that “the individual decision –maker is the primary unit of analysis and that the individual*

² These and other assumptions of the theory will be critically evaluated at the discussion chapter.

preferences or values are assumed to be more important than other values-collective, organizational, group or social” (Anderson, 2011).

Putting it differently, the theorists believe that aggregate social behaviour results from the behaviour of individual actors, each of whom is making their individual decisions. This implies that for the rational choice theorists the actions of a group or organization can best be explained within the context of the behaviour of individuals within the group. According to them, whatever social phenomenon an analyst is looking at, the focus must be not on groups but rather on the individual actors as the elementary unit of analysis, and this will be sufficient to explain patterns of behaviour.

In a related development, for the rational choice theorists “the rational man” does not behave in a vacuum but rather acts within certain prevailing conditions. These conditions include the following:

- *That the individuals can always make a decision when confronted with a range of alternatives;*
- *he ranks all the alternatives facing him in order of his preferences in such a way that each is either preferred to, indifferent to or inferior to each other;*
- *his preference ranking is transitive;*
- *he always chooses from among the possible alternatives that which ranks highest in his preference ordering; and*
- *he always makes the same decision each time he is confronted with same .*

3.4. Criticisms of Rational Choice Theory

Since its evolution, *rational choice theory* has attracted a number of criticisms from many scholars. Notable among the critics of the theory are Donald Green and Ian Shapiro who have vehemently argued that the theory has contributed too little to the

general understanding of politics. According to these scholars, many of the hypothesis of the theory are based on assumptions such as the availability of perfect information, rationality, preferences as well as unobservable entities like taste or belief. Their concern has been that such variables are difficult to be subjected to empirical test. They argue that this has led to the production of many conclusions based on conjectures which have not been fully tested. In their view such methodological flaws show that the universality claim of the theory is questionable (Green and Shapiro, 1994).

Again, the rational choice theorists have been criticised for overestimating human rationality. According to the critics, they have lost sight of the fact that people hardly possess a definite set of preferred goals and do not take decisions on the basis of complete and accurate knowledge (Heywood, 2004). Similarly, the critics have demonstrated that the so called rational man cannot be all-knowing and also does not have massive memory power in order to overcome the problems of inadequate information and uncertainty in the decision making process. For this reason it is extremely difficult for individuals to make rational decisions always, and that this may force individuals to opt for other ways of making decision rather than the rational means (Ogu, 2013).

In a similar vein, some critics have contended that the assumption of human rationality which seeks to suggest that almost every action of the political actor is rational is problematic. They are of the view that the attempt by the Rational Choice Theorists to assume that all actions of the individual are rational, make the so called irrational actions as well become part of rational actions. According to the theorists, a decision is irrational if it is not consistent with utility maximization. This the critics say makes it rather more difficult to determine which action is rational and which is not. This is because the

standard for assessing rationality as proposed by the rational choice theorists in itself is confusing and not straight forward (Ibid, 2013).

Another weakness which is related to the theory has been on the assumption of individual's egoistic motivation. It is noted that the theory's key feature of the principle of self-interest does not apply to all actions of a political actor. The key question is that if the assumption of the self-interested human being is tenable why such individuals would ever do anything that might benefit other members of the society more than themselves. From the perspective of the critics, the rational choice theorists have failed to answer why individuals often engage in activities that are considered altruistic, philanthropic or selfless. Based on this perceived weakness of the rational choice theory, the critics have concluded that the theory does not qualify to represent every real world situation (Patracca, 1991).

Another key argument made against the RCT is its deliberate attempt to downplay the importance of social norms and historical factors in explaining human actions. According to the RCT, social norms are not relevant in explaining political behaviour. Rather such behaviour can best be explained in terms of individual actions. The issue which has not been properly addressed by Rational Choice Theorists is why some individuals accept and religiously follow social norms of behaviour which compel them to lead a selfless life. In the light of this Rational Choice Theorists have been accused of not paying sufficient attention to the importance of social structures but they have rather chosen to emphasize the so-called individualistic attributes of human beings. (Heywood, 2004).

Lastly, reading through all the assumptions of RCT, it is clear that the Rational Choice Theorists have been overly reductionist in their assumptions. A typical example of such

assumption is methodological individualism which seeks to explain even group political behaviour in the context of individual actions. This kind of approach provides the critics with the justification to conclude that rational choice theory attempts to reduce the whole political arena, for example, to a mere self-interested and utility maximizing political actors.

3.5. Usefulness of RCT to the Study

Rational choice theory like many known theories in the social sciences can never be dismissed as worthless. The theory has significantly contributed to the understanding of behaviour of political actors, and has shaped the study of contemporary political science and research. In the light of this, the current study considers RCT as the most appropriate for analysing the motivation behind the implementation of LEAP and its perceived patron-client relationship. I consider the theory to be useful in explaining the findings of the study in the following ways.

First, the issue of proper targeting has always been a crucial determinant of the success or otherwise of any poverty alleviation intervention. It is believed that for any poverty alleviation strategy to achieve the expected impact, the benefits of the programme must reach those who need them most. The RCT on the other hand considers politicians as self-interested and utility maximization individuals who are always ready to manipulate rules to achieve a preferred outcome (Anderson, 2011). On the basis of this the application of RCT will serve as a framework to explain the behaviour of the political class in the selection of the beneficiaries of the LEAP programme in Ghana. The data to be gathered on the processes involve in the selection of the beneficiaries will be examined within the context of RCT to see if they confirm or refute the assumptions of the theory.

Another central concern of the RCT is that in a highly competitive political environment the politicians act as entrepreneurs bent on doing everything possible to secure and maintain political power, whilst individual voters on the other hand behave like consumers ready to give their votes to candidates whose policies most closely reflect their preferences (Heywood, 2004). In this study, the RCT serves as a useful framework for analysing the structure of the relationship that exist between the political class and the beneficiary households of the LEAP programme. This is very important as the RCT theorists predict that the rational beneficiaries of poverty alleviation programme will definitely be compelled to nurture a long term relationship with the politicians to sustain the material benefit. In the opinion of the theorists, once this relationship grows stronger the beneficiaries will have no option than to provide loyalty and political support. Indeed, this explanation appears to make sense in this study because for the poor the provision of just political support in exchange for long term material benefits could be a golden opportunity which can hardly be resisted by people who are desperately looking for an avenue to survive. In short, what RCT theorists seek to convey is that looking at the self-serving nature of human beings, clientelistic politics is bound to occur in any poverty alleviation exercise. This study seeks to determine the explanatory power of the RCT in the context of the beneficiaries' behaviour in the implementation of LEAP.

Again rational choice theory, postulates that politicians are incurably opportunistic and all their decisions are calculated on the basis of how such actions will help or hurt their chances for re-elections (Roskin, 2016). In the view of rational choice theorists, the self-interested politicians will only commit huge resources to actions or policies that will enable them to win or maintain political power. In other words, the rational politicians will always strategically invest state resources in areas where they can easily secure political support and the loyalty of the electorate. The theory therefore suggests that the

perceived commitment on the part of the politicians to invest so much in the implementation of various poverty alleviation interventions, may not be borne out of altruistic commitment to public interest but rather as an instrument to achieve a selfish end (Gerxhani and Schram,2009). It is hoped that the adoption of RCT with its emphasis on self-interested human nature could effectively provide useful insight into why governments engage in clientelistic politics in the implementation of poverty alleviation programmes such LEAP. This is basically because the theory predicts that once government is made up of self-interested individuals, these officials will always promote their own interest rather than the interest of others.

Political clientelism which has always worked against effective implementation of poverty alleviation programmes is strengthened by a reciprocal relationship between the politicians and the beneficiaries. The RCT argues that as long as the politicians continue to use material benefits in exchange for political support, so will the recipients of the benefits continue to reciprocate the gesture; because both act rationally and pursue choices with the highest level of utility. The implication of this assumption is that the beneficiaries of poverty alleviation intervention such as LEAP will definitely prefer to go for a readily available material benefit than to wait for the general benefit of any public policy. Consequent to the acceptance of these material benefits, the theorists are of the view that the recipients are likely to feel obligated to reciprocate the gesture. Such practice according to the theorists keeps developing some kind of a sustained reciprocal relationship between the politicians and the beneficiaries of the poverty alleviation programme (Schaffer, 2007). Against the assumption that both the politicians and the recipients of the material benefits are likely to reciprocate the kind gesture materially and electorally respectively, this study employs the theory to analyse the findings of this

study to verify whether the assumption reflects the true nature of reality, particularly with regard to the implementation of LEAP in Ghana.

Arguably, within the arena of the social sciences there has not been any theory that has extensively been used by researchers to predict and explain actual human behaviour than rational choice theory. On the basis of this the choice of RCT to analyse the behaviour of political actors in the implementation of LEAP is undoubtedly deemed appropriate and well calculated.

However, in spite of the widely acclaimed explanatory power of the theory, critics have pointed out a number of weaknesses which suggest that the application of the theory in a study does not guarantee perfect results which this study acknowledges. In order to ensure that those weaknesses among others which have already been discussed do not impact negatively on the outcome of this study, a number of preventive measures were adopted in order to overcome some of the weaknesses of rational choice theory as pointed out by critics and they included:

First, the mixing of the features of qualitative and quantitative strategies in the study is to ensure that the RCT is not used in isolation. This adoption of this approach is also to complement the role and ability of the theory to provide insight into the behaviour of stakeholders involved in LEAP implementation. This is possible because the process of observing the behaviour of these political actors from different perspectives will not only improve accuracy in prediction but also enhance understanding of the research problem.

Similarly, for the rational choice theorists, whatever social phenomenon an analyst is looking at, the focus must not be on groups but rather on the individual actors as the elementary unit of analysis, and this will be sufficient to explain patterns of behaviour. This assumption has been criticised on the grounds that the theorists underestimate and

overlook the importance of aggregated actions or views of groups, institutions or organizations. The adoption of mixed method approach which strives to gather empirical data systematically from both individuals and groups in order to examine data patterns, will not only help to bridge the individual-group gap of the theory but will also enable the study to go beyond the individual experiences and analyse the group experiences too in the implementation of LEAP.

Again, the study recognises that political actors are interacting social beings whose actions can be influenced by societal norms and experiences. Though this social reality appears to be overlooked by the rational choice theorists, the study does not completely ignore the social context within which the subjects of the study operate but rather incorporates that aspect in the gathering and analysis of the empirical data of the study. This stems from the fact that for me to be able to interpret the evidence from the study very well, the social conditions of the participants of the study must as well be properly observed and understood.

Another weakness of the theory has been the assumption that almost everything humans do including self-sacrifice is rational. The critics believe that by stating this, the rational choice theorists are assuming that all forms of actions including irrational actions become part of the model. In order to overcome the weakness associated with this assumption, the researcher tries to adopt the position that most of the social actions of human contain rational elements and therefore the issue of rationality must be treated as a subjective phenomenon since human beings can from time to time be both rational and irrational in taking decision (Ogu, 2013). Essentially, looking at the assumption from this perspective it will be wrong to assume that the actions of others are irrational simply because we appear to disagree with them. For the rational choice theorists it is better for us to find out the reasons behind the actions. On the basis of this the open-ended questions

to be asked in the qualitative study such as in-depth interviews are meant to elicit the reasons for the actions of the participants in the study. In addition the study uses variety of data collection instruments to solicit information from the participants from different geographical areas and this process seeks to provide them the flexibility to explain the reasons behind their actions. The approach seeks to offer each participant the opportunity to present his/her experience based on available information.

In a null shell, I argue that the RCT is one theory which has been used broadly by many scholars to understand political behaviour. In almost all such instances the theory has demonstrated that, despite its shortfalls, it can be used to predict the outcomes of political actions and the intentions of political actors. Hence, this study considers the RCT framework to be the most appropriate and relevant for analysing the findings of the study. The intention of this study is not to disprove the veracity of RCT. Rather, it is to highlight the role played by rationally self-interested attribute of political actors in the implementation of Ghana's LEAP programme. It is strongly believed that all the measures instituted in the study will allow the researcher to obtain an outcome that meets the stated objectives. All the weaknesses identified have therefore been considered as suggestions that can be taken on board to further improve RCT and it is against this background that theory cannot be responsible for the shortcomings of the study.

3.6. Research Questions

Drawing from the major assumptions of the Rational Choice Theory, the study seeks to find answers to the following empirical questions:

- What have been the processes involved in the selection of LEAP beneficiaries in practice?

- To what extent has the LEAP programme been characterised by clientelistic politics in its implementation?
- Are the beneficiaries of the programmes feeling obliged to reciprocate the gesture by supporting the implementing government electorally?
- In what ways does the incumbent government exploit the programme for electoral advantage?
- To what extent has the programme helped to improve the living conditions of the beneficiaries and how can it be sustained?

I finally conclude this chapter by stating that, looking at all the assumptions of rational choice theory, it is without doubt the most appropriate framework within which the findings of this study can best be explained. This is because the theory does not only explain why political actors do what they do but also provides useful direction for any study on political behaviour. In the end the theory is expected to provide a complete picture of the structure of the relationship that exists between politicians and beneficiaries of the LEAP programme in Ghana.

CHAPTER FOUR

METHODOLOGY

4.0. Introduction

This chapter describes in detail the overall plan of action for the data collection and the approaches to analyse and interpret the obtained data from the field. It represents the blueprint which ensured that the research problem was addressed effectively and in a logical fashion.

A number of questions guided the direction of this study. Among others the questions included finding out whether there has been any attempt by the political office holders to distort the process of selecting the beneficiaries of LEAP programme. The study further investigated whether there was any relationship between political party affiliation and the selection of LEAP beneficiaries. These key questions emanated from the overall objective of the study which was to examine whether political clientelism plays any role in the implementation of LEAP in Ghana.

4.1. Research Design

In order to address these questions holistically, the study employed Concurrent Mixed Methods Design, which involved the collection of both quantitative data and qualitative data simultaneously. This approach which is underpinned by the pragmatist principle argues that looking at a phenomenon from different perspectives provide richer and comprehensive understanding than by looking at it from a single perspective (Neuman, 2011). The data collected from both the quantitative and qualitative sources were therefore compared to determine if there were corroborations or differences in the findings. The reason for the adoption of this strategy was that while the qualitative

research design meant to explore the views of the respondents in detail, the quantitative approach was meant to gather quantitative data to compare with the qualitative data. In essence, the application of the mixed methods approach aimed at providing more thorough understanding of the subject matter, because the data from each method was not only to provide confirmation to the respective findings but also used to amplify the outcome of each other. One key advantage of this approach was that it allowed me to make use of “what works” to bring solution to the identified problem.

More importantly, the selection of this approach to data collection was influenced by the complex nature of the issue of political clientelism. In my opinion, the use of a single approach would not have been adequate to address it comprehensively. Besides, this type of approach which combines both positivist and interpretive principles allows any researcher to take multiple measures to address the research problem and this goes a long way to provide more insight into the phenomenon being studied (ibid, 2011).

4.1.1. Purpose of Research Type

The research was primarily an explanatory research which sought to explain the behaviour of political actors in the implementation of LEAP programme. It was to support or refute the predictions or principles of Rational Choice Theory through the utilization of multiple sources of evidence. As explained by Neuman (2011), explanatory researcher is usually interested in learning why things or events occur, and link the issues to the general principles of a theory. In this particular case, the study did not only seek to explain the actions of both the politicians and the beneficiaries associated with the process of LEAP implementation, but also took interest in understanding why they do what they do, through the utilization of the key assumptions of rational choice theory.

4.2. Method of Study

4.2.1. Sources of Data

The study was based on both primary and secondary sources of data. The information which I collected personally from respondents of the study constituted the primary data. On the other hand, all the information gathered from the previously documented materials on the topic of study formed secondary data (Dawson, 2006). These secondary data sources made up of published and the unpublished works included materials published on website, in journals and newspapers among others. These secondary sources of data have provided a useful background understanding of the subject matter and also provided insight into the analysis and interpretation of the findings obtained from the field. Within the context of this study, the data from the primary source was used to validate the findings obtained from the secondary sources.

4.2.2. Selection of Study Areas and Respondents

(i) Study Areas Selection Procedure:

The beneficiaries of the LEAP programme are geographically spread across the length and breadth of Ghana. Thus, they are found in all the ten administrative regions and the 216 districts of the country. Within the regions and the districts the number of beneficiaries differs from one area to another. Besides, 56 percent of the beneficiaries are women while 44 percent are men (MoGCSP, 2017). In order to overcome some of the disadvantages inherent in both probability and purposive samples, a mixture of sampling techniques has been used in the study. The study therefore employed cluster probability sampling method/multistage random area sampling (Ethridge, 1994). With this technique, the entire country was divided into two major clusters, namely the northern zone and the southern zone. The northern zone included the Northern, Upper East, Upper West, Brong Ahafo and Ashanti Regions. While the southern zone consisted of Greater

Accra, Eastern, Volta, Western and Central regions. From the two clusters, the Northern and the Greater Accra regions were purposively selected to represent the north and the south divide respectively. Within these two regions, four districts were also purposively chosen from each region using the incidence of poverty and a district's (constituency's) loyalty to the two major political parties (NPP and NDC) as criteria. As intimated by Silverman (2009), purposive sampling technique becomes more appropriate when an area exhibits some features of interest relevant to the phenomenon under study. The eight districts which fully fulfilled the two criteria included Shai Osu Doku and La Dade Kotopon representing the poorest and the least poor districts in Greater Accra respectively (GSS, 2010), the Ga East and Ga West Municipalities represented the electoral strongholds for the NPP and NDC political parties respectively (EC, 2016). The districts selected from the Northern region included East Gonja being the poorest district and the Tamale Metropolis represented the least poor district in the region (GSS, 2015), the Yendi and the Kumbungu districts on the other hand served as the electoral strongholds for the NPP and NDC political parties respectively in the region (EC, 2016).

(ii) Justification for the Study Areas

Generally, the purpose of choosing the above two regions among others was to make sure that the findings from the study reasonably reflect geographical differences in the LEAP implementation process. Besides, Greater Accra and Northern regions possess some unique features worth investigating. For instance, available statistics indicated that Greater Accra has experienced the highest reduction in poverty level since the beginning of LEAP and also it holds the least number of poor people in Ghana. Thus, 241,166 peoples (Cook et al. 2016). On the other hand, the Northern region has experienced the least reduction in the level of poverty since 2008, it holds the highest number of poor people in Ghana (1.3 million people) (Cooke et al. 2016). The Northern region also hosts

the East Gonja which is the poorest in all the 216 districts in Ghana and it is a rural district making it an interesting case for investigation (GSS, 2014). Again, both Greater Accra and the Northern regions have the least and highest number of LEAP beneficiaries respectively in the country and they provide unique cases for comparison in terms of selection of the beneficiaries (MoGCSP, 2017). Besides, poverty in rural Ghana is more pervasive than in the urban areas and also the rate of reduction in the urban centres has been faster than in rural areas (NDPC, 2015). A baseline study collaboratively done by Institute of Statistical, Social and Economic Research (ISSER) and Economic Growth Center of Yale University to provide data for policy makers to identify target groups for government social intervention such as LEAP, showed that while Greater Accra has the highest households in the country located in the urban area, the Northern region on the other hand has the highest households located in the rural areas (Aryeetey et al. 2011). The LEAP programme focuses on households as unit of support therefore the selection of these two diametrically opposite regions in terms of their household concentration, provides the opportunity to compare the implementation of the LEAP programme in both urban and rural areas as well as the impact of the programme thereof.

Additionally, the World Bank (2011), has stressed that Ghana's poverty reduction success story has always been the success story of its southern sector. Therefore until efforts are made to do away with the historical North, South divide in the standard of living, poverty will continue to persist in the country. On the basis of this concern, the study sought to investigate how the LEAP has been implemented within this historical North and South divide over the years as well.

(iii) Profile of Study Areas

In Ghana, there are 216 district assemblies and each may come under Metropolitan, Municipal or District Assembly. LEAP as a poverty alleviation programme is implemented in all these assemblies. As stated earlier, in this study I concentrated on

eight districts from Greater Accra and Northern regions. These districts have exhibited diversity of experiences regarding poverty alleviation as well as political support and loyalty to the two dominant political parties in Ghana, and these features were considered useful to the study. Though the degree of clientelistic politics in the process of LEAP implementation in each district may slightly differ from one another, it is believed that the happenings in these selected districts were the reflection of what pertains in all the other districts which were not covered by this study. In this study the districts considered to be the stronghold of NPP and NDC, as well as those considered poorest or least poor (i.e. politically neutral) could also be referred to as beneficiaries' electoral constituency. The discussion on the profile of each selected district begins with the first four in the Greater Accra and followed by the other four from the Northern region.

La Dade Kotopon Municipal Assembly

The La Dade-Kotopon Municipal Assembly was carved out of the Accra Metropolitan Assembly in June 2012 through the Legislative Instrument (L I) 2133. It covers an area of 36,033 square kilometres. La is the municipal administrative capital. The Municipality shares boundaries on both North and West with Accra Metropolitan Assembly, on the East with the Ledzokuku Krowor Municipal and the South with the Gulf of Guinea. According to the 2010 Population and Housing Census of Ghana (GSS, 2014), the total population of the Municipality stands at 183,528 with males constituting 47 percent and females forming 52.7 percent. La Dade-Kotopon Municipal Assembly is described as completely urban. The 2015 Ghana Poverty Mapping report revealed that the Municipality has the lowest incidence of poverty 1.3 percent with 9,336 people as an estimated number of poor persons (GSS, 2015).

Shai-Osudoku Districts Assembly

The Shai-Osudoku District was established in June, 2012 after the passage of the Legislative Instrument (L I) 2137. Based on this LI, the then Dangme West District was split into two to have Shai-Osudoku and the Ningo Prampram Districts. It occupies a total land area of about 968,361 square kilometres. The district has Dodowa as its administrative capital. The district also has a population of 51,913 and of this figure 48.7 percent are males and the females constitute 51.3 percent. It shares boundaries with Akwapim North District to the West, North Tongu District to the North-East, Yilo and Lower Manya Districts to the North-West, Kpone Katamanso District to the South-West, Ningo Prampram District to the South and the Ada West District to the East. The District is largely rural and a significant number of the active population is engaged in agriculture and its related activities (GSS, 2014). According the Ghana Poverty Mapping report (2015), a rate of 55.1 percent incidence of poverty and a poverty depth of 23.2 percent were observed in the Shai-Osudoku District. These figures were the highest in the Greater Accra region, even though the region in general has the lowest poverty rate in the country. The district also has 27,547 people as an estimated number of poor persons. In addition, the report further revealed that in terms of the distribution of poverty inequality, the district performed worst with a rate of 40.1 percent and it is the only district with inequality above the average of 37.6 percent.

Ga East Municipal Assembly

The Ga East Municipal Assembly was created in 2004 through a Legislative Instrument (L I) 1864. The District was carved out of the then Ga District and was elevated to a Municipal status in 2007 through an LI 2061. It covers a land area of about 85.7 square kilometres and has Abokobi as its capital. The total population of Ga East Municipality according to the 2010 Population and Housing Census is 147,742. Males form 49 percent

of the population while the females constitute 51 percent. It has about 52 settlement with about 82 percent of the population living in the urban areas and about 55 percent of the population is into Agriculture. Ga East Municipal Assembly shares boundaries with Ga West Municipal to the West, the La-Nkwantanang Municipal to the East, Accra Metropolitan Assembly to the South and the Akwapim South District to the North. In terms poverty, it recorded 4.8 percent of incidence of poverty, 1.1 percent rate of poverty depth and 6,881 people were observed as an estimated number of poor persons in the Municipality (GSS, 2015).

Ga West Municipal Assembly

The Ga West Municipal Assembly which is the last in the districts selected from Greater Accra was established in 2008 by a Legislative Instrument 1858. It was carved out of the erstwhile Ga District which was created in 1988. The Municipal Assembly covers a total land area of 299.578 square kilometres with about 412 communities. Amasaman is the administrative capital of Ga West Municipal Assembly. Figures from the 2010 Population and Housing Census revealed that the total population of Ga West Municipal Assembly is 219,788 with the male forming 49 percent of the population and the females constituting 51 percent. The Municipality shares boundaries with Ga East Municipal and Accra Metropolitan Assembly to the East, Akwapim South District to the North and Ga South Municipal and Ga Central Municipal Assemblies to the South. The Municipal Assembly recorded 8.9 percent of incidence of poverty and 2.2 percent rate of poverty depth. In all, 19,230 people were stated by the 2015 Ghana Poverty Mapping report as an estimated number of poor persons located in the municipality.

Tamale Metropolitan Assembly

The Tamale Metropolitan Assembly was created in 2004 through the Legislative Instrument (L I) 2068. It is currently one of the six Metropolitan Assemblies in Ghana

and the only Metropolis in the three regions of northern Ghana namely Upper East, Upper West and the Northern region. Tamale which serves as the administrative capital for the metropolis is also the capital city for the northern region. The metropolis which is located at the central part of northern region covers an estimated land area of 646. 9018 square kilometres with 115 communities. The total population of Tamale Metropolis according the 2010 Population and Housing Census stands at 233,252 of which males constitute 50.3 percent and females forming 49.7 percent (GSS, 2014). The Metropolis shares boundaries with Sagnarigu District to the West and North, Mion District to the East, East Gonja to the South and Central Gonja to the South-West. The incidence of poverty is 24.6 percent and the depth of poverty is 6.8 percent with 54,091 people have been quoted as the estimated number of poor persons in the metropolis. All these figures represent the lowest values of poverty among all the districts in the northern region (GSS, 2015).

East Gonja Municipal Assembly

The East Gonja Municipal Assembly was established in 2007 by the L. I. 1938. It has Salaga as its administrative capital. The Municipal Assembly occupies a total land area of 8, 340.10 square kilometres which is about 11.95 percent of the total landmass of the entire northern region. This make the Municipality the largest district assembly in the country (GSS, 2014). The total population captured by the 2010 population and housing census for the municipality is 135,450 while the males constitute 51.5 percent, the females form 48.5 percent. Within the population 32.7 percent of the people aged 11years and above are literates while as high as 67.3 percent of the population are non-literates. Besides, the municipality is largely considered as rural and as high as 72.6 percent of households in the district engage in agriculture (GSS, 2014). It shares boundaries with Mion District and Tamale Metropolitan to the North, Central Gonja to

the West, Nanumba North, Nanumba South and Kpandai Districts to the East and Brong-Ahafo to the South. The incidence of poverty in the municipality stands as high as 84.2 percent and the poverty depth is 41.0 percent. While the estimated number of poor persons in the municipality is 112,130 (GSS, 2014).

Kumbungu District Assembly

The Kumbungu District was created in 2011 based on the Legislative Instrument 2062. It was carved out the then Tolon-Kumbungu District. The district has Kumbungu as its administrative capital. It covers a total land mass of about 1,599 square kilometres. According to the 2010 Population and Housing Census, the district has a population of 39,341. Males constitute 50 percent and the females' form 50 percent. Within the population, 26 percent of the people who are aged 11 years and above are literates and as high as 74 percent within the same age bracket are non-literate (GSS, 2014). The district is largely rural and as high as 95 percent of the households in the district engage in agriculture. It shares boundary with Mamprugu District, Tolon and North Gonja to the West, Sagnerigu District to the South, and Savelugu/Nanton Municipal Assembly to the East. In terms of its poverty records, the district has a rate of 32.3 percent as its incidence of poverty and the poverty depth stands at 9.7 percent. It also has 12,596 people as an estimated number of poor persons located within the population (GSS, 2014).

Yendi Municipal Assembly

The Yendi district came into existence in 1988 through the PNDC Law 207, Act 462 and LI 1443. It remained a district status until 2007 when it was elevated to a municipality. Yendi is the administrative capital of the municipality. It occupies a total land area of 1,446.3 square kilometres. The Municipality has a total population of 117,780 with males constituting 50 percent and the females 50 percent. It shares boundaries with six other districts assemblies. These include Saboba District to the East, Chereponi and

Zabzugu Districts to the South, Nanumba North District to the North, Gushegu and Mion Districts to the West. Close to two thirds (69.9%) of the population aged 11 years and above in the Municipality are not literates (GSS, 2014). According to USAID (2017), the Municipality has poverty prevalence of 20 percent, poverty depth of 10.3 percent and a total population of the poor stands at 26,522.

Table 4.1: Selected Regions and Districts for the study based on poverty level:

Selected Regions	Poorest District Selected from the Region.	Least Poor District in the Region
Greater Accra	Shai Osu Doku	La Dade Kotopon
Northern	East Gonja	Tamale Metropolis

Source: Adopted from Ghana Poverty Mapping Report (2015).

Again, some politicians usually adopt different strategies to ensure that they are able to convert the distribution of poverty alleviation benefits into political support and loyalty. Magaloni (2006) suggests that the politicians can use the distribution of the material benefits in various ways possible. They can use such poverty alleviation benefits to consolidate political support or reward supporters in their strongholds. Also the material benefits can be used in the area considered to be the stronghold of their rival parties in order to dilute their opponents support. On the basis of this information, I therefore purposively selected other two districts each from the two regions to investigate for evidence of political clientelism in LEAP implementation. I selected Ga East and Yendi districts which have proved to be electoral strongholds for NPP and Ga West and Kumbungu district too have proved to be electoral strongholds for NDC parties respectively. The table below provides detailed voting pattern in these four districts:

Table 4.2: Share of Votes in Parliamentary Elections in Ghana (2004-2016)

	GREATER ACCRA REGION				NORTHERN REGION			
YEAR & PARTY	Ga East (NPP) Stronghold		Ga West (NDC) Stronghold		Yendi (NPP) Stronghold		Kumbungu(NDC) Stronghold	
	NPP	NDC	NPP	NDC	NPP	NDC	NPP	NDC
2004	66%	32%	46%	45%	54%	34%	21%	78%
2008	58%	39%	44%	49%	46%	49%	23%	68%
2012	64%	36%	40%	54%	47%	29%	26%	57%
2016	68%	31%	49%	50%	52%	46%	15%	55%

Source: Electoral Commission of Ghana/Peacefmonline.com/pages/1992-2016

The Ghana Poverty Mapping Report (2015) suggests that various districts have either experienced significant levels of increase or decrease in poverty within the period of LEAP implementation. The selection of these eight districts provided insight as to why some districts are doing well in poverty alleviation than others under LEAP implementation.

(iv) Selection of Survey Respondents.

The total population of the beneficiary households in these eight selected districts as at July 2018, stood at 7162, with the current gender ratio composition of 56:44 for females and males respectively (MoGCSP, 2017). To achieve meaningful representative sample for such a study, the ideal sampling approach for the survey should have been to employ a simple random sample of the entire beneficiary households throughout the selected

districts. However, this strategy was practically impossible for the study due to its implications on the travel cost and time.

For this reason, a list made up of 7162 LEAP beneficiary households was obtained from all the eight District Social Welfare Officers from the selected districts. This compiled list served as the sample frame for the survey. For the study being a mixed method in nature, it was decided that a sample size of five (5) percent of the study population was a reasonable representation (Webb, 1989). The five percent of 7162 households constituted 360 beneficiary households. The study therefore settled on 360 beneficiary households across the selected districts for the survey. A quota of five (5) percent was selected from the total number of beneficiaries in each district with a gender ratio of 56:44. The sampling objective was to ensure that the number of respondents randomly selected from each district was proportional to the number of beneficiary households in the districts.

The next stage of the sampling process involved the random selection of a LEAP beneficiary or a caregiver from the sampled households from each selected district to represent their respective households. Generally, the mathematical formulae for the selection of respondents from each district was: $N = n \times 5\% \times 360$ (56:44 gender ratio).

Where N is the number of respondents in a district and “n” is the total number of beneficiary households in a district.

Table 4.3: Summary of the sample frame and size with gender ratio.

REGION	DISTRICT	TOTAL BENEFICIARY HOUSEHOLD	5% of Total Beneficiary Households	FEMALEs (56% of Total Beneficiary Households)	MALES (44% of Total Beneficiary Households)
Greater Accra	Shai Osu Doku	1315	66	37	29
	La Dade Kotopon Municipal	299	15	8	7
	Ga West Municipal	894	45	25	20
	Ga East Municipal	289	15	8	7
Northern	East Gonja	1853	93	52	41
	Tamale Metropolitan	934	47	26	21
	Kumbungu	516	26	15	11
	Yendi Municipal	1062	53	30	23
TOTAL		7162	360	201	159

Source: Author's own computations, 2018.

(v) Selection of interviewees for the qualitative study

The participants for the qualitative research came from diverse segment of the population from both state and non-state actors. They were purposively selected because of their involvement and deep knowledge in poverty alleviation and LEAP implementation in Ghana. They included the LEAP programme Manager, 8 District Social Welfare Officers representing the 8 selected districts from the two regions, 1 Official each from Ghana Centre for Democratic Development (CDD), IMANI Center for Policy and Education-Ghana and Institute for Democratic Governance (IDEG) representing the Civil Society Organizations involved in poverty alleviation activities and LEAP in Ghana.

In all 12 key respondents were purposively selected and interviewed. This sample size for the qualitative study was considered adequate enough as the study was guided by the principle of data redundancy (Patton, 2002).

4.3 Data Collection Instruments and Procedure

For a better understanding of the problem under investigation, various data collection instruments were used to collect both the quantitative and the qualitative data. With regard to the survey data, first the consent of all the respondents of the survey were sought before the questionnaires were administered. The data were gathered through an interviewer-administered questionnaires which contained a combination of open-and-closed- ended questions. The reason for interviewer-administered questionnaires was that the educational levels of most of the LEAP beneficiaries who were the key respondents of the study were low. Where the respondents did not understand English or the language used by the researcher, the services of trained local language interpreters were hired for them to translate the questions for such respondents. This was to ensure that the respondents understood the questions adequately before they respond to the questions.

On the other hand, the interviews with the 12 officials were all scheduled days ahead before they were conducted. Permission was sought from each official before the interviews could be recorded. The qualitative data were collected through semi-structured face-to face interviews with an interview guide to provide direction. This process sought to allow the interviewees to openly express their feelings, opinions and concerns they had towards the LEAP programme. Such approach provides the participants the opportunity to give full explanation behind their actions and motivations (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005). The approach further provided me the opportunity to probe the responses from the officials for elaborations and to explore key issues raised which were relevant to the study. I made every effort in order to remain emotionally neutral but critical in the course of the interviews. All the interviews with the officials were conducted in English. They were all tape-recorded and transcribed later. At the end,

while the interviews with the LEAP beneficiaries on the average lasted for 30 minutes, those with the 12 officials lasted for an hour on the average.

Table 4.4: Summary of Data Collection Method.

Number	Method of Data Collection	Participants
1	Survey 360	LEAP Beneficiary Households. Respondents include males and females who were 18 years and above
2	In-depth interviews. 12 Interviewees	A Programme Manager at the LEAP Secretariat, 8 District Social Welfare Officers, 3 Officials from CSOs.

4.4. Data Analysis

This section of the study also describes how the data gathered from the field were processed for analyses. For this study the choice for data analysis approach was determined by the kind of research design and the research questions involved. The approach employed in the analysis helped the researcher to make sense out of the views obtained from respondents in the form of words and numbers. In order to achieve effective data analysis, the data from both quantitative and qualitative sources were subjected to vigorous rechecking and editing before coding was done.

4.4.1. Data Analysis Procedure

In this study the analysis of the data simply focused on the search for patterns in the data in order to interpret the identified patterns within the context of rational choice theory. This involved critical examination of the raw data, sorting, categorization, evaluation and the synthetization among others (Neuman, 2011). The exercise also to a large extent helped in explaining how the raw data relate to the research questions for the study. The interpretation of the data from both the quantitative and qualitative data sources were done side-by-side to determine whether there was a convergence or differences in the

findings from each method of study (Morgan, 1998). The quantitative data which was gathered from the survey was first coded and subsequently entered into IBM SPSS version 20 for descriptive and inferential analysis. Pearson Chi-Square test was carried out to establish whether there has been a relationship between political clientelism and areas where the beneficiaries of LEAP were selected from. Thus Person Chi-Square is a statistical tool used to test whether there exist any relationship between two categorical variables. Specifically, in this study the test was interested in finding out whether the beneficiaries' electoral constituency (district) be it NPP stronghold, NDC stronghold or Politically Neutral constituency has any significant relationship with other interested variables such as their voting pattern or their trust in the implementing government. In the analysis for the Chi-Square, all the tests were performed at 5% level of significance. Thus in all the analysis an alpha of 0.05 was used as the cut-off for the level of significance. In addition to the Chi-Square analysis, univariate descriptive statistics for quantitative variables was carried out in order to describe and present the quantitative data in the form of frequency tables, graphs and charts.

With regard to the qualitative data, the analyses were done thematically using Qualitative Data Analysis Software known as Nvivo 12 (Pro Version). The thematic analysis began with the used of Microsoft Word Office to transcribe the audio-recordings from the interviews into texts. The transcribed data was then imported into the Nvivo software for further analysis. With the help of the software, the data were coded for the process of categorization and sub-categorizations to be carried out. Categorization of the data as an activity did not only provide some kind of patterned responses to be emerged but also led to the identification of major themes within the data in relation to the research questions for analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Additionally, the 'explore' feature of the Nvivo

software was used to present some portions of the qualitative data in the form of tables and charts.

4.5. Ethical Considerations

In order for me to establish a reasonable amount of trust with the respondents of the study, the following ethical principles were followed. The first step was to submit the study to the Ethics Committee for the Humanities (ECH) of University of Ghana for ethical clearance. The permission was subsequently granted with the Ethical Protocol number ECH 059/17-18. To overcome ethical problems which emerged during data collection, I strictly followed the guidelines provided by Bryman and Bell (2007) which among others include: participants' voluntary participation, the procurement of participants' full consent, protection of participants' privacy and anonymity as well as the provision of adequate level of confidentiality of the research data.

In order to secure an informed consent from the prospective respondents, the objectives and the importance of the study were first discussed with them before interactions began. This was to ensure that they had sufficient information on the study before attempts were made to secure their written or verbal consent in their preferred language. For the purpose of protecting the privacy and the confidentiality of respondents, their names were concealed. They rather participated under pseudonymous. They were made aware that opinions expressed concerning the implementation of LEAP were to be kept secret, and they could exercise their right to withdraw from the interview at any time as participation of the study was voluntary.

Lastly, the confidentiality and the safety of the participants were guaranteed by making sure that the data obtained from the field were highly secured and were analysed objectively.

CHAPTER FIVE

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

5.0. Introduction

Democratic governance in its true sense requires that governments become responsive to the needs of citizens, particularly the poor and the vulnerable. However, Devereux and White's study (2010) on developing democracies in Africa including Ghana, concluded that political clientelism has become pervasive. They explained that the phenomenon is so widespread that success in the implementation of poverty alleviation programmes is not measured in terms of immediate benefits to the target groups, but rather on the basis of its ability to mobilize broad political support. This observation appears to suggest that the politicians in this part of the world have been using poverty alleviation programmes to solicit political support from vulnerable voters. Obviously, such practice does not only pose serious threat to the effective implementation of the poverty alleviation programmes but also undermines democratic growth in the countries.

Although, the democratization process in Ghana, as prevails in many African countries, started on a shaky note even though in many instances, the country has sought to assure the world that her determination to progress to democratic maturity is unwavering (Boafo-Arthur, 2006). In spite of Ghana's democratic credentials, politics in the country over the years has been characterized by patronage (Ryan, 2012; Oduro et al. 2014). Concerns have been raised not only about the seemingly ineffective functioning of the pillars of democracy in the general governance system but also in the implementation of poverty alleviation programmes (Abane, 2017). These concerns are based on numerous allegations of selective distribution of state resources to party supporters by the ruling government (Ekobor-Ackah et al. 2014). The growth of these practices has compelled

some scholars to describe the general political processes in the country as competitively clientelistic (Mohan and Asante, 2015; Paller, 2014; Lindberg, 2010).

LEAP is one of the key poverty alleviation programmes introduced by government. Most of the studies on LEAP have focused on the impact it is making on the beneficiaries (Handa et al 2013; Park, 2012; Davis and Osei, 2013). There are however grounds for concern (Martei, 2015). One important aspect of the programme which has been overlooked by the previous studies is the extent to which the benefits are getting to the target groups; that is, whether the LEAP is benefitting the right people particularly the poor and the vulnerable. This study sought to examine the extent to which political clientelism has played a role in the implementation of the LEAP programme. The empirical data to be analysed in this section were meant to answer the following research questions.

- How have LEAP beneficiaries been selected?
- Has the implementation of the LEAP programme been characterised by clientelistic politics?
- Are the beneficiaries of the programme feeling obliged to reciprocate the gesture by supporting the implementing government electorally?
- In which ways have the incumbent government exploited LEAP for electoral gains?
- Has the programme improved the living conditions of the beneficiaries; and how can the programme be sustained?

The survey data were gathered from 360 LEAP beneficiaries randomly selected from eight districts in Greater Accra and the Northern regions of Ghana. Some officials from both public institutions and Civil Society Organizations associated with the implementation of LEAP were also interviewed. I was interested in respondents'

attitudes to, perceptions of, and opinions on certain key issues concerning LEAP implementation.

5.1 Data Analysis

5.1.1 Demographic Profiles of Respondents.

This section of the chapter describes the demographic characteristics of all the respondents. The essence of this exercise is to present a demographic profile of the respondents. For the qualitative study a total number of officials interviewed were 12. The gender distribution of those officials is as follows: 50% males and 50% females. Government officials formed 75% of the sample; and those selected from Civil Society Organizations constituted 25%. In all, the officials who were interviewed have worked in their respective organizations for not less than three years. Table 5.1 below summarises the demographic characteristics of the officials.

Summary of the Demographic Characteristics of the officials in the Qualitative Study

Table 5.1: Demographic characteristics of officials.

ID	GENDER	ORGANISATION	POSITION	YEARS OF EXPERIENCE
D1	Female	Government	Social Welfare Officer	8 Years
D2	Male	Government	Social Welfare Officer	10 Years
D3	Male	Government	Social Welfare Officer	11 Years
D4	Male	Government	Social Welfare Officer	4 Years
D5	Female	Government	Social Welfare Officer	10 Years
D6	Female	Government	Social Welfare Officer	6 Years
D7	Female	Government	Social Welfare Officer	5 Years
D8	Male	Government	Social Welfare Officer	15 Years
DD9	Male	Government	LEAP Manager(M&E)	3 Years
C1	Female	Civil Society	Dep. Head of Research	3 Years
C2	Female	Civil Society	Coordinator,Pro-poor Programmes	5 Years
C3	Male	Civil Society	Snr. Research Fellow	8 Years.

Source: Author's field data 2018

5.1.2 Demographic characteristics of survey respondents.

The entire demographic characteristics of the survey respondents are presented below:

5.1.3 Gender of respondents

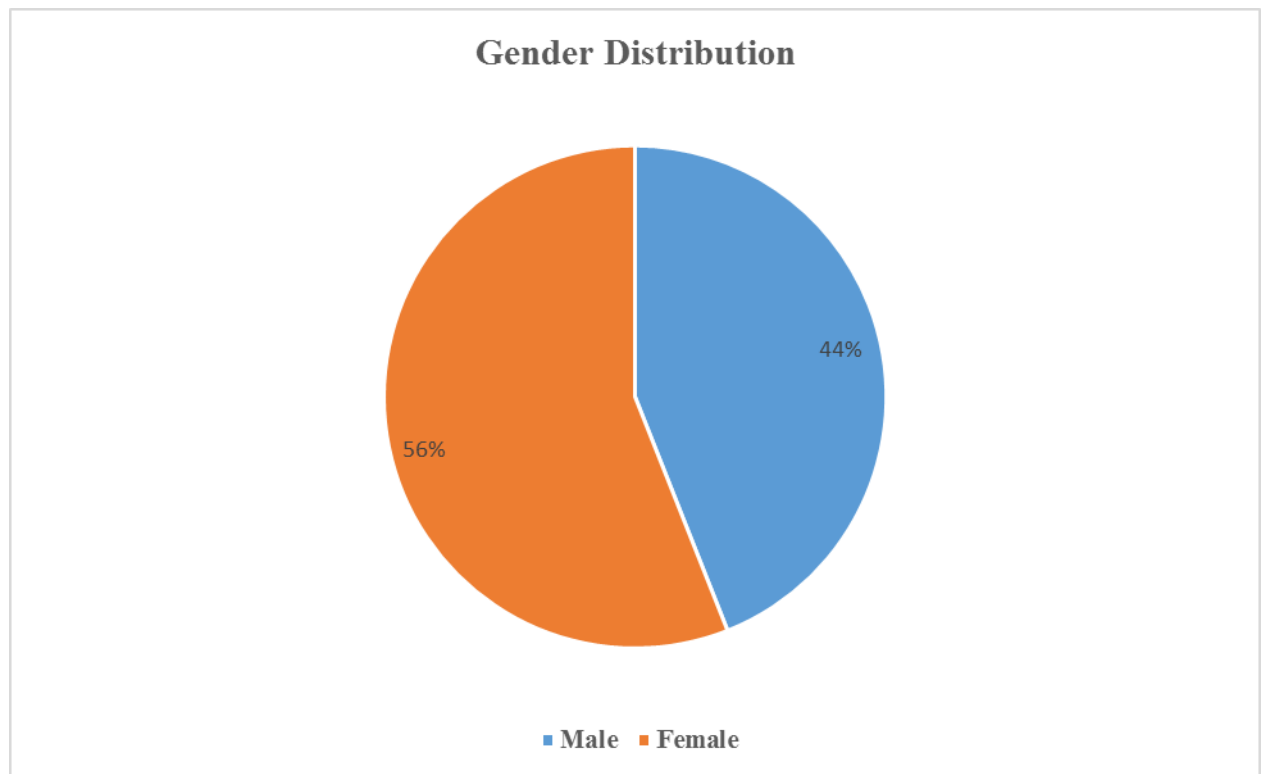
Majority of the respondents were females representing 56%; the remaining 44% were males. The gender distribution in the study is quite representative. This is because the number of beneficiaries sampled in the study is a true reflection of the entire population of LEAP beneficiaries, where females out-number their male counterparts in a ratio of 56:44. The sampling frame provided by the respective district social welfare officers showed that there has been a deliberate effort to select more women to benefit from LEAP though there was no evidence of correlation between gender and political party support. See table 5.2 & figure 5.1 for details.

Table 5.2: Gender Distribution table.

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Males	159	44
Females	201	56
Total	360	100

Source: Author's Field Data, 2018

Figure 5.1: Gender Distribution chart



5.1.4 Age of respondents

Thirty- four percent of the respondents were over 55 years. This was followed by those who were between the ages of 31 and 45 years (17%), 46 and 55 years (12%) while those between 18 and 30 years constituted 6%. As many as 31% of the respondents did not know their ages at the time of the survey. As table 5.3 shows, the age distribution of the respondents is skewed towards the aged as they formed the largest group of the LEAP beneficiaries in the survey. This was an indication that the age requirement in the eligibility criteria was given attention during the selection of LEAP beneficiaries. However, there was no evidence found in the study to show that there was a relationship between the age of the beneficiaries and their loyalty to the political parties that supported their selection.

Table 5.3: Age distribution of respondents

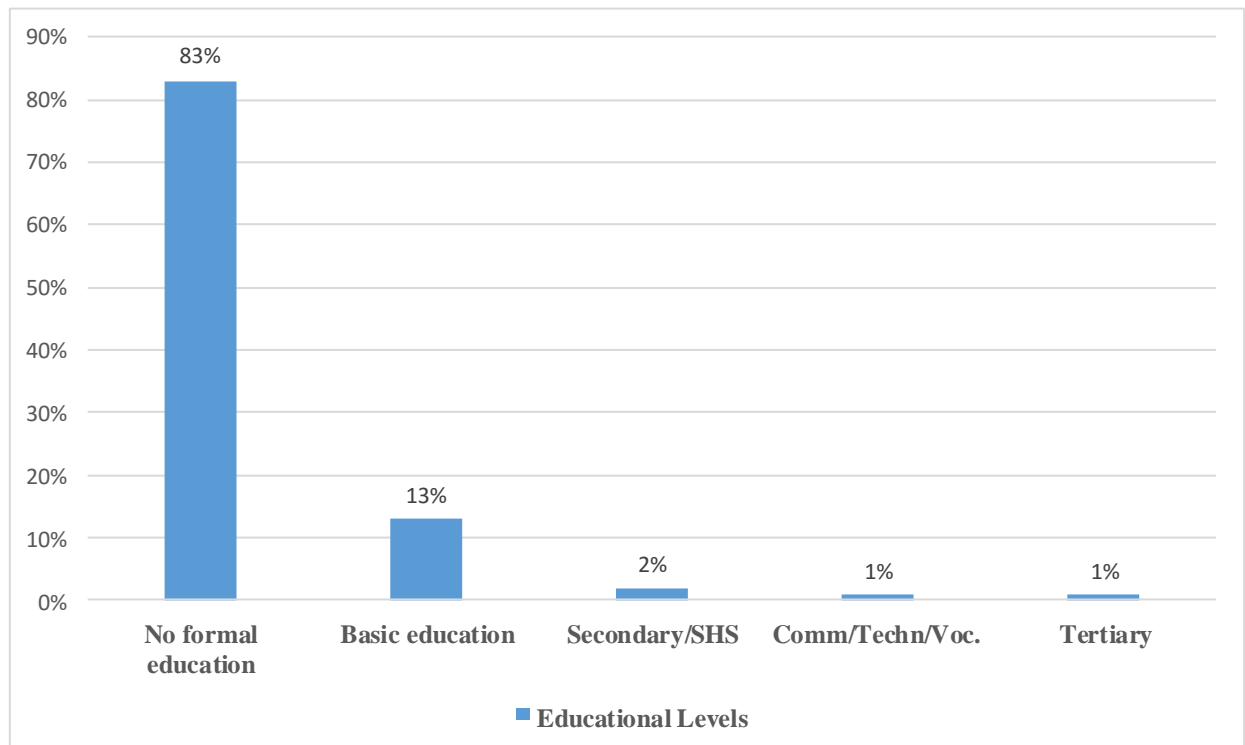
Age groups	Frequency	Percentage (%)
18-30 years	22	6
31-45 years	60	17
46-55 years	43	12
56 years and above	124	34
I don't know my age	111	31
Total	360	100

Source: Author's Field Data, 2018

5.1.5 Educational levels of respondents

Eighty-three percent of the respondents said they have no formal education. This is followed by 13% who said they have basic education, 2% of them said they have secondary education, 1% of the respondents have had commercial/vocational education. The remaining 1% said they have tertiary education. The educational distribution of respondents in this study is not surprising considering the fact that most of the poor families in Ghana are the ones with basic or no formal education. Figure 5.2 shows that most of the LEAP beneficiaries have no formal education.

Figure 5.2: Educational distribution of respondents.



5.1.6 Occupation of respondents

The survey found that as high as 63% of the beneficiaries who participated in the study were unemployed. For those who claimed that they were employed, 20% were traders, another 16% said they were farmers, and the rest of them forming 1% selected other occupation options which were not on the list provided. As shown in table 5.4 the occupational distribution of respondents in this study is representative of the beneficiary base of the LEAP, majority of whom are supposed to be aged, unemployed and people with disability.

Table 5.4: Occupational distribution of respondents.

Occupation	Frequency	Percentage
Unemployed	225	63
Trader	73	20
Farmer	57	16
Others	5	1
Total	360	100

Source: Author’s field survey 2018

5.1.7 Marital status of respondents

Table 5.5 below shows that three in five respondents (61%) were married. They are followed by those who were separated with 17%, the widowed formed 13%, and the divorced constituted 6%, those who were single or yet to marry comprised 2.5% of the respondents and those who were involved in cohabitation were 0.5%. The most striking aspect of the responses to the question on marital status is that the beneficiaries are dominated by married couples. Ordinarily this category of people (those who are married) are expected to receive financial support from their spouses instead of relying on social intervention programmes such as LEAP.

Table 5.5: Marital status of respondents.

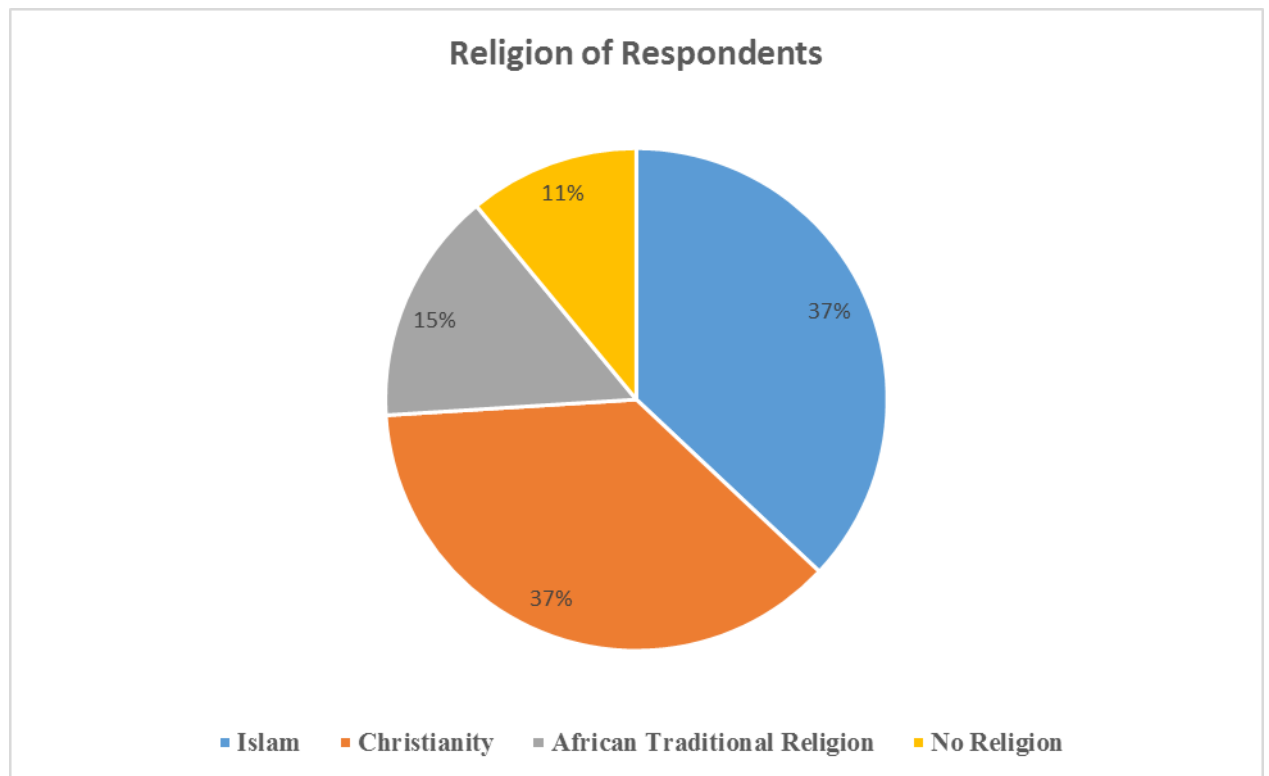
Marital Status	Frequency	Percentage
Single	9	2.5
Married	221	61
Divorced	21	6
Widow/Widower	46	13
Separated	61	17
Cohabitation	2	0.5
Total	360	100

Source: Author's field data 2018.

5.1.8 Religion of respondents

The findings indicate that 37% of the respondents were Moslems; and another 37% of them were Christians. The remaining respondents were either traditionalists – 15% or had no religious affiliation – 11%. The results of this study as summarised in Figure 5.3 below does not represent the distribution of religious affiliations of the Ghanaian population, per the from the 2010 Population and Housing Census particularly the percentages for Christianity and the Islam (GSS 2012)

Figure 5.3: Religion of respondents



Source: Author’s Field Survey (2018)

5.1.9 Response Rate

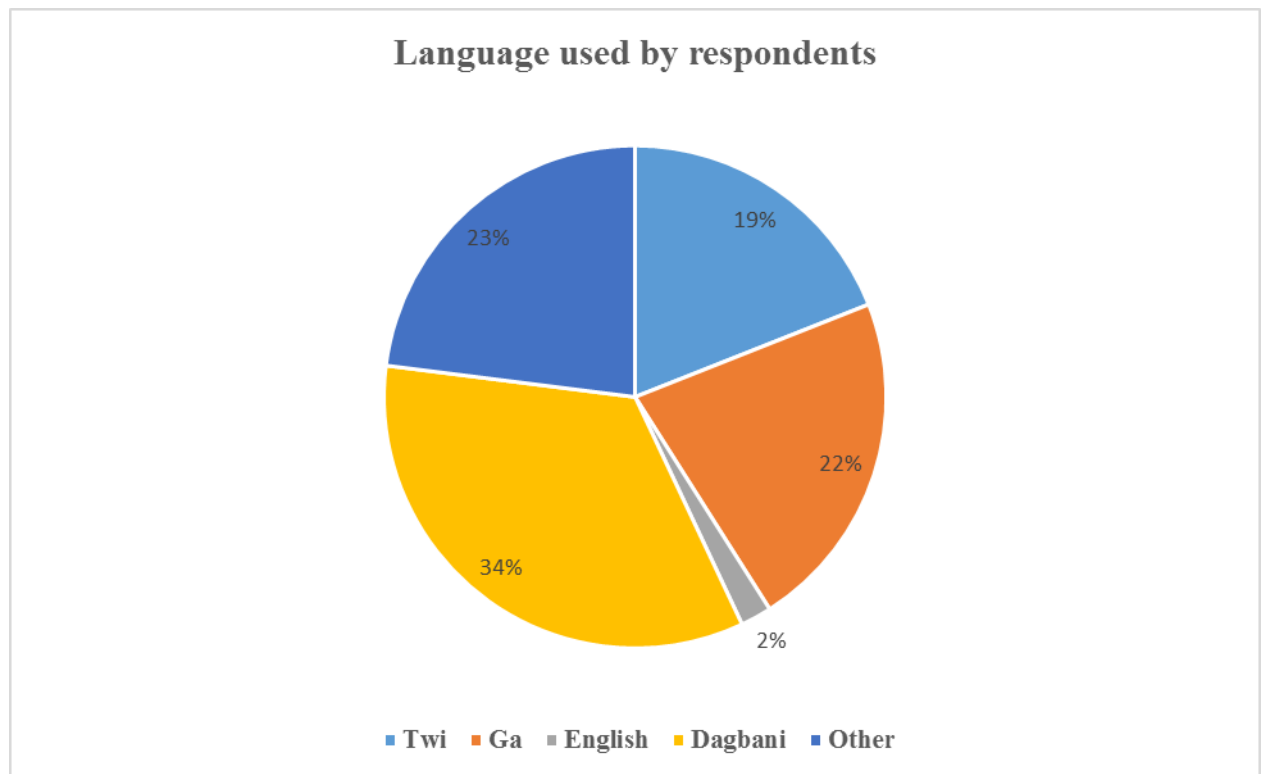
At the end of the data collection exercise 360 questionnaires were usable. Of this 68 were LEAP beneficiaries in NPP strongholds, 71 were in NDC strongholds with the remaining 221 being beneficiaries of districts considered to be politically neutral. In terms of the level of poverty, 62 were LEAP beneficiaries in least poor districts whereas 159 were beneficiaries in poorest districts. The remaining 139 beneficiaries were selected from districts considered to be moderately poor. A total of 141 respondents were selected from Greater Accra. The remaining 219 were selected from the Northern region. The languages used to interview respondents were Twi, Ga, English, Dagbani and other minority languages. These are summarized in table 5.6 and figure 5.4:

Table 5.6: Final Sample

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
District		
Shai-Osu Doku	66	18
La Dade Kotopon Municipal	15	4
Ga West Municipal	45	13
Ga East Municipal	15	4
East Gonja	93	26
Tamale Metropolitan	47	13
Kumbungu	26	7
Yendi Municipal	53	15
	360	100
Political Party Affiliation		
NPP Strongholds	68	19
NDC Strongholds	71	20
Politically Neutral Districts	221	61
Total	360	100
Level of poverty in district		
Least Poor	62	17
Poorest	159	44
Economically Neutral	139	39
Region		
Greater Accra	141	39
Northern	219	61

Source: Author's Field Survey (2018)

Figure 5.4: Language used by respondents



5.2 Study Objectives and how they were achieved.

5.2.1 Assessment of the processes involve in the selection of LEAP beneficiaries

The issue of weak targeting associated with the LEAP programme as a result of political interference has been a source of major concern to many stakeholders (Jaha and Sika-Bright, 2015). The study sought to establish the views of government officials who have been directly involved in the LEAP implementation whether the selection process is rule-based. All the nine officials who were interviewed emphatically stated that the selection of the beneficiaries is based strictly on eligibility criteria, which cannot be compromised. According to them *“LEAP is for: the poorest families in the community which have; orphans and vulnerable Children (Disabled, Chronically ill children, children in a family with a head who is a child under 18years), the Aged/Elderly (65 years and above) without productive capacity, severely disabled people who cannot work, and under the*

LEAP 1000 which is available in a selected district very poor pregnant women and infants below the age of 1 year were to benefit”

The officials who participated in the interviews were asked to describe the stages involve in the selection process. They explained that it is the selection of the communities which has seen major changes over the years. The following is how they explained the selection process:

“The Ministry has over the years used two methods in the selection, and the difference between the two is who selects the community. Previously the communities in the district were selected using the Ghana Poverty Mapping Reports by the Ghana Statistical Service while with the current process the respective Districts LEAP Implementation Committees (DLICs) select the community.

After the community selection, the District Social Welfare Officer and his/her outfit go to the community to sensitize the people in the community on all what LEAP is about.

The officials from a Non-Government Organization by name ESOKO, with the support of a community focal person visit the selected communities to collect data on the prospective beneficiaries and the data is sent to the LEAP Secretariat to be processed

The LEAP Secretariat receives the data directly from ESOKO for the assessment of poverty status of the families/households and the preparation of the list of selected beneficiaries follows. The prepared list of the selected beneficiaries is therefore sent to the districts for us to invite and prepare them for payment to commence”

Extent of political interference in the selection process

On paper, there is a clearly stated eligibility criteria for the selection of LEAP beneficiaries. The study sought to gauge the views of the respondents on whether the process is interfered by politicians or other people. In stark contrast to their previous

responses that the selection is rule-based, eight out of the nine (89%) Social Welfare Officers who are directly in-charge of the programme at the district level admitted that political interference is a regular feature in the selection process. The following statements by two of the officials were also supported by other officials interviewed:

“Of course yes they usually try to interfere, unlike previously where the communities were selected based on the poverty profile, now the DLIC which is under the authority of the District Chief Executive selects the community and this cannot be done without political manipulation” (Officer D2).

The above statement was further echoed by another officer when the question of political interference in the selection process was posed,

“As for political manipulations and interference they are common, even in 2016 when we were doing LEAP 1000 enrolment, a party chairman and the women organizer insisted that we have to finish registering their prepared list before we can register “outsiders” which I obliged. Additionally between October and November in the same year there was an emergency expansion which enrolled 2585 people unto the programme in this district before the election. Meanwhile the entire existing beneficiaries were 1,095. Unfortunately, none received payment until there was a change of government and the new government has suspended the expansion project till now” (Officer D3)

The survey also tried to elicit the views of the LEAP beneficiaries on how they got selected to the programme. This was a further attempt to verify the earlier assertion by the government officials that the selection process is strictly rule-based. At the end of the survey the respondents also confirmed the perception that there is widespread political influence in the selection process.

More than half (53%) of the respondents admitted that they were selected for the LEAP through the assistance of their Assemblyman/woman. The most revealing part of this result is that during the data collection at the field, I observed that almost all the

assemblymen/women who were playing the role as LEAP community focal persons were bold to indicate their political party affiliations which gives an indication that there has been a partisan element in the selection process. Also, one in three (35%) respondents was selected for LEAP through government officials, whereas about 6% of them said they obtained the help through party members. Another 2% said they obtained help through church/mosques, those who said friends assisted them constituted 1% and those who mentioned other means not on the list formed 3%. The results from the Chi-Square test further indicate that there is a significant relationship between the beneficiaries' electoral constituencies and the assistance they received during the selection process ($\chi^2 = 48.53, p < 0.05$). Whereas the majority of respondents in NPP strongholds benefited from LEAP through the assistance of government officials (66%), majority of those in NDC strongholds (73%) and districts considered to be politically neutral (55%) benefited from LEAP through the assistance of their assemblyman/woman. These data imply that the selection process is influenced by other influential people in spite of the clear cut eligibility criteria. See table 5.7 for details.

Table 5.7: Source of assistance towards LEAP selection

<i>Source of assistance for selection</i>	<i>Beneficiaries' Electoral Constituency</i>				χ^2	<i>P</i>
	<i>NPP</i>	<i>NDC</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>All</i>		
A friend	2%	1%	1%	1%	48.53	0.00*
Party member	2%	5%	7%	6%		
Government Official	66%	14%	33%	35%		
Church/Mosque Member	2%	3%	1%	2%		
Assemblyman/woman	25%	73%	55%	53%		
Other	3%	4%	3%	3%		
Total	100	100	100	100		
Note: * is significant at $p < 0.05$						

Source: Author's Field Data (2018)

5.2.2 A measure of Political Clientelism as a feature of LEAP implementation

Suspicion of political clientelism being an integral part of LEAP implementation is rife in Ghana and this called for investigation to confirm or deny. In this regard the study explored the phenomenon in the interviews conducted with both the District Social Welfare Officers and officials from Civil Society Organizations operating in the research area. The interviews revealed that politicians have always used the LEAP as a political tool to reward their party supporters. They do this first in the selection of the communities where they know their supporters are concentrated. They subsequently influence the selection of individual beneficiaries. They are able to manipulate the choice of beneficiaries for political ends because the Ghana Statistical Service Poverty Mapping report, which generates the poverty profile of districts in Ghana, is not detailed enough to include the poverty profile of communities in the districts. The political parties operate through the District/Municipal/Metropolitan Assemblies which are headed by Chief Executives who are political appointees and represent the interest of the appointing authorities. This view ran through all the responses from almost all the District Social Welfare Officers, According to one of the Officers labelled officer D2, he stated:

“As for the political pressure you cannot complain, even recently my District Chief Executive called me to his office, and presented a list of communities that he has selected and had prepared a list of potential beneficiaries that he intends forwarding them to Accra. According to him it was a campaign promise that our party made to the communities and we must fulfil it. Currently the list is in Accra and I do not know what will come out of it”.

Another Social Welfare Officer shares her concern by indicating:

“On paper it does not serve any political interest because the objective of the programme is to help alleviate poverty. But on the ground the politicians have always used it as a political tool to reward their supports. If any of us as professionals make any attempt to resist the politicians, you are likely to be

transferred and wherever you are sent to, you are going to work under another District Chief Executive who would have already been provided with information about you before you get there because they have a platform that they discuss issues about the happenings in their districts.” (Officer D6)

Similar sentiments were expressed by all the officials from the Civil Society Organizations who were interviewed. For example lamenting about this situation based on observation, an officer has this to say:

“So far, the key measure of progress is a ballooning number of beneficiaries. The mode of delivery is patronizing, neither does it empower the beneficiaries who receive these handouts” (Officer C2)

Another officer labelled C3 from one of the Civil Society Organizations in his words stated:

“I do have a serious problem with the selection of the communities to benefit from the programme, I see it to be discriminatory and politically motivated. From my own hometown in the Ahanta District in the Western Region, two communities with equal level of poverty, and because one community was a stronghold of a party in government it was quickly selected for LEAP, and the one perceived to be for the opposition party was ignored. The influence of the politicians on the selection process is too great and widespread”

We further sought beneficiaries’ opinion on the influence of politicians in the selection process, especially those related to their respective districts. Three in five (59%) respondents claimed that political party leaders at the district level influence the selection of LEAP beneficiaries, about 22% of them disagreed. The rest (19%) had no opinion about the influence of politicians in the selection process. The results from the Chi-Square test also revealed a strong evidence that there is a relation between the influence of political party officials and selection of the beneficiaries from all the electoral constituencies ($\chi^2 = 23.02$, $p < 0.05$). The outcome of the test clearly shows that indeed

political party officials influence the selection process. Thus the data from table 5.8 shows that though large majority of respondents in NPP strongholds, NDC strongholds and districts considered to be politically neutral were all of the opinion that politicians influence the selection of LEAP beneficiaries, the percentage of respondents who hold this view in NDC strongholds (76%) is significantly higher than those in NPP strongholds (50%) and districts considered to be politically neutral (56%).

Table 5.8: Do political party leaders influence selection of LEAP beneficiaries?

<i>Influence from party officials</i>	<i>Beneficiaries' Electoral Constituency</i>				χ^2	<i>p</i>
	<i>NPP</i>	<i>NDC</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>All</i>		
Yes	50 %	76 %	56 %	59 %	23.02	0.00*
No	38 %	7 %	22 %	22 %		
Don't know	12 %	17 %	22 %	19 %		
Total	100	100	100	100.		
Note: * is significant at $p < 0.05$						
Source: Author's Field Data (2018)						

Knowledge of other more qualified applicants than respondents

Respondents who are also the beneficiaries of LEAP were asked whether they know other poor and vulnerable people who appear to be more qualified than themselves but have not been selected for the LEAP benefit. Forty-two percent (42 %) of the respondents knew of other more qualified candidates than themselves but were not selected for LEAP, whereas the remaining 58% either disagreed or were not aware of any other people better qualified than them. The results from the Chi-Square showed that statistically no relationship exists between the constituency where the beneficiaries were selected from and knowledge of other more qualified persons. See table 5.9 for details.

Table 5.9: Knowledge of other qualified applicants than respondents

<i>Knowledge of the poorest</i>	<i>Beneficiaries' Electoral Constituency</i>				χ^2	<i>p</i>
	<i>NPP</i>	<i>NDC</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>All</i>		
Yes	50 %	45 %	40 %	42 %	10.58	0.090
No	28 %	18 %	35%	31%		
Don't know	22 %	37%	25%	27 %		
Refused	0.0%	0.0%	0.0 %	0.0%		
Total	100	100	100	100		

Source: Author's Field Data (2018)

Regime that selected respondents to benefit from LEAP

One of the key objectives of the study is to understand the extent of fairness with which various regimes carried out the selection process particularly in the areas perceived to be their strongholds. Respondents were asked to indicate the regime within which they were selected. As high as forty eight percent (48%) of the respondents indicated that they started benefiting from LEAP during the Mahama's regime. Two in five (38%) respondents cited Mills' regime. Another 13% of the beneficiaries mentioned Kuffour's regime and those selected under Akuffo Addo's regime formed 1%. Significantly, all the respondents (100%) in the NDC strongholds benefited from LEAP during Mills' or Mahama's regime. The majority of respondents in the NPP strongholds benefited from LEAP during Kuffour's regime (38%). However, no beneficiary was selected from the NDC stronghold which raises a question about how fair the selection process has been. Also, majority (58%) of the respondents in the districts considered to be politically neutral started benefiting from the LEAP during Mahama's regime. The outcome of the Chi-Square test indicates that there is a significant relationship between where the beneficiaries got their selection and the regime which selected them. These findings are

interesting not only for the pattern they revealed with regard to how the regimes did their selection but also clear to indicate that selection for the LEAP beneficiaries is characterized by partisan considerations. See table 5.10 for details.

Table 5.10: Regime under which respondents benefitted from Leap.

<i>Regime of selection</i>	<i>Beneficiaries' Electoral Constituency</i>				χ^2	<i>p</i>
	<i>NPP</i>	<i>NDC</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>All</i>		
Kuffour	38%	0.0%	9 %	13%	77.41	0.00*
Mills	35 %	63 %	32%	38 %		
Mahama	27 %	37 %	58%	48 %		
Akufo-Addo	0.0%	0.0%	1%	1%		
Total	100	100	100	100		

Note: * is significant at $p < 0.05$

Source: Author's Field Data (2018)

Length of time respondents have benefitted from LEAP

Two in three (66%) respondents had been benefiting from LEAP in the past 3 to 5 years which most likely will be during the Mahama's regime. Two in five (32%) respondents had been benefiting from LEAP for more than 6 years or more which is also likely to be during Mills and Kuffour regimes. The rest (2%) had been benefiting from LEAP for a maximum of 2 years prior to the survey. The results point to the fact the LEAP programme saw its major expansion under Mahama's regime. This is why all the respondents (100%) in the NDC strongholds had been benefiting from LEAP in the past 3 to 6 years which falls within Mills' or Mahama's NDC regimes. The majority of respondents in the NPP strongholds had benefitted from LEAP for 6 years or more (57%) which falls within Mills' or Kuffour's regime. Also, majority of respondents (66%) in the districts considered to be politically neutral had been benefiting from the LEAP for 3 to 5 years, which places them under Mahama's regime. There is a strong

evidence from the statistical test which confirms that there is a significant relationship between where the beneficiaries were selected from and the regime which selected them.

($\chi^2 = 58.68, p < 0.05$). See table 5.11 for details.

Table 5.11: Length of time respondents have been benefiting from LEAP

<i>Beneficiaries Length of time on LEAP</i>	<i>Beneficiaries' Electoral Constituency</i>				χ^2	<i>p</i>
	<i>NPP</i>	<i>NDC</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>All</i>		
Less than a year	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0 %	58.68	0.00*
1-2 years	0.0 %	0.0%	3%	2 %		
3-5 years	43 %	100%	62%	66%		
6years & above	57 %	0.0%	35%	32 %		
Total	100	100	100	100		

Note: * is significant at $p < 0.05$

Source: Author's Field Data (2018)

Possession of political party membership card

To get an idea of beneficiaries' affiliation to political parties and their activities, they were asked to indicate whether they possess a membership card of any of the political parties. The responses are summarised in table 5.12 below. Majority of respondents (68%) did not possess any political party card at the time of the survey. However, as many as 30% of the respondents were in possession of political party cards. The rest (2%) declined to respond to the question about the possession of political party cards. Again, by comparison, the percentage of respondents in NPP strongholds (41%) with party membership cards is higher than those with party cards in NDC strongholds (30%). Majority of the beneficiaries' did not possess political party membership cards and this may suggest that they are not supporters of or affiliated to a political party. However, in Ghana it is a common knowledge that majority of the supporters of various political

parties are not card bearing members of the party they are affiliated to. Again, the Chi-Square test also indicates that there is no significant relationship between the beneficiaries' electoral constituency and the ownership of political party membership cards. See table 5:12 for details.

Table 5.12: Possession of political party card

<i>party card</i>	<i>Beneficiaries' Electoral Constituency</i>				χ^2	<i>P</i>
	<i>NPP</i>	<i>NDC</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>All</i>		
Yes	41 %	30 %	27 %	30%	8.72	0.080
No	59 %	70 %	70 %	68 %		
Refused	0.0%	0.0%	3 %	2%		
Total	100	100	100	100		

Source: Author's Field Data (2018)

Respondents and political parties they follow most in the media

A follow-up question was asked to find out from the beneficiaries the political parties in Ghana they follow their activities most in the media. Judging from the responses to this question - see table 5.13 - it is clear that though the beneficiaries may not be card bearing members of various political parties, they are sympathizers of one or the other major political parties and follow their activities in the media. For example, fifty-nine percent (59 %) of the respondents indicated that they follow NDC activities through the media very often.

Another 35% of them cited NPP activities whereas the rest (6%) mentioned the minor political parties. Also, whereas majority of the respondents in NDC strongholds (75%) follow NDC activities through the news, a significant portion of those in NPP strongholds (59%) follow NPP activities most often in the news. The results from the Chi-Square test also support the assertion that there is a significant relationship between

the beneficiaries' political media following and their electoral constituencies. Thus there is a significant relationship between their electoral constituencies and the political party they follow its activity most in the news ($\chi^2 = 30.28, p < 0.05$). See table 5.13 for details.

Table 5.13: Beneficiaries and Political Party they follow most in the media

<i>Political Party media following</i>	<i>Beneficiaries' Electoral Constituency</i>				χ^2	<i>P</i>
	<i>NPP</i>	<i>NDC</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>All</i>		
NDC	37 %	75 %	60%	59 %	30.28	0.00*
NPP	59 %	20 %	32%	35%		
CPP	3%	3%	3%	3%		
PNC	0.0%	0.0%	3%	2%		
PPP	1%	1%	1%	1%		
Other	0.0%	1%	1%	0.0%		
Total	100	100	100	100		

Note: * is significant at $p < 0.05$
 Source: Author's Field Data (2018)

Attendance at political party campaign rally

As shown in table 5.14, forty seven percent (47%) of the respondents in the study had previously attended political party rallies, about 49% of them claimed they have not; the remaining 4% declined to answer the question. Also, whereas majority of respondents in NDC strongholds 61% had previously attended political party rallies, 68% of the beneficiaries in the NPP strongholds indicated that they have never attended political rallies before. There is a significant relationship between the beneficiaries' electoral constituency and their attendance to political party rallies ($\chi^2 = 17.35, p < 0.05$). The data suggest that a significant number of the beneficiaries are affiliated to the two major political parties that is NDC and NPP. See table 5.14 for details.

Table 5.14: Have previously attended political party campaign rally

<i>Attendance of Political Party's rally</i>	<i>Beneficiaries' Electoral Constituency</i>				χ^2	<i>P</i>
	<i>NPP</i>	<i>NDC</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>All</i>		
Yes	31%	61 %	47 %	47%	17.35	0.02*
No	68 %	38.%	47 %	49 %		
Refused	1 %	1 %	6 %	4 %		
Total	100	100	100	100		

Note: * is significant at $p < 0.05$

Source: Author's Field Data (2018)

Participation in Ghanaian politics in general due to LEAP

Similarly, the study further tried to establish whether LEAP has got the beneficiaries interested in political issues. A simple majority (49%) of the respondents claimed that their relationship with LEAP has got them interested in the country's political issues; about 40% of them said they are still not interested in political issues. The rest were either indifferent (10%) or have no opinion (1%). Table 5.15 below shows that the beneficiaries' interest in political issues generated as a result of LEAP is common across NPP strongholds, NDC strongholds, and districts considered to be politically neutral. See table 5.15 for details.

Table 5.15: Beneficiaries active participation in Ghanaian politics due to LEAP

<i>Political participation</i>	<i>Beneficiaries' Electoral Constituency</i>			
	<i>NPP</i>	<i>NDC</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>All</i>
Yes	50 %	54 %	47 %	49 %
No	40 %	34%	42 %	40%
Indifferent	10 %	12 %	10 %	10%
Don't know	0.0%	0.0%	1%	1%
Total	100	100	100	100

Source: Author's Field Data (2018)

Politics of favouritism

Respondents were asked to indicate whether they support the view that elected officials should be biased in the distribution of state resources. It was presumed that these respondents who are also the beneficiaries of LEAP would be in a unique position to give their verdict on the practice. What is most interesting about the responses to the question is that overwhelming majority indicated emphatically that elected officials should not be biased in the distribution of state resources. Table 5.16 shows that 62% of respondents were of the opinion that elected political leaders should avoid favouritism in the distribution of state resources; 5% of them did not see anything wrong with this practice. While another 5% of the respondents were indifferent, as high as 28% said they have no opinion. The claim by the respondents that elected political leaders should not be too partisan was unanimous across NPP strongholds, NDC strongholds and districts considered to be politically neutral. The Chi-Square test performed on this issue did not find any relationship between beneficiaries’ electoral constituency and their views on the issue of political biasness. See table 5.16 for details.

Table 5.16: Should elected political leaders be biased in distributing state resources?

<i>Support for Political biasness</i>	<i>Beneficiaries’ Electoral Constituency</i>				χ^2	<i>p</i>
	<i>NPP</i>	<i>NDC</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>All</i>		
Yes	6 %	1 %	6 %	5 %	8.81	0.18
No	60 %	67 %	61 %	62 %		
Don't know	27%	23 %	30%	28%		
Indifferent	7%	9 %	3 %	5%		
Total	100	100	100	100		

Source: Author’s Field Data (2018)

Preferred politician

To test the consistency in the responses to the above question, a follow up question was asked to find out whether the beneficiaries will vote for politicians who make policies to benefit everyone in Ghana or those who make policies to benefit particular groups only. As summarized in table 5.17 below, 68% of the respondents claimed they would vote for politicians who make policies that benefit everyone in Ghana. Only 3% of them preferred a politician who is always biased towards a group. The rest who were either indifferent (11%) or did not have an opinion constituted 18%. The position of the majority on the question was also unanimous across NPP strongholds, NDC strongholds and districts considered to be politically neutral. See table 5.17 for details:

Table 5.17: Beneficiaries’ Preferred Politician

<i>Preferred politician</i>	<i>Beneficiaries’ Electoral Constituency</i>			
	<i>NPP</i>	<i>NDC</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>All</i>
A Community/ Group-oriented politician	3 %	1%	3 %	3 %
National Policy-Oriented Politician	68 %	82 %	63 %	68 %
Indifferent	13 %	7 %	12 %	11 %
Don't know	16 %	10 %	22 %	18 %
Total	100	100	100	100

Source: Author’s Field Data (2018)

Political clientelism as a sustainable tool for mobilizing political support

Given that many politicians may act under the delusion that selective distribution of state resources is the surest way of sustaining political power, I sought the opinion of respondents on whether in their view political clientelism is a sustainable tool to secure political support.

Figure 5.5: Political Clientelism as a sustainable tool to establish political support

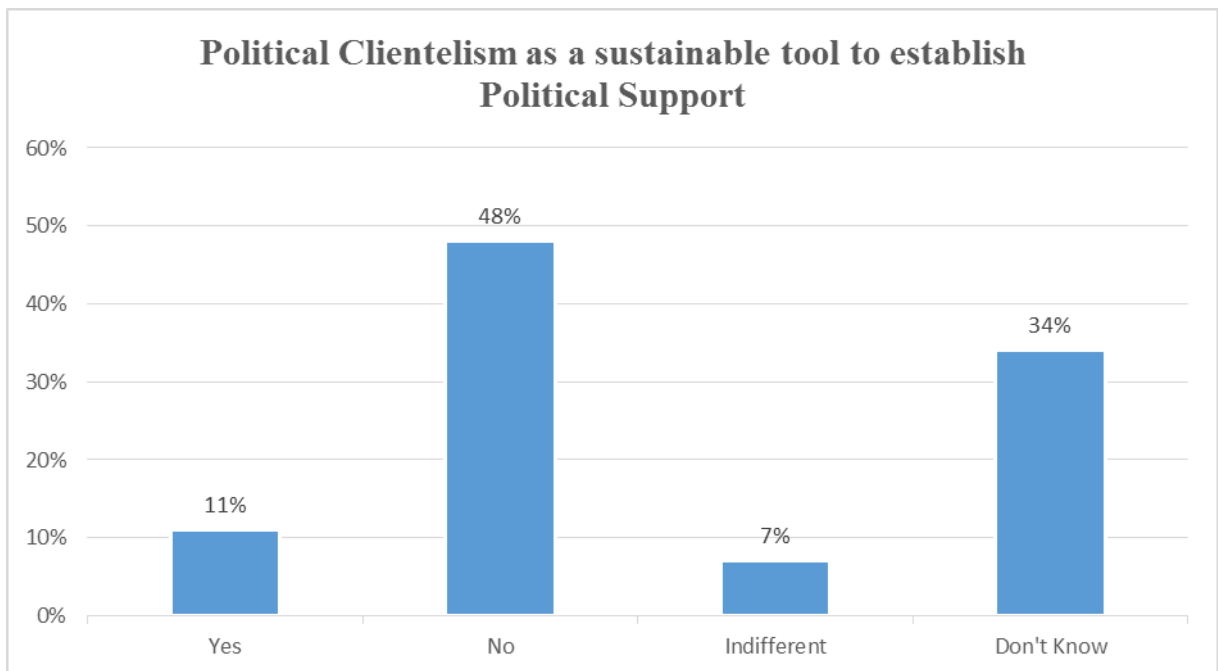


Figure 5.5 shows that only one in ten (11%) respondents was of the opinion that political clientelism is a sustainable tool to build political support; 48% indicated that political clientelism is not an effective way to establish sustainable political support. 7% were indifferent and 34% said they have no opinion of the issue. Also, majority of respondents who indicated that political clientelism is not a sustainable tool to establish political support. This view was more evident among respondents even in districts considered to be politically neutral (41%). In NDC strongholds 53% held this view while 59% held a similar view in NPP strongholds.

In a null shell, the responses to the questions provide a pattern which generally suggest that majority of the beneficiaries have strong ties with the two major political parties and are benefiting from the LEAP because of their association with these political parties in Ghana.

5.2.3 The reciprocity of beneficiaries and the electoral fortunes of incumbent government

The third question sought to find out the extent to which the beneficiaries of LEAP may feel obliged to reciprocate the gesture by supporting the implementing government electorally. In other words, the study sought to establish whether the incumbent government is likely to gain any electoral advantage for the implementation of the programme.

First, the study sought the views of the officials associated with the implementation of LEAP on this issue. Strikingly, eight out of the nine Social Welfare officers in the interview held the view that only few of the beneficiaries who are not affiliated to any political party, can be persuaded to vote for the incumbent government. They were convinced that majority of the beneficiaries are sympathizers of the two major political parties in Ghana, and so during elections they vote for the political party of the regime that selected them.

In a statement that is consistent with the above view, a Social Welfare Officer D4 stated:

“I can say that it is possible for some to vote for the implementing government because for the poor and the vulnerable in general they can easily fall for anything that their very survival depends on, particularly the beneficiaries who are not align to either NDC or NPP. Apart from this group LEAP can do little to change the minds of the people who benefit from it because they had their favourite political parties before they were enrolled unto the programme”

During interviews with the three officials from three different Civil Society Organizations they expressed similar view. For instance one of the officials indicated:

In terms of elections, the real function of LEAP is to maintain the party loyal members and it is for this reason why politicians engage in politically driven distribution. LEAP is only an effective political tool to reward their loyal

supporters but for enticing the beneficiaries to vote for them only few can be persuaded. As I have stated earlier already the LEAP benefits are going to the supporters of the two dominant parties, the NPP and NDC” (Officer C3).

The statements by the officials are consistent with the results gathered from respondents in the survey. They affirmed the view that politicians cannot rely on the LEAP programme to win significant new votes during elections. These findings also partly provides explanation as to why two successive implementing governments of LEAP have lost power to opposition parties in Ghana. For instance, when the respondents were asked if elections were held at the time of the study, which of the parties would they have voted for, majority of the respondents would vote for the NDC (57%). Though the implementing government at the time of the study happened to come from the NPP, majority of the LEAP beneficiaries would have voted against her if elections were held. This outcome is not strange because it has already been established that the two regimes thus Mills and Mahama, under NDC enrolled majority of the respondents to the LEAP programme (See table 5:10 for details). Again, another 39% of the respondents would vote for the NPP and the remaining 4% of them would vote for other political parties. More specifically, whereas majority of respondents in NPP strongholds (60%) would vote for the NPP, another significant portion of those in NDC strongholds (69%) and districts considered to be politically neutral (59 %) would vote for the NDC. The results from the Chi-Square test also show that there is a significant relationship between where the beneficiaries were selected from and the political party they will vote for if elections were held at the time of the survey. ($\chi^2 = 20.13, p < 0.05$). The verdict from the respondents suggests that beneficiaries are already aligned to political parties and therefore LEAP implementation can do little to change the minds of beneficiaries. See table 5.18 for details.

Table 5.18: Which of the following parties will you vote for if elections were held today?

<i>Beneficiary's party to vote for</i>	<i>Beneficiaries' Electoral Constituency</i>				χ^2	<i>p</i>
	<i>NPP</i>	<i>NDC</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>All</i>		
PPP	2%	2%	1%	1 %	20.13	0.01*
CPP	1%	1%	2%	2 %		
NDC	37 %	69%	59 %	57 %		
NPP	60 %	28%	36%	39.%		
Others	0.0%	0.0%	2 %	1 %		
Total	100	100	100	100		
Note: * is significant at $p < 0.05$						

Source: Author's Field Data (2018)

The Loyalty of LEAP beneficiaries are for the Political Parties

Having determined the likely voting pattern of the beneficiaries in an event of a general election, a follow-up question was asked to find out the extent to which their loyalty is for the political parties. This is to explain further the voting behaviour of the beneficiaries. For example the respondents were asked to indicate whether they will be compelled to reciprocate the gesture by voting for the political parties whose government selected them. More than three in five (63%) beneficiaries will vote for a party whose government selected them to benefit from LEAP. However, 20% disagreed, 10% did not have an opinion on the issue and 7% were indifferent. Willingness to vote for a party whose government selected them to benefit from LEAP is unanimous across NPP strongholds, NDC strongholds and districts considered to be politically neutral. The qualitative data and the observed data from the frequency table provide strong evidence to suggest that the loyalty of the beneficiaries is more toward the political parties which chose them. Statistically, the outcome of the Chi-Square test on the issue did not find any

significant relationship between the beneficiaries’ electoral constituency and their willingness to vote for a party whose government selected them to benefit from LEAP ($\chi^2 = 5.56, p>0.05$). This outcome implies that the beneficiaries’ loyalty to the political parties is not as a result of their selection to benefit from LEAP but rather they were loyal to the parties before they became beneficiaries of LEAP. As it was observed from table 5:10, within the NPP strongholds, majority of the beneficiaries were selected for LEAP during Kuffour’s regime and 100% of the beneficiaries from the NDC strongholds were all selected during Mills’ and Mahama’s regimes, that is governments under NDC party. This clearly suggests that both NPP and NDC party officials have managed to bring their supporters and sympathizers to benefit from the programme and therefore these beneficiaries were already aligned to the parties before their selection. This explains why the Chi-Square test did not find any relationship between the beneficiaries’ electoral constituency and their willingness to vote for a party whose government selected them to benefit from LEAP. See table 5.19 for details.

Table 5.19: The Loyalty of LEAP beneficiaries is for the Political Parties

<i>Willingness to vote for party that chose you</i>	<i>Beneficiaries’ Electoral Constituency</i>				χ^2	<i>P</i>
	<i>NPP</i>	<i>NDC</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>All</i>		
Yes	63%	70%	61%	63 %	5.56	0.47
No	22%	20%	20%	20 %		
Don't know	7%	9%	10%	10 %		
Indifferent	8%	1 %	9 %	7 %		
Total	100	100	100	100		

Source: Author’s Field Data (2018)

5. 2.4. Incumbent governments’ ways of exploiting LEAP for electoral gains.

In Ghana the documented incidents of LEAP exploitation are rare, however allegations of exploitation by the incumbent governments in the media are rife. It appears that because such practices are carried out in a clandestine manner it becomes very difficult for an outsider to see what goes on behind the scene. The study therefore engaged the district social welfare officers who are more involved in LEAP, and also familiar with the implementation of the programme in a series of interviews. The officers were asked to describe what they consider to be the strategies used by politicians to exploit LEAP for electoral goals. The findings revealed that the politicians use various strategies to exploit the programme. Among the key strategies mentioned by the respondents were the manipulation of the process to select both the beneficiary communities and individuals, procurement of political party cards for some beneficiaries, the unreasonable removal of LEAP managers appointed by a rival political party, and the unnecessary expansion of the programme particularly when general elections are getting closer. Six out of the eight district social welfare officers corroborated these exploitative strategies employed by incumbent government in the LEAP implementation process. For example below were some of the experiences shared by the officers during the interviews:

In sharing her frustration officer D5 intimated:

“Politicians you know always want to exploit programmes to their advantage. Could you believe that most of our finest managers of the programme at the Secretariat who were appointed by the previous government were all asked to proceed on leave as soon as the new government took over the administration of the programme? This is not the first time it happened as all the political parties are guilty of the practice. Such incidents make some of us conclude that LEAP is actually a political tool in the hands of the politicians. If the programme was to be administered fully by Department of Social Welfare, all these would not have happened”

Similar experiences in support of how LEAP is exploited by incumbent government for electoral gains were raised by other officers. For instance, in revealing how the politicians use LEAP to serve political goal, officer D4 also stated:

“We have not experienced much political manipulation in the LEAP implementation process because our district was created not long ago. But my only experience has been that in 2016 after the then GA District was divided into LA Nkwantanang-Madina and Ga East. Ga East you know, is perceived to be an NPP Stronghold and the La-Nkwantanang-Madina is an NDC Stronghold, and when the NDC government decided to embark on an expansion programme, even though the Ga East had the least beneficiaries, the then government decided to enrol all the beneficiaries from the La-Nkwantanang as general elections were drawing near, and this must tell you something”.

The above views shared by the Social Welfare Officers on how implementing government attempts to exploit the programme for electoral gains were further reinforced by some officials from the Civil Society Organizations. As independent observers they believe that all governments exploit the LEAP. Two officials from CSO’s expressed their views as:

“The frequent expansion of the programme by politicians to cover more people, without any practical measure to exit those that have been on it for a long time is an indication that it has political undercurrent. Again, I do not think any government will have the courage to stop the implementation of the programme because they have the conviction that the programme is helping their political course” (Officer C2).

During an interview, officer C3 remarked:

“My view is that implementing governments of LEAP always use the programme to reward party supporters and loyalists. It is not the actual poor who are benefiting from the programme now but the party members who may or may not be poor” (Officer C3)

Further interactions with the beneficiaries in Changli, a community in the Tamale Metropolis revealed that as many as 28 out of 47 of the beneficiaries who responded to the questionnaires,(See table 5:12) admitted that they were provided with political party membership cards after they started benefiting from LEAP. When the assemblyman of the area was confronted with this issue he confirmed that indeed he facilitated the procurement of the political party cards. For him this to ensure that the beneficiaries remained loyalty to the political party that selected them. Again all the 13 LEAP 1000 beneficiaries from Wanbong community in the Yendi Municipality also admitted that they were made to own political party membership cards immediately after they were enrolled into the programme. These findings from the beneficiaries further re-affirmed the earlier sentiments expressed by the officials from both government and Civil Society Organizations regarding how the politicians exploit LEAP for electoral advantage.

5.2.5a. Impact of Leap Programme on Beneficiary Households

The last research question this study sought to address was the extent to which LEAP has helped to improve the living conditions of the beneficiaries, and how the programme can be sustained. The officials in the interview were first invited to share their views on how LEAP has improved the living conditions of the beneficiaries.

First, there was consensus among all the officials that LEAP has significantly served as life-support for majority of the beneficiaries. The following statements by the officials were summarised by officer D1 when she intimated that:

“LEAP has been one of the best poverty alleviation programmes ever implemented in the country, looking at the impact it has made on the beneficiaries so far” (Officer D1)

According to officer DD9, *“LEAP has been a life changing programme so far. Apart from the fact that it has prevented a lot of the poor and the vulnerable persons from*

sinking deeper into poverty, it has also improved school enrolment at the basic level. And I can say with certainty that all the studies that have been conducted by both government institutions and independent organizations have revealed that the programme is making significant impact on the lives of the beneficiaries, though I concede that the amount involved is insufficient”

Officer D5 re-echoed similar view:

“I can boldly confirm that the programme has made a significant impact on the lives of thousands of the poor beneficiaries. At times I will be in my office and some of the beneficiaries will come and shower blessings and praises upon me because of this intervention. One can see the real impact LEAP is making on the people when the money delays small. For me, it has been a useful intervention and you can confirm this from the beneficiaries themselves”

Officer C3 in an interview intimated:

“I do not have any doubt in my mind that LEAP as a poverty alleviation programme is doing well in terms of improving the living conditions of the beneficiaries. The fact that some poor people entirely depend on the LEAP cash means that it is contributing to poverty alleviation in Ghana”.

Even though all the Social Welfare officials admitted that LEAP is doing well in improving the living conditions of the beneficiaries, those from the Civil Society Organizations raised reservations about the programme’s capacity to pull the poor out of poverty. For example, according to officer C1,

“There is a risk of beneficiaries being solely dependent on LEAP indefinitely. In this regard, LEAP breeds dependency and has drifted from being a short term intervention. The cash transfers are not intended to be a lifetime benefit”

Even though this same officer concedes that with regard to the living conditions, the programme has made a positive impact on the beneficiaries, she however cautioned that we should be moderate in our celebration. She remarked:

“This is not surprising because ‘free’ money, no matter the value, improves the condition of the recipient to some extent but for a growing economy, we must not settle for mediocrity”

Similar sentiments were shared on the same issue by Officer C3. She states:

“LEAP is just contributing to the fight against poverty but the programme in its current state does not have sufficient capacity to enable the beneficiaries leap out of poverty. The best it can do is to help improving their living conditions but not to take them out of poverty completely”

Again, in support of the above views, officer C2 from a Civil Society Organization concluded:

“Obviously, the amount which is paid to the beneficiaries is woefully inadequate to enable them come out of poverty, besides if LEAP is as effective as the politicians want us to believe, people would not have been on the programme for ten solid years”.

The general impression one gets from the above findings is that LEAP has indeed improved the living conditions of the beneficiaries since its inception but lacks the capacity to pull majority of the poor entirely out of poverty.

The results from the survey corroborate the views expressed by the officials. Respondents were asked to respond to questions relating to the main uses of LEAP cash and the extent of improvement in their living conditions as a result of LEAP payments.

The related findings from the questions are presented below:

Main uses of LEAP money

Table 5.20 and figure 5.6 summarize the results. Sixty-eight percent (68%) of the respondents admitted that they use their LEAP money for feeding. This is followed by those who use the LEAP for educational needs of their children (13 %); for business/trade (10 %), for their health needs (7 %) and to purchase agricultural inputs

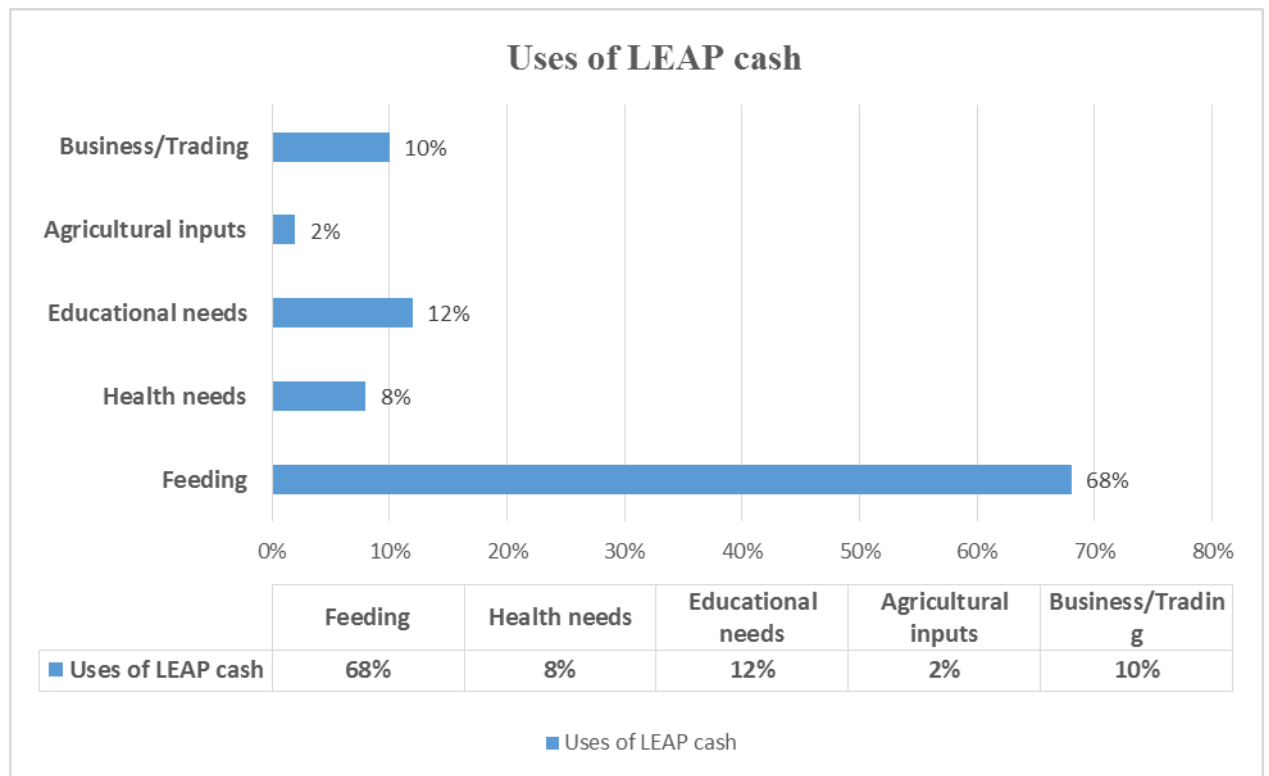
(2%). Though, majority of respondents in all the areas of study use the LEAP cash for feeding, the percentage of respondents in NDC strongholds (21%) who use the money for business is significantly higher than those in NPP strongholds (12 %) and districts considered to be political neutral (5%). The survey data provide some supporting evidence for the position that the LEAP amount paid to the beneficiaries does not have sufficient capacity to completely take them out of poverty. As a result of the inadequate nature of the cash transfer, only 10 % of the beneficiaries are able to invest the money in business ventures. Evidence from the Chi-Square test also indicates that there is a relationship between where the beneficiaries are selected from and what they use the LEAP money on. ($\chi^2 = 41.85, p < 0.05$). It is clear that majority of the beneficiaries are using the LEAP benefit on feeding, this is an indication that the kind of improvement being experienced by the beneficiaries is largely limited to their ability to provide daily food as a result of the LEAP cash. See table 5:20 for details

Table 5.20: Main uses of LEAP cash

<i>Uses of LEAP cash</i>	<i>Beneficiaries' Electoral Constituency</i>				χ^2	<i>P</i>
	<i>NPP</i>	<i>NDC</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>All</i>		
Feeding	71 %	46 %	76%	68.%	41.85	0.00*
Health needs	2%	20 %	5%	7 %		
Educational needs	13%	13%	12%	13%		
Agricultural inputs	2%	0.0%	2%	2 %		
Business/Trading	12%	21%	5%	10 %		
Total	100	100	100	100		
Note: * is significant at $p < 0.05$						

Source: Author's Field Data (2018).

Figure 5.6: Uses of LEAP Cash.



Extent of improvement in the living conditions of LEAP beneficiaries.

The survey further sought to find out from respondents the extent to which the provision of LEAP benefit has improved their living conditions over the years. The data from the survey provide empirical evidence to confirm that the impact of the LEAP programme has been reasonable. It has also shown that the programme has been an indispensable source of livelihood for the beneficiaries.

Four in five respondents (82 %) indicated that the LEAP programme has led to a better living condition for them. Table 5.21 shows that seventeen percent (17%) of them admitted that LEAP has made their living conditions much better; the remaining 1 % claimed that their living conditions have remained almost the same. The important role LEAP plays in improving living conditions among the beneficiaries cuts across the political divide, with respondents in NPP strongholds, NDC strongholds and districts

considered to be politically neutral all endorsing LEAP as a programme that changes life. On the contrary, the outcome of the Chi-Square test does not support the view that the extent of improvement in the living condition of the beneficiaries can be attributed to the provision of the LEAP cash, irrespective of where the beneficiaries were selected from. The data indicate that there is no relationship between the level of improvement in the living condition of the beneficiaries and their electoral constituencies.

Table 5.21: Extent of improvement in the living condition of LEAP beneficiaries

<i>Level of improvement</i>	<i>Beneficiaries' Electoral Constituency</i>				χ^2	<i>P</i>
	<i>NPP</i>	<i>NDC</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>All</i>		
Much better	10 %	17 %	20 %	17 %	5.14	0.27
Better	90 %	83 %	79. %	82 %		
Same	0.0 %	0.0%	1%	1%		
Total	100	100	100	100		

Source: Author's Field Data (2018)

LEAP as an income security tool

Having determined what has contributed to the improvement in the living condition of the beneficiaries, the survey asked the respondents if in their opinion they see the programme as a secure source of income. An overwhelming 97 percent of the respondents admitted that LEAP serves as a secure source of income for them. This claim is much stronger in both NPP strongholds (100%) and NDC strongholds (100%) than districts considered to be politically neutral (96%) Statistically, the data from the Chi-Square test confirm that there is a significant relationship between where the beneficiaries were selected from and the view that LEAP cash provides a secure source of income. This data implies that irrespective of where the beneficiaries were selected from be it NPP Stronghold, NDC Stronghold or a politically district, they all share the same belief. See table 5.22.

Table 5.22: LEAP serves as an income security tool

Income security tool	<i>Beneficiaries' Electoral Constituency</i>				χ^2	<i>p</i>
	<i>NPP</i>	<i>NDC</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>All</i>		
Yes	100%	100%	95%	97%	6.47	0.04*
No	0.0%	0.0%	5%	3%		
Total	100	100	100	100		

Note: * is significant at $p < 0.05$

Source: Author's Field Data (2018)

Trust in government

In addition to the improvement in the living conditions of the beneficiaries, the survey again invited the respondents to indicate whether the programme has influenced their trust in government as caring for their welfare or not. The responses to this question are presented below. Nine in ten respondents (92 %) indicated that the LEAP has influenced their trust in government as a caring authority; as few as 1% of them did not think so. The rest were either indifferent (4%) or did not have an opinion. The results from the Chi-Square test show that a relationship exists between the beneficiaries electoral constituency and their trust in government ($\chi^2 = 18.45$, $p < 0.05$). Though the perception that LEAP influences trust in government, is unanimous across the electoral constituency categories, the percentage of respondents in NDC strongholds (93%) and districts considered to be political neutral (94%) who were of the view that LEAP influences their trust in government is significantly higher than those of NPP strongholds (88%). Interestingly, a greater percentage of the beneficiaries in the NDC strongholds who are perceived to belong to the opposition party still have trust in the NPP government as caring for their welfare. See table 5.23 for details.

Table 5.23: Does LEAP influence your trust in government as caring for your welfare?

<i>Beneficiaries' Trust in government</i>	<i>Beneficiaries' Electoral Constituency</i>				χ^2	<i>p</i>
	<i>NPP</i>	<i>NDC</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>All</i>		
Yes	88%	93%	94%	92 %	18.45	0.01**
No	6.0%	0.0%	1%	1 %		
Indifferent	2%	7 %	3%	5 %		
Don't know	4%	0.0%	2%	2%		
Total	100	100	100	100		
Note: * is significant at $p < 0.05$						

Source: Author's Field Data (2018)

5.2.5b. Sustainability of the LEAP programme

The issue of sustainability of LEAP has become a matter of public concern considering the rate at which politicians expand it. Those who have expressed apprehension about the sustainability of the programme may have a good reason. It is generally acknowledged that Ghana has the penchant for starting laudable programmes but the problem has been on their sustainability. It is against this backdrop that the study sought the opinion of respondents on factors that threaten the sustainability of the programme.

Following are the views of Officer C1:

“LEAP is referenced as part of the National Social Protection Strategy and by the Ghana Shared Growth and Development Agenda. However, these documents do not address the crucial elements of long term sustainability and proper targeting as well as indicators and measures of success. So far, the key measure of progress is a ballooning number of beneficiaries”

The essence of the above comment is that the foundation document which gave birth to LEAP as a social protection strategy did not explicitly provide mechanisms for its

sustainability. This is because it was intended to be a short term cash transfer programme to usher the beneficiaries into productive ventures. Further interactions with other officials revealed that frequent expansion of the programme by politicians to cover more people poses a serious threat to the sustainability of the programme. This has become a concern because there has not been any exit policy for those who have been on it for a long time. : Officer D5 summarises what must be done to sustain LEAP

Take partisan politics out of the implementation process, allow the technocrats to take over the programme completely, and ensure effective implementation of the exit plan by making sure that exiting beneficiaries are engaged in a productive ventures. This will provide them with a sustainable source of income so that they will not fall back into poverty. The cash transfer too should not be treated as a lifetime benefit in its implementation.

Officer C3 also intimated:

“I am of the view that the sustainability of the programme largely depends on the swift implementation of the exit plan, not just for the sake of exiting beneficiaries but one that will transfer them to a productive venture. She perfectly agrees with Maud (2015) when she said “LEAP should be viewed as an incubator, one that shelters individuals for a while, before releasing them to stand on their own feet”.

Surprisingly, while the officials involved in the interviews were apprehensive about the sustainability of LEAP and therefore went ahead to prescribe remedies to salvage it from total collapse. The beneficiary/respondents in the survey, on the other hand, were confident in the sustainability of the programme. A significant majority 72% of them were of the opinion that LEAP is sustainable; 4 percent of them feared that the programme may not last for a long time. The rest were either indifferent (3 %) or did not have an opinion (21%). The view that LEAP is sustainable is stronger among respondents in NDC strongholds (83%) than among respondents in NPP strongholds (66%) as well as districts considered to be politically neutral (70 %). The Chi-Square test

indicates that there is a significant relationship between the two categorical variables, thus the beneficiaries' perception about the sustainability of LEAP and their electoral constituencies. ($\chi^2 = 13.83, p < 0.05$). This implies that irrespective of where they are selected from, they all share the belief that LEAP is sustainable. See table 5.24 for details:

Table 5.24: Sustainability of LEAP

<i>Sustainability of LEAP</i>	<i>Beneficiaries' Electoral Constituency</i>				χ^2	<i>p</i>
	<i>NPP</i>	<i>NDC</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>All</i>		
Yes	66 %	83%	70 %	72 %	15.82	0.02*
No	10 %	1%	3 %	4%		
Indifferent	0.0%	2%	4%	3%		
Don't know	24 %	14 %	23.%	21%		
Total	100	100	100	100		
Note: * is significant at $p < 0.05$						

Source: Author's Field Data (2018)

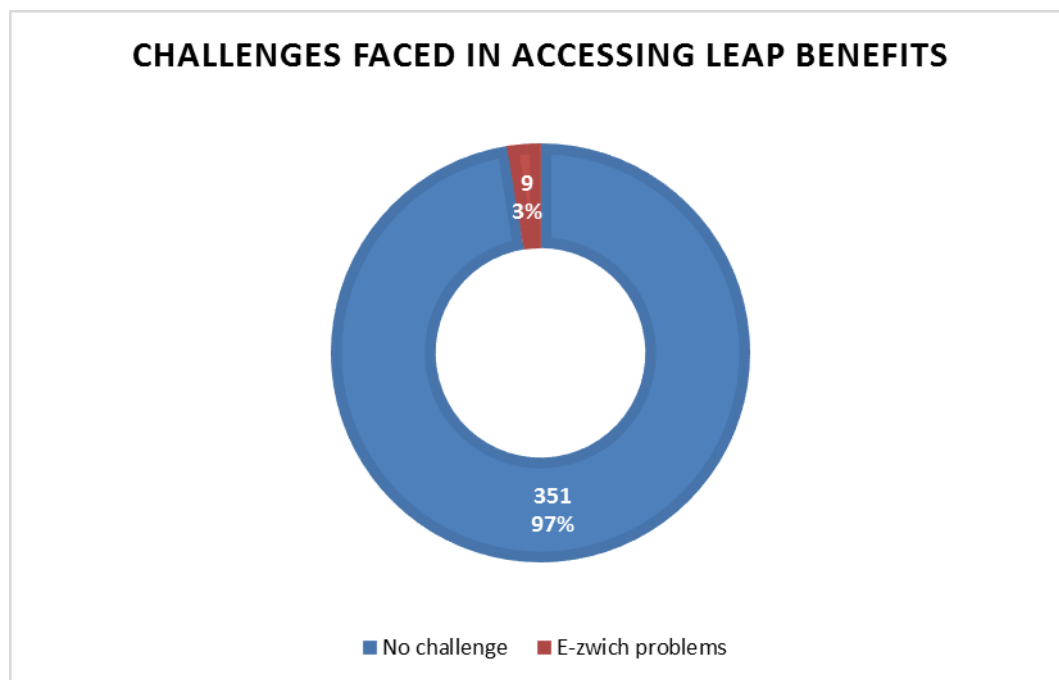
Challenges faced by Leap beneficiaries

The study also assessed the main challenges faced by LEAP beneficiaries in accessing the funds and the unpleasant components of LEAP they want them to be changed. This is against the backdrop that Agbaam and Dinbabo (2014), and Abbey et al. (2014) in their earlier studies have identified irregular payment, weak linkage of the programme to other pro-poor interventions, inadequate staff with limited operational capacity and low coverage of poor family as some of the key challenges facing the smooth implementation of LEAP. The responses to these questions are discussed below:

Main challenges faced in accessing LEAP benefits

Almost all the respondents (97%) reported that they face no challenge in accessing the LEAP benefits. Only 9 respondents that is, 3 percent of them said they encountered few problems when the E-zwich card malfunctioned on some occasions. See figure 5. 7 below for details.

Figure 5.7: Challenges faces in accessing leap benefits



Source: Author's Field Data (2018)

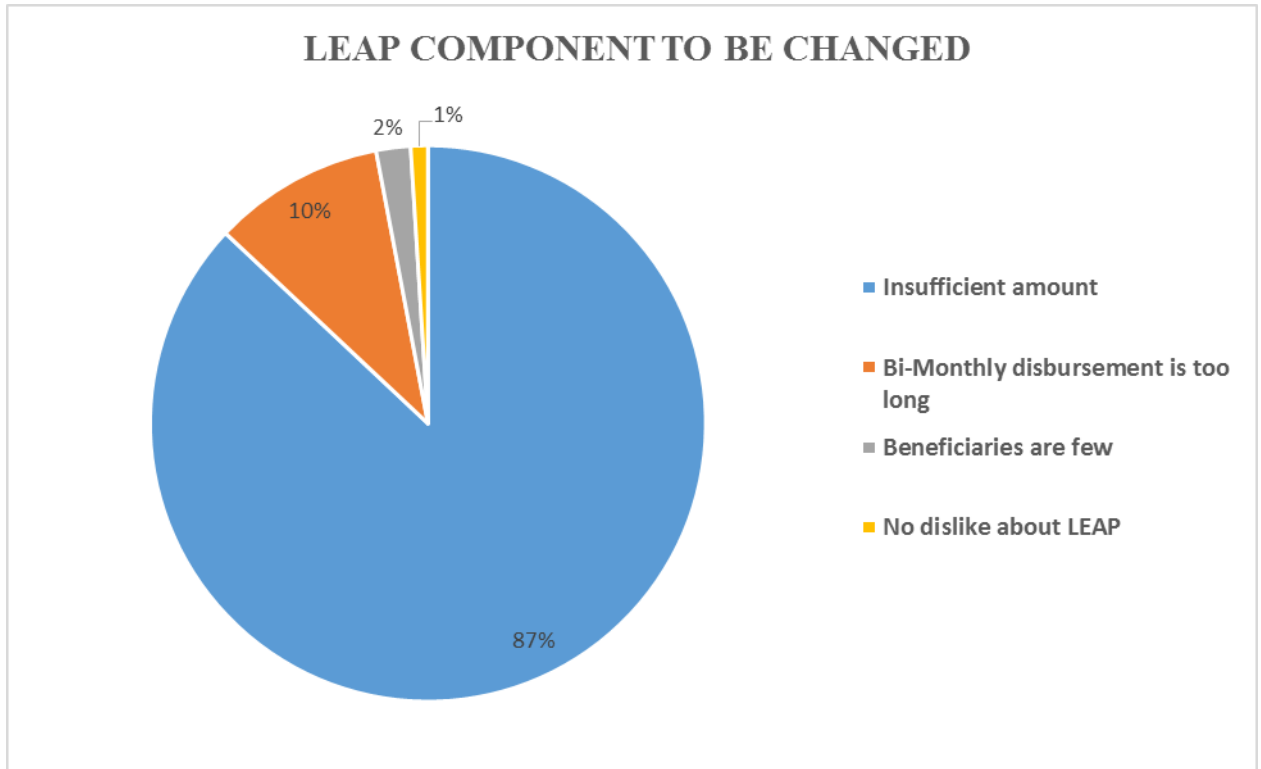
LEAP Component to be changed

The question of any one key component of LEAP to be changed was put to the respondents. The study sought to elicit from them what in their opinion should be changed about LEAP. Their responses are presented below.

Majority of the respondents, forming 87 percent, were of the opinion that the funds disbursed to them are insufficient. Another ten percent (10%) of them claimed that the two months intervals for the disbursement of funds is too long and should be made monthly. About 2 percent indicated that the LEAP beneficiaries in their communities are

few; there is therefore the need for government to enroll more beneficiaries from their communities to the programme. The remaining 1% admitted they did not have any suggestion as far as the programme is concerned. See figure 5.8 for details.

Figure 5.8: Leap components to be changed



5.3 Dilemma of an Exit Plan

LEAP as a social protection intervention was expected to be a short term social intervention programme which aimed at assisting the beneficiaries to leap out of poverty. However, the survey found that some of the beneficiaries have been on the programme since its inception in 2008. This called for an investigation into the status of an exit plan in the policy document. Subsequently, interviews with officials from both government and the civil society organizations revealed that none of the successive governments has developed any plan for the activation of the exit plan. This is because they do not have the political will to exit people who have been enrolled into the programme by their

predecessors. They rather found it politically expedient to enrol their own supporters to benefit from LEAP. This explanation ran through the responses of the eight district social welfare officers. All the officers admitted that they have never implemented any exit plan in their respective districts. This view was succinctly expressed by Officer D5, one of the district social welfare officers. She intimated:

“Yes the exit plan exists on paper but we have never implemented it in this district, and even all other districts that I am aware of. You know before we can implement it here, first the government has to provide a particular package that can be given to the exiting beneficiaries. And also because of the way we do our politics in Ghana, it will be risky to exit the supporters of other political party but it is rather easy for them to put their party members on the programme

The study further explored for other possible explanations from the perspectives of the LEAP Secretariat, and the Civil Society Organizations for the failure of successive governments to develop an exit plan. In the words of an officer (DD9) at the LEAP Secretariat:

We have not been able to exit them because no programme is currently in place to take them on board. I know well that some of the categories on the programme are perpetually going to be on it. For example the aged or the disabled persons without any support. But with the orphans when they get to eighteen years they will automatically be disqualified.

Another reason why it is not working is that if you have supported people for a long time and you say to them today I am pushing you away, where are you pushing them to? If we rush and exit them they are likely to move deeper into poverty than before, their children will become more vulnerable and the poverty cycle will keep repeating itself. Once this happens then the investment made in them would have gone waste

The current plan is to expand the programme to cover other groups which have not benefited at all to bring equity. If you want to wait till one group is self-sufficient before you consider others, those you intend to cover later would have

perished before you get to them, meanwhile we need everybody alive to contribute to national development. Why should the government take care of some section of the poor and leave the others? That will not be fair!’’

Further questioning revealed that government is in the process of developing an exit plan. The officer again explained:

“We are now developing a programme called Productive Inclusion that will train beneficiaries of the programme so that they will get themselves equipped before we exit them from the LEAP programme” (Officer DD9)

Regarding the exit plan and its effects on the sustainability of LEAP the programme in Ghana, the officers from the three Civil Society Organizations unanimously suggested a number of measures that would urgently need attention. Among them were the swift implementation of an exit plan, not just for the sake of exiting current beneficiaries but one that will transfer them to an alternative source of livelihood.

They also contended that because LEAP is not meant to be a lifetime benefit, mechanisms must be put in place to ensure that the programme matures to become one which graduates the beneficiaries to tax paying members of the society.

The officials argued finally that the implementation of an exit plan can only serve its purpose if politicians would ensure that the selection of beneficiaries is insulated from partisan politics.

In conclusion, the findings from the study suggest that a good number of beneficiaries on LEAP were supporters of the two major political parties before they got selected into the programme. The most plausible interpretation of this evidence is that clientelistic politics plays a critical role in the selection of beneficiaries’ into the programme. It can also be concluded that majority of the beneficiaries are likely to vote for the political party whose regime selected them not because of their selection to benefit from LEAP but

because they were aligned to the party before LEAP came into existence. Therefore the implementation of LEAP can do little to change how beneficiaries vote during elections. It can further be noted that despite the fact that LEAP to an extent has improved the living conditions of majority of the beneficiaries, the programme does not have sufficient capacity to pull them out of poverty.

CHAPTER SIX

DISCUSSION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

6.0. Introduction

Transparency, political accountability and fairness are core components of vibrant democracies. The viability of any poverty alleviation programme in a democratic state like Ghana therefore needs to be assessed by the extent to which these critical tenets of democracy are observed in the process of programme implementation (Chazan, 2015). Though poverty alleviation by any measure is critical to the consolidation of democratic governance, Ghanaian politicians have succeeded in distorting the targeting procedures of programmes intended to alleviate the suffering of the poor (Abdulai, 2017). This practice is attributed to the fact that they have always perceived these programmes as avenues for the mobilization of political support (ibid). However, if the goal of any poverty alleviation programme is to be achieved, then the benefits must directly go to the target people.

There is consensus that working democracies should strive to highlight and address all political exchanges that do not only seek to exploit the poor but also maintain a relation of perpetual dependence (Webster and Engberg-Pedersen, 2002). Underlying this call is the recognition that these practices make mockery of democratic accountability as they reduce the pressure on governments to provide public goods (Stokes, 2005). To ensure effective implementation of LEAP, there is the need for constant examination of how the targeting procedures in practice are consistent with the stated eligibility criteria outlined in the policy document. As the state continues to invest money in the programme, every effort must be made to ensure that the poor and the vulnerable

benefit greatly from the programme. This study examines whether political clientelism plays a role in the implementation of the LEAP programme in Ghana.

This chapter discusses the key findings of the study. The discussion focuses on the extent to which the behaviour of politicians and LEAP beneficiaries have confirmed or contradicted the assumptions of rational choice theory in the implementation process. The main issues that have been addressed in this study are the following:

- How have LEAP beneficiaries been selected?
- Has the implementation of the LEAP programme been characterised by clientelistic politics?
- Do the beneficiaries of the programme feel obliged to reciprocate the gesture by supporting the implementing government electorally?
- In which ways have the incumbent governments exploited LEAP for electoral gains?
- To what extent has LEAP improved the living conditions of the beneficiaries, and how can the programme be sustained?

6.1 Discussion of Key Findings

The processes involved in the selection of LEAP communities and beneficiaries are politically influenced.

First, the study found that on paper the selection of the beneficiaries is based strictly on clearly stated eligibility criteria. However, in practice, widespread political interference has rendered the strict application of the stated eligibility criteria ineffective. It was also found that the inability of Ghana Statistical Service to expand the scope of the District Poverty Map to cover all communities in a district, provides an avenue for politicians to interfere with the selection of the LEAP communities. The findings suggest that even though there are unambiguous guidelines which regulate the selection of LEAP

beneficiary communities and individuals, politicians are able to circumvent the rules to enable them to influence the selection process.

These findings validate the assumption of rational choice theory which contends that the actions of politicians are guided by the pursuit of their own self-interest rather than by an altruistic commitment. It explains that politicians in their desperate quest to pursue their self-interest can easily manipulate laid down rules in order to achieve their preferred outcome (Anderson, 2011). In the case of LEAP, attempts by politicians at both national and local levels to interfere with the process of selecting the beneficiaries is inconsistent with the standard operating procedures stated in the LEAP policy document (Ekobor-Ackah et al. 2014). According to the rational choice theory, the actions of politicians in the implementation of the programme are not unusual. They can be explained within the context of the behaviour of individuals who are incurably self-interested and utility maximizers. Within the existing literature, the findings corroborate recent studies conducted by Jaha and Sika-Bright (2015), and Abane (2017). These studies on LEAP implementation in the Central and the Upper West regions of Ghana respectively, found that political interference in the selection process is pervasive. This finding also reinforces Whitefield's observation (2011) that many poverty alleviation initiatives in Ghana have failed to achieve their intended objectives because of excessive political interference in the targeting process. The finding of this study is therefore a reflection of the view that most politicians in Ghana are good in championing the enactment of excellent laws but have over the years perfected the act of breaching these same laws with impunity. Clearly, attempts by the political elite to side-step the eligibility criteria in the selection of LEAP beneficiaries is not an exception.

Political Clientelism has been a key feature of LEAP implementation

The study also found that politicians have always used the LEAP as a tool to reward their party supporters and sympathizers. The study established that political clientelism plays a central role in deciding who is to benefit from LEAP and in the selection of communities to be covered by the programme. As intimated by Bardhan and Mookherjee (2016), the distribution of poverty alleviation benefits becomes clientelistic if the selection of the beneficiaries becomes contingent on past political support or is done to elicit future political support. The finding of this study confirms the perception that the selection of both LEAP beneficiary communities and individuals has not been based on merit. Rather it has been based on loyalty and past political support for the ruling party. Stokes (2005) has already found in her study that politicians sometimes use clientelistic politics to consolidate their support base by deliberately focusing on those supporters whose loyalty in the future is uncertain. In the case of LEAP the motivation for politicians to concentrate on their party supporters for the distribution of the benefits might be due to the fact that they do not want to waste resources on people whom they are not sure the benefits can win their political support. This finding however contradicts the widely held belief in the literature that essentially politicians use such poverty alleviation programmes to recruit new supporters for electoral gains, particularly the swing voters (Bardhan and Mookherjee, 2016; Magaloni, 2006; Schady, 2000). Further to this, Ninsin (2016) notes that excessive executive power in the hands of the president has created a situation whereby supporters and sympathizers of the ruling party become what he describes as the “privileged beneficiaries of financially rewarding patronage”. The picture painted by Ninsin significant captures what is happening in the LEAP

implementation where only the loyalists of political party of the ruling government largely get selected to the programme.

Theoretically, the behavior of politicians in the implementation of LEAP is consistent with the principle of human rationality as espoused by the rational choice theorists. They argue that because politicians are rational beings they would always base their decisions on cost-benefit calculations, and therefore would not invest in a programme that will not provide them with the highest political dividends (Wittek, 2013). The evidence from the study lends support to the view that the political class sees LEAP as a convenient tool for the consolidation of their support base. I argue that the perceived commitment shown by successive governments in Ghana to expand and sustain LEAP has been motivated largely by electoral considerations. For Lindberg (2010), political clientelism may continue to be a prominent feature of Ghana's political process, until such a time the cost of maintaining the relationship can no longer be borne by the political elite in the country. The finding also confirms various observations in the literature that political clientelism has been a consistent feature of poverty alleviation programmes in the developing democracies (Auyero, 2000; Van-Arkadie, 2004; Weitz-Shapiro, 2008; Robinson and Verdier, 2013). The often cited reason for the practice has been that the political support from the poor and the vulnerable is cheaper to buy especially with the distribution of public resources (Stokes, 2005, Robinson and Verdier, 2001, Ryan, 2012).

The finding of this study further gives meaning to the assertion by Berenschot (2015) that the political process in Africa in general is characterized by political clientelism. Corruption as the closest contender. He is of the opinion that the practice of distributing state resources to a targeted groups in exchange for political support and loyalty has long been associated with African politics. Evidence from this study also suggest that political

clientelism has not only been a key feature in the implementation of LEAP but rather the phenomenon has become an integral part of the general political process in Ghana.

The loyalty of LEAP beneficiaries leans towards political parties whose regime selected them than the incumbent government.

The study also found that there is reciprocity among LEAP beneficiaries towards political parties. Their political loyalty is strongly skewed towards political parties whose government selected them to become beneficiaries. The key reason is that most of the beneficiaries were aligned to the parties before they got selected to become LEAP beneficiaries. The finding suggests that without a regular expansion of the programme, the implementation of LEAP does not give significant electoral advantage to the incumbent government. This explains why officials from the two major political parties in Ghana are fond of interfering with the selection of the beneficiaries (Dixit and Londregan, 1996). Furthermore, this finding is consistent with the principle of reciprocity which is one of the assumptions of the rational choice theorists who argue that political actors, by their rational nature, are likely to return in kind the favours that are offered them by others, as a way of making sure that such exchanges are sustained indefinitely (Bruni et al 2008). Based on the principle of reciprocity, the rational choice theorists predict that the recipients of poverty alleviation benefits will be compelled morally to offer their political loyalty in return to those who enrol them onto the LEAP programme.

The conclusions of a number of scholars are also in agreement with the present finding. For instance, Schaffer (2007) argues that recipients of material benefits from politicians are more likely to reciprocate because they usually experience pleasure in increasing the material payoffs of those who have greatly supported them. He explained that in societies where a culture of reciprocity prevails, it follows naturally that when a person

offers another individual something that he/she values, such kindness is likely to be rewarded and vice versa. The finding further affirms the assertion by Omobowale and Olutayo (2010) that as long as politicians provide what their clients want, the clients on their part will largely remain tamed for them. The evidence also highlights why politicians, in their quest to establish clientelistic relationship, tend to find it convenient to target the poor voters as they are more inclined to pay back in kind. Another supportive evidence could be drawn from a study by Finan and Schechter (2012) which also found that recipients of political favours usually demonstrate a greater tendency for reciprocity. They explained that the act of receiving political favours engenders the feeling of obligation and this accounts for why political clientelism flourishes significantly in an environment where the social norm of reciprocity is pervasive.

Most of the authors cited above suggest that the recipients of material benefits are naturally loyal to their patrons, which in the case of LEAP should have been the incumbent government. However, this is not the case as far as the Ghanaian experience is concerned. The beneficiaries are rather loyal to the political party whose regime selected them to benefit from the LEAP programme. This implies that the continuous provision of LEAP benefits to the beneficiaries by implementing government is not strong enough to change their minds electorally. The behaviour of LEAP beneficiaries as observed in this research agrees with what Auyero (2000) noted in his study when he wanted to understand the logic of clientelism from the clients' perspective in Argentina. The study showed that the slum-dwellers who were the clients in the relationship did not perceive the state as the provider of the material benefits but rather the Peronist party which orchestrated the clientelistic network. This finding from the Auyero's work clearly illustrates how clients in a clientelistic relationship would owe their loyalty to a political party instead of an incumbent government.

Deliberate attempts are made by incumbent governments to exploit the LEAP in various ways for electoral advantage

There is considerable body of evidence from the study which point to a consistent pattern of political manipulation by incumbent governments. The main motivation is to use LEAP as a tool to promote electoral advantage. Strategies for the exploitation of the programme according to the study include the manipulation of the selection process to determine both the beneficiary communities and individuals, provision of political party membership cards for some of the beneficiaries after their selection, the unreasonable removal of LEAP managers appointed by a rival political party, and the unbridled expansion of the programme particularly when general elections are getting closer. These actions by the political class in Ghana in relation to the implementation of LEAP is consistent with the assumption of the rational choice theorists. The theorists see politicians as selfish individuals who are always seeking to maximise their gains at the expense of others (Anderson, 2011). They have noted that such politicians usually do not want to implement a policy which in their calculation will not benefit them politically. Therefore the attempts by politicians to exploit such an important poverty alleviation programme for electoral gains perfectly sits well with the assumption of self-interest driven persons. For the theorists this behaviour should not be a surprise because the government is made up of individuals who are constantly in pursuit of self-interest. The finding from this study also validates the prediction of Keefer and Vlaicu (2008) which states that in countries where democracy is young and the politicians have not developed a nationwide reputation to make credible promises to the citizens, they tend to enter into clientelistic deals with groups which in their view have sufficient credibility to exchange their political support for private benefits. The finding also gives credence to the observation by the World Bank (2015) that many well-designed poverty alleviation programmes have not been able to achieve their intended objectives because the political elite have always

sought to exploit the programmes for electoral purposes. Many politicians in Ghana by their calculation feel that they can take advantage of LEAP implementation to permanently hold hostage the political loyalty of the beneficiaries; hence the deliberate attempt to manipulate the programme for electoral goals.

LEAP has impacted positively on the living conditions of the beneficiaries but lacks the capacity to pull them out of poverty.

The study further found that LEAP has improved the living conditions of beneficiaries since its inception but lacks the capacity to pull majority of the poor out of poverty. For this reason the programme can at best be described as “maintenance payment” to the poor and the vulnerable in the country. This is so because the study evidently revealed that the cash transfer at best helps the beneficiaries to cater for the living cost of their households. It is very difficult for many beneficiaries to invest the money in order to generate extra income. The study also found that for the beneficiaries, LEAP serves as an income security tool. This is why majority of the beneficiaries, according to this study, depend on the programme for survival. Based on the findings, it is evident that the goal of helping to improve the living conditions of the beneficiaries has been achieved. The findings therefore seek to convey that LEAP has been able to provide a short term relieve to the beneficiaries but has failed to realise its long term human capital development component, which is to make the beneficiaries economically independent. An earlier baseline study by Handa and Park (2012), on LEAP implementation affirms the present finding. Their study reveals that the programme has not been able to make maximum impact on the lives of beneficiaries because the value of the cash transfer is among the lowest in the world. They argue that while countries like Zambia, Kenya and South Africa have been paying between 20-30 percent of the mean per capita expenditure of the beneficiaries under a similar programme, Ghana is paying just 7 percent. The present

finding also agrees with the outcome of a study conducted by Ghana Center for Democratic Development (2017). In that study it was revealed that LEAP is making a modest impact in the lives of the beneficiaries; however, in spite of the modest achievements being chalked by the programme, there is little or no guarantee for consistent poverty reduction in the long term. This is due to the fact that the amount paid to LEAP beneficiaries is inadequate to cater for the needs of the entire members of the beneficiary household. Although Debrah (2017) agrees that LEAP has improved the status of the beneficiaries, he however suggests that the surest way for the government to completely pull the beneficiaries out of poverty is to provide them with investment capital. In his view, the current cash transfer to the beneficiaries is insufficient; it therefore does not have the capacity to make them financially independent. Studies by Korboe (2011); Park et al. (2012); Handa et al. (2013) ; David et al. (2014), among others, have all confirmed that LEAP has made positive impact on the well-being of the beneficiaries in Ghana. From the rational choice theory perspective, the objective of getting the LEAP beneficiaries to remain loyal to the political parties that selected them has been achieved. The theory assumes that every individual is most likely to undertake the course of action which would be to his/her own advantage (Ogu, 2011). For the theorists, the politicians and the beneficiaries are rational and would seek to pursue their respective self-interest. Therefore it can be argued here that the clientelistic relationship between them is to benefit both parties. That is, these individuals have been engaging in a win-win relationship. Hence, the finding indicates that while the beneficiaries have experienced improvement in their living conditions, the political parties on the other hand have secured the political support of the beneficiaries.

According to the rational choice theorists, the difficulty in winning the fight against clientelistic politics is due to the fact that the phenomenon is an activity which is pursued

in the interest of all the individuals involved (ibid). Both the politicians and the LEAP beneficiaries as rational actors have calculated the costs and the benefits of their political behaviours. For example the beneficiaries have come to a realization that the benefits they are deriving from the clientelistic relationship exceed the cost of exchanging their political loyalty. Drawing from the predictions of the rational choice theory, it is fair to suggest that the failure on the part of the government to pay a reasonable amount to the beneficiaries could also be a deliberate attempt to render them financially dependent so as to maintain the clientelistic relationship for a long time.

Beneficiaries of LEAP have an overwhelming trust in the government as caring for their welfare.

The research findings also suggest that the cash transfer has significantly increased the beneficiaries' trust in government. The growth of the beneficiaries' trust in government appears to be an unintended benefit from the LEAP implementation. For the rational choice theorists, the actions of groups can best be explained in terms of the behaviour of a model individual. Rational choice theorists argue that the individual beneficiaries of LEAP is a person who is informed and rational (Anderson, 2011). For this reason the beneficiaries should be seen as people who are well aware of the fact that the incumbent government has the capacity to exit them from the programme especially those in the opposition party strongholds. The unwillingness on the part of government to carry out this exercise alone can engender continuing trust among the beneficiaries that the government cares for their welfare. In spite of the fact that the beneficiaries may or may not support the government electorally, for the rational choice theorists it is just rational for the beneficiaries to express their trust in government for the continuous provision of LEAP benefits to them. Again, the finding also agrees with the assertion made by Torsello (2012), that clientelistic practices flourish well in an environment where there is

trust. He intimated that clientelistic relationship grows stronger when there is trust between the patron and the clients. The present finding also supports the outcome of a study which was undertaken by Auyero (2000) on the slum-dwellers who were in clientelistic network. He found that the clients considered the relationship as problem solving network and therefore perceived the politicians as “good people who really care”. He concluded that from the clients’ perspective clientelistic relation provides them the protection against the risk of everyday life therefore they consider the relationship as worth keeping (Ibid). In the case of LEAP, the beneficiaries’ trust in the government could be an indication that political clientelism is not going to disappear easily from the implementation process.

Sustainability of LEAP is threatened by the unbridled expansion and the absence of a workable exit plan.

The study also found that the sustainability of LEAP is seriously threatened by the ballooning number of beneficiaries since its inception. The study revealed that though the programme was initially intended to be a short term cash transfer to the beneficiaries, there is no strategy for its sustainability, which makes LEAP appears to be a lifetime benefit. The problem has been compounded by the penchant for politicians to grab the slightest opportunity to expand the LEAP. While the expansion has financial implication on government’s budget, it also raises question about how the programme can be sustained in the absence of donor support. Participants in the study were unanimous in their suggestion that swift implementation of an exit plan can go a long way to sustain LEAP. How the political elite in Ghana have so far treated the programme further confirms the assumption of the rational theorist that politicians are not motivated by an altruistic commitment but rather they are guided by their self-interest. The finding also affirms the observation made by Appiah and Abdulai (2017) in a study focused on competitive clientelism in Ghana. They found that most of the reforms that have been initiated by the state to transform the public sector could not be sustained to achieve their goals fully because

their establishment was driven by what they term “a strategic incentive to maintain power” The narrative above confirms our earlier assertion that Ghanaian politicians do not have a genuine commitment to the sustainability of LEAP. Rather they are interested in the acquisition of short term electoral gains.

Exit Plan Component of LEAP has never been effectively implemented

As stated earlier, LEAP cash transfer is not meant to be a lifetime benefit. On the contrary, it is expected to be a short term social intervention programme which aims at assisting the beneficiaries to meet their basic survival needs. The study found that some of the beneficiaries have been on the programme since its inception in 2008. This because the exit plan component of the programme has not been developed for implementation. The reason is that there is no alternative programme to receive the beneficiaries. The situation confirms the rational choice theorists’ prediction that in their attempt to maximise political gains the rational politician will not hesitate to use poverty alleviation programmes to maintain the beneficiaries in a relation of dependency. The finding also supports the view by Webster and Engberg-Pedersen (2002) that politicians in the name of poverty alleviation usually establish and maintain a relation of dependence with the poor as the surest way of securing their political support. The finding further reinforces Martei’s (2015) conclusion that if the state does not use LEAP to develop the beneficiaries to become economically independent, they would have no option than to depend permanently on the programme. She is of the opinion that for the state to deliver value for money, LEAP should rather be used to empower the beneficiaries to become tax paying members of society.

LEAP beneficiaries do not face serious challenges in accessing their benefits

Finally, the study found that the involvement of Esoko, (data collection NGO) in the selection process , the introduction of biometric system for the beneficiaries to facilitate

payment and the prompt release of funds by the government, have significantly lessened the frustrations beneficiaries go through in accessing their LEAP benefits. This is contrary to the initial challenges such as delayed/irregular payments which the beneficiaries had to encounter before the benefits were paid to them (Davis et al. 2014, and Ekobor-Ackah et al. 2014)

6.2 Conclusion

The identified problem which underpinned the rationale for this study was the concern that whilst the government invests heavily in LEAP as the number of the beneficiaries keep increasing, the existing reports have unanimously reported an increasing level of poverty and inequality. This revealed a serious discrepancy between the increase in the number of beneficiaries of the programme and the level of reduction in both poverty and inequality in the country. The study therefore set out to examine whether political clientelism plays a role in the implementation of LEAP. It has become quite clear that the selection of beneficiaries and the implementation of the cash transfer programme have become contingent on the individuals' political support for the political party of the incumbent government. This implies that the LEAP benefits are not getting to the right people who need them most but rather it is the political party supporters who are largely benefiting from the programme, and this explains why the discrepancy has existed over the years.

CHAPTER SEVEN

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.0. Introduction

This chapter summarizes the key findings of the study, followed by the conclusion and recommendations. The study set out to examine the role played by political clientelism in the process of LEAP implementation. To achieve this goal, the following research questions were asked.

- (i) What have been the processes involve in the selection of LEAP beneficiaries?
- (ii) To what extent has the implementation of the LEAP programme been characterised by clientelistic politics?
- (iii) Do the beneficiaries of the programme feel obliged to reciprocate the gesture by voting for the implementing government?
- (iv) In what ways does the incumbent government exploit the LEAP programme for electoral advantage?
- (v) To what extent has the programme helped to improve the living conditions of the beneficiaries and how can it be sustained?

I employed the mixed methods approach to collect quantitative and qualitative data.

7.1. Summary of key findings

The following are the major findings of the study:

(i) The study found that the selection of LEAP communities and beneficiaries were influenced by political considerations. Thus, the prescribed eligibility criteria expected to be used for the selection of beneficiaries including extremely poor household, Orphaned and Vulnerable Children (OVC), persons with severe disability and without any productive capacity, elderly persons who are 65 years and above, and very poor pregnant women and infants below the age of one year, have not been followed. .

(ii) The study also found that political clientelism has been a key feature of LEAP implementation. Sufficient evidences were found to show that the provision of LEAP benefits has become contingent largely on the individuals past and present political support for the party of the ruling government. Thus politicians have always used the LEAP as a political tool to reward their party supporters and sympathizers.

(iii) The study further found that loyalty of LEAP beneficiaries leans towards political parties whose regime selected them more than the implementing government. This so because majority of the beneficiaries were affiliated to the parties before they got selected therefore their selection did not do much to change the level of their loyalty. This finding implies that implementation of LEAP does not provide a significant electoral advantage to the incumbent government. This finding explains why ruling governments are obsessed with the unrestricted expansion of the LEAP programme.

(iv) Again the study found that ruling governments have made several attempts to exploit LEAP for electoral advantage. Strategies for the exploitation of the programme include the manipulation of the selection process to benefit both the beneficiary

communities and individuals, provision of political party membership cards for some of the beneficiaries, the replacement of LEAP managers appointed by a rival political party, and the rampant expansion of the programme especially when general elections are getting closer.

(v) Furthermore, the study reveals that LEAP has impacted positively on the living conditions of beneficiaries but lacks the capacity to pull them out of poverty. Thus, in spite of the fact that the cash transfer has improved the living conditions of beneficiaries, a significant proportion of them intimated that the amount paid to them is not sufficient to meet their household or basic needs.

(vi) The study further found that beneficiaries of LEAP have an overwhelming trust in the government as caring for their welfare. As high as 92% of the respondents indicated that the provision of the cash transfer has significantly increased their trust in government.

(vii) The study further revealed that over politicization, unregulated expansion and absence of a well-designed sustainability plan for LEAP, threaten the continuous existence of the programme. .

(viii) The Exit Plan Component of LEAP has never been implemented. The study found that some of the beneficiaries have been on the programme since its inception in 2008, which means they have been on the programme for the past 10 years. The explanation for this is that the exit plan component of the programme has never been activated as a result of unavailability of alternative programme to receive the exiting beneficiaries.

(ix) LEAP beneficiaries do not face serious challenges in accessing their benefits. The study found that the introduction of biometric system in 2015 to facilitate payment has

significantly reduced the frustration beneficiaries used to go through in accessing their benefits. The bi-monthly payment of LEAP benefit has also been consistent,

Other findings

(x) In addition to the above, the study discovered that a significant portion of LEAP beneficiaries have no formal education. Eighty three percent (83%) of the beneficiaries who participated in the survey did not have formal education. This finding suggests that there is the need for the beneficiaries to be taken through some form of education so that an upward review of the cash transfer can make the expected impact.

(xi) Majority of beneficiaries use the cash transfer on food. The survey found that 68 percent of beneficiaries use their LEAP money for feeding, 13 percent of them use the transfer for the educational needs of their children. Those who use it for business/trade constituted 10 percent; 7 percent use it to cater for their health needs while only 2 percent of them spend it on agricultural inputs. This particular finding points to how far LEAP can assist the poor in Ghana's poverty alleviation efforts.

7.2. Limitations of the Study

It is important to point out that the findings from the study presented in this thesis should be considered in the light of the following limitations:

First, due to time and resource constraints, the survey was based on the views of 360 LEAP beneficiaries randomly selected from eight districts in Greater Accra and Northern regions, even though LEAP is being implemented in all the 216 districts across the 10 regions of Ghana. The degree of clientelistic politics in the LEAP implementation may slightly differ from one region to another. Therefore because the study was not able to cover all the ten regions or the 216 districts in Ghana, generalization of the results is limited to the study areas.

Second, the selection of the Civil Society Organizations namely Ghana Center for Democratic Development, IMANI Center for Policy and Education-Ghana and Institute for Democratic Governance as well as the selection of the district social welfare officials for the qualitative study were all done purposively. This means that the adoption of the purposively sampling technique to select the institutions limited the chances of other equally good institutions to take part in the study. This indicates that there was a response bias and therefore, once conclusions drawn were based on the views expressed by these selected officials, it also limits the generalization of the outcomes of the study to other environment. However, these biases were mitigated by comparing the results from both the quantitative and qualitative studies to see where they converge.

Lastly, as a way to reduce the extent to which my own personal biases influence the results from this study, I ensured that questions meant for all the respondents were asked in the same way and further ensured that outcomes of the interviews were recorded objectively and accurately.

7.3. Conclusion

In conclusion, it is clear from the study that successive governments have made numerous attempts to implement one poverty alleviation intervention or the other. The failure of these governments stems from their inability to insulate the programmes from their political interest and LEAP as a poverty alleviation programme has not been an exception. This practice has not only become the bane of the country's poverty alleviation intervention but also the growth of political accountability in general (Ninsin, 2016). This study examined how LEAP has been implemented in eight districts purposively selected from Greater Accra and Northern regions of Ghana. The findings from the study lead to the conclusion that the political office holders use the LEAP

benefits to reward supporters and the sympathizers of the National Democratic Congress and New Patriotic Party, the two dominant political parties in Ghana. The findings of the study adequately addressed the research problem which was on the discrepancy between the increasing level of the number of LEAP beneficiaries and the level of reduction in both poverty and inequality in Ghana. The results from the study point to the fact that the LEAP benefits are largely not getting to the right people who need them most. Evidences found from the study further confirm the claim that the poverty alleviation programmes introduced in most developing democracies are not driven by altruistic motives; rather they are intended to be used as tools for political mobilization (Kitschelt and Wilkinson, 2007; Calvo and Murillo, 2004).

Again, despite the fact that many scholars have intimated that in a clientelistic relationship the loyalty of the clients is towards the patron (government), evidence from this study suggests that in locating the political loyalty of LEAP beneficiaries, we need to look beyond the incumbent government and focus on the political parties under whose regime the individuals were selected. This points to the fact that the political party of the ruling government plays a key role in the determination of who is selected to benefit from LEAP. This practice as identified in the study renders the LEAP eligibility criteria useless.

The issues which have been highlighted by the study provide a major source of concern. This is because even though any effort by government to initiate poverty alleviation programmes to tackle poverty is important, the introduction of such programmes alone does not provide sufficient condition for poverty alleviation. The daily political rhetoric of politicians in Ghana recognising the plight of the poor masses, can only be taken seriously when they are supported by practical actions. A growing number of countries that have succeeded in their poverty alleviation effort paid particular attention to political

accountability, transparency, openness, proper targeting coupled with the manifestation of strong political will from the political class (Engberg-Pedersen and Webster, 2002:258). These conditions are key if LEAP is to achieve its poverty alleviation agenda. There cannot be shortcut to poverty alleviation. The Government of Ghana has to treat poverty alleviation programmes as a valuable asset which can make poverty alleviation a real possibility. LEAP can continue to remain as a relevant poverty alleviation programme only when the governing elites in Ghana are committed to changing the existing power structure in favour of the poor and the vulnerable.

Recommendations for Action

Based on the findings of the study, a number of measures have been recommended for consideration. They are to help in addressing the challenges identified and to enhance effective implementation of the LEAP programme.

(i) Reducing political interference in the process of selecting the beneficiaries requires a change in policy. It is recommended that the government should assign the responsibility of managing LEAP to Ghana Statistical Service and the Department of Social Welfare. If the management by the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection has led to widespread political interference in the selection process, then we must consider how to empower these two institutions to manage the programme. They are only needed to be provided with a clear mandate couple with the signing of a specific performance contract which goes with reward systems. These two institutions which are made up of professional have accumulated a reasonable amount of credibility among the public and donor countries over the years. All they need is the provision of the required logistics and given the free hand to operate. Although handing over the LEAP to these institutions will not address all the problems associated with the programme, it would

enhance transparency and the credibility of the programme. It will also help to insulate the process from unnecessary political interference from political office holders.

(ii) To tackle the pervasive political clientelism associated with the LEAP programme requires an active participation of the media and civil society organizations. The study recommends an active involvement of the media and civil society organizations in the implementation process. The regular and effective monitoring of the programme by these institutions will expose most of the abuses and manipulations carried out by politicians. As Norton and Foster (2001) argue, the civil society organizations play vital role in ensuring that accountability is promoted in a country's social protection activities. According to them the civil society organizations do this through critical monitoring of the selection process and by so doing they ensure transparency and accountability in the implementation of such schemes. Besides, the eligibility criteria and the selection process of LEAP must widely be publicized in the media. The public awareness of what constitutes an abuse of the implementation process can act as a further check on the activities of politicians. It is believed that clientelistic politics associated with LEAP will be made less politically attractive if they are widely exposed in the media and shamed by civil society organizations. This findings from the study by Domingo (2005) as stated earlier showed that the media and the civil society organizations can do so much to reduce political clientelism in the implementation of poverty alleviation programmes, however it will take the commitment of the political elites in Ghana to make this a real possibility.

(iii) It is also recommended that in order to promote transparency in the selection of LEAP beneficiaries, regular auditing should be carried out by credible and independent auditing firms to ensure that individuals who did not use the approved route to benefit from the programme are not only removed but also the officials who assisted them are

made to refund all the cash transfers received illegally. This is also one of the surest ways to counter political clientelism in the selection of the LEAP beneficiaries.

(iv) The study further demonstrates that though the programme has impacted positively on the living conditions of the beneficiaries, the paltry sum of money paid to beneficiaries cannot pull them out of poverty. It is therefore recommended that the amount paid to the beneficiaries must be reviewed upwards annually. The rate of increase must be done within the context of the rising cost of living and the rate of inflation as it is done with the daily minimum wage for Ghanaian workers. Again, in order for LEAP to make a more meaningful impact in the lives of the beneficiaries, the current practice of spreading the benefits thinly to cover more beneficiaries must be halted and the existing beneficiaries who exhibit sufficient seriousness must be provided with investment capital to engage in small scale businesses. In order to make this investment capital more useful, it is suggested that the beneficiaries must be given non-formal education and skills training to boost their capacity to invest appropriately to generate extra income so as to become financially independent.

(v) Furthermore, for the country to achieve the goals of LEAP in full, it is recommended that government must show concrete evidence of her support and genuine commitment towards the success and sustainability of the programme. Although the LEAP programme is an excellent initiative, the general political environment, the positive attitude and the level of commitment exhibited by the political elite have a strong bearing on the programme's success. It is believed that the more politicians show commitment to the fight against poverty, the less they engage in political clientelism.

(vi) Regarding the sustainability of LEAP, the study suggests that the practice of claiming-credit which appears to motivate politicians to unnecessarily extend the programme to cover more people must be discouraged. The expansion of the programme

must not be driven by political expediency but rather be necessitated by comprehensive need assessment and sound economic reason. Besides, there is an urgent need for the development of alternative programmes to ensure swift implementation of the exit plan. The existence of such alternative programmes will make it possible for the exiting LEAP beneficiaries find an alternative source of income. Delay in the operationalization of the exit plan component of LEAP can wreck the programme and all the gains made so far.

Ghanaians have affirmed their commitment to democratic governance. Every effort should be made to ensure a more effective targeting and political accountability in the implementation of the LEAP programme. The real challenge, therefore is how to ensure that the political class in Ghana provides the needed commitment that will see to it that the above recommendations are put into action. Until urgent reforms are made to the programme, clientelistic politics will continue to be a way of life for both politicians and LEAP beneficiaries. Also public confidence in this pro-poor intervention will be negatively affected.

Recommendation for Future Research

Findings from this study have indeed added a new dimension to the scholarly works on LEAP implementation in Ghana. However, because it was not able to cover all the districts in the country, generalization of the results is limited. There is also the need for further study across the other districts excluded from this study to check the veracity of these outcomes. For further research, it is recommended that the following areas are considered.

- (i) Why do politicians in Ghana choose to favour their party supporters with LEAP benefits rather than swing voters?
- (ii) The incentives that make political clientelism a viable mobilization strategy for Ghanaian politicians.

(iii) Why does political clientelism persist in a country like Ghana with steadily improving liberal democratic governance?

(iv) Lastly, the assumptions of the rational choice theory and the reviewed literature on the area of study were not able to explain the importance of reciprocity in maintaining political clientelism adequately, therefore it is recommended that future research considers such an area.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Questionnaire for Leap Beneficiary Households

DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

UNIVERSITY OF GHANA

I am a PhD Candidate at the Department of Political Science, University of Ghana. I am conducting a research on Political Clientelism and Poverty Alleviation programmes, a case of Ghana's LEAP programme. The questionnaire is designed to solicit the opinions from the beneficiaries of the programme. Any information you provide by way of answering the questions will form part of the overall field data and will be used solely for the purpose of this study. Thank you for your assistance.

Time of interview: From.....To

Date.....QID.....

A. PART A : Socio-Demographic Characteristics

1. Interview Region.....1. Greater Accra () 2. Northern ()
2. Language used by respondent...1. Akan () 2. Ga () 3. English ()
4. Dagbani () 5. Other Specify.....
3. Gender of Respondent.... 1. Male () 2. Female ()
4. Age in completed years... 1. 18-30 () 2. 31-45 () 3. 46-55 () 4. 56 and above
() 5. I don't know my age ()
5. What is your educational level? 1. Basic () 2. Secondary/SHS ()
3. Commercial//Vocational () 4. Tertiary () 5. No formal education () 6.
Other...
6. What is your occupation? 1. Unemployed () 2. Trader () 3. Farmer ()
4. Employee () 5. Other Specify.....
7. Marital Status ...1. Single () 2. Married () 3. Divorced () 4. Widow/Widower
() 5. Separated () 6. Cohabitation. ()
8. Religion ...1. Islam () 2. Christianity () 3. African Traditional Religion ()
4. No Religion () 5. Other Specify.....

PART B. Leap Beneficiaries' Relationship with Politicians

- 9 In whose regime were you selected as a beneficiary of LEAP?
1. Kuffour () 2. Mills () 3. Mahama () 4. Akufo-Addo () 5. Indifferent ()
- 10 How long have you been benefiting from the LEAP programme?
1. Less than a year () 2. 1-2 years () 3. 3-4years () 4. 5years and above ()
11. Who introduced you to benefit from the LEAP programme? 1. A friend ()
2. Party member () 3. Government Official () 4. Church/Mosque member ()
5. Assemblyman/woman () 6. Other.....
12. Do you know someone who qualified more than you at the time of your selection?
1. Yes () 2. No. () 3. Don't know () 4. Refused ()
13. What in your opinion helped you to qualify for the LEAP programme?
1. My living condition () 2. Death of Breadwinner () 3. Party membership ()
4. Relationship with Managers () 5. Old Age () 6. Disability () 7. Other
Specify.....
14. Do you think political party members influence the selection of LEAP beneficiaries?
1. Yes () 2. No () 3. Don't know ()
15. Will you vote for the party whose government selected you to benefit from the LEAP programme?
1. Yes () 2. No () 3. Don't know () 4. Indifferent ()
16. Do you hold any political party's card? 1. Yes () 2. No. () 3. Refused ()
17. Have you ever attended a campaign rally of any political party?
1. Yes () 2. No. () 3. Refused ()
18. In your opinion, do you think the LEAP programme serves any political interest?
1. Yes () 2. No () 3. Indifferent () 4. Don't know ()

- 1.9. Should elected political leaders engage in favouritism in the distribution of state resources? 1. Yes (). 2. No. () 3. Don't know () 4. Indifferent ()
20. Has the LEAP programme you are benefitting now influenced your trust in the government as caring for your welfare? 1. Yes () 2.No 3. Indifferent ()
4. Don't know. ()
21. Do you think the motivation of succeeding politicians to implement LEAP is to reduce poverty? 1. Yes (). 2. No (). 3. Indifferent (). 4. Don't know ()
22. Will you vote for a politician who can deliver goods and services to people in this community or the one that can make policy which benefits everyone in Ghana?
1. A Community/Group-oriented politician ()
2. National Policy-Oriented Politician () 3. Indifferent (). 4. Don't know ()
23. Do you think your relationship with the LEAP programme has got you interested in the political issues in Ghana?
1. Yes () 2. No. () 3. Indifferent 4. Don't know
24. For what purpose do you use the LEAP money? 1. For feeding ()
2. Health needs () 3. Educational needs () 4. Agricultural inputs ()
5. For Business () 6. Other Specify.....
25. To what extent has LEAP improved your living condition?
1. Much better () 2. Better () 3. Same () 4. Bad () 5. Worse ()
6. Don't know.
- 26a. Does LEAP assures you of income security? 1. Yes () 2. No ()
- 26b If yes why.....?
- If no why.....?
27. What are the three key challenges you faced in accessing the LEAP benefits?
- (1)..... (2).....

(3).....

29. Do you think political clientelism is a sustainable tool to establish political support?

1. Yes () 2. No. () 3. Don't know (). 4. Indifferent ()

30a. Do you believe that government can sustain LEAP for a long time?

1. Yes. () 2. No. () 3. Indifferent () 4. Don't know.

30b. What particular thing do you dislike about LEAP?

31. Which of the following parties can win your vote if elections were held today?

1. PPP. 2. CPP. 3. NDC. 4. NPP. 5. Others.....

Appendix B: Interview Guide for Government Officials Related to LEAP

1. Who qualifies to receive the LEAP money transfer?
2. Is the allocation of the cash benefits strictly ruled-based or discretionary?
3. What process are involved in the selection of the beneficiaries for the programme?
4. What are some the challenges faced by your institution in the selection of the beneficiaries?
5. What political interest does the LEAP programme serve?
6. What drives the government to support LEAP?
7. Do you think the LEAP can help the government gain votes from the beneficiaries' households?
8. How many people were benefiting from the programme in this district before the 2016 general elections?
9. How many people are benefiting from the programme currently in this district?
10. Does the much talked about political payoffs for LEAP a perception or real?
11. What plans are in place to raise the budget for the programme continuously?
12. In general, how would you describe the LEAP programme in Ghana?
13. Is there any exit plan for the beneficiaries of LEAP?
14. What do you consider as the success story for LEAP?
15. What do you consider as the greatest threat to the LEAP programme?

**Appendix C: Interview Guide for the Officials from Civil Society Organizations
Associated with Poverty Alleviation.**

1. What does LEAP mean to you?
2. In your opinion who qualifies to benefit from the LEAP programme?
3. Do you think Political party leaders influenced the selection of beneficiaries to LEAP programme
4. How well does LEAP programme focus on the poor?
5. Does LEAP have partisan orientation?
6. In your opinion what drives the government to support LEAP?
7. Does LEAP benefit impose any loyalty obligation on the recipients?
8. How effective is LEAP contributing to Ghana's poverty alleviation effort?
9. Does LEAP by any way nurture political clientele for electoral purposes?
10. Does the much talked about political payoffs for LEAP a perception or real?
11. What do you consider as the greatest threat to LEAP programme?
12. In your opinion what can be done to sustain the LEAP?
13. How do you see the future of the LEAP programme?

Appendix D: Letters