

**THE ROLE OF INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AGENCIES IN THE
EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN: A CASE STUDY OF JICA IN THE
NORTHERN REGION OF GHANA**

BY

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DECLARATION

I declare that; this dissertation is an original work conducted by me under the supervision of Dr. Peace A. Medie. This work has not been published by another author, except for the reference to other authors which have been duly acknowledged.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my mother, without whom I wouldn't be presenting this dissertation and to John Federoff who believed in my abilities.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

A2N	-	Africa 2000 Network
CIDA	-	Canadian International Development Agency
DAWN	-	Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era
GAD	-	Gender and Development
GES	-	Gender Equality Strategy
GTZ	-	German Technical Cooperation
IDA	-	International Development Agency
JETRO	-	Japan External Trade Organization
JICA	-	Japan International Cooperation Agency
JOCV	-	Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteer
JWIDF	-	Japan Women in Development Fund
MDG	-	Millennium Development Goals
MOFA	-	Ministry of Food and Agriculture
MoWCA	-	Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs
SNV	-	Netherlands Development Organizations
NGO	-	Non-Governmental Organization
ODA	-	Official Development Assistance
PCDC	-	Polish-Canadian Development Cooperation PCDC

SDG	-	Sustainable Development Goals
SFC	-	The Savannah Food Company
UNDP	-	United Nations Development Programme
UNOPS	-	United Nations Office for Project Services
USAID	-	United States Agency for International Development
WIAD	-	Women in Agriculture Development
WID	-	Women in Development

ABSTRACT

There is a growing effort in the field of international development to address poverty in developing countries through women's empowerment. However, development agencies often implement only a set of standard repertoire of interventions aimed at expanding the scope of women's choices as the outcome of their empowerment. As a result, development interventions have failed to alleviate poverty among rural women as inequalities in the capabilities of and opportunities for both women and men persist. Nonetheless, in furtherance to the increasing acceptance of the central role of women in socio-economic development, International Development Agencies (IDAs) continue to undertake development projects with the rationale to promote women's empowerment, reduce poverty and generate employment for sustainable livelihoods in rural communities in Ghana. In view of this, the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) has also adopted various strategies for addressing gender equality and promoting women's empowerment across its global operations, including Ghana. This study seeks to answer the central question of whether JICA's development interventions have positively transformed and empowered rural women engaged in the shea butter sector in Northern Ghana. Its study adopted the qualitative research approach to collect and analyze data from interviews with 25 beneficiaries of the Sagnarigu Shea Butter and Soap Processing Center. The results show that, overall, the project beneficiaries received adequate training and technical support from JICA to improve the quality of shea butter produced and also to effectively manage their lives and work processes. Moreover, the women were involved from the beginning of the project in identifying their aim, objectives and monitoring roles. Leadership positions were also chosen by the women themselves and they reviewed their shea butter making processes from time to time. The findings also reveal that empowering women through micro enterprise increases their involvement in household decision-making in respect to credit, control

of household assets, children's education, nutrition and the health needs of their children which together lead to better living standards for the family. Overall, there has been significant improvement in local shea nuts/butter processing in terms of quality, production capacity, cost and delivery which has ensured sustainability of the industry. The study finds that to ensure women's empowerment in development projects, beneficiaries should be regarded as agents of their own change but not passive beneficiaries of development aid. This study recommends that the center be expanded and equipped with modern technology to improve production processes and ultimately production capacity and also attract the youth to join the shea butter processing industry.

CHAPTER ONE

RESEARCH DESIGN

1.1 Background of the Study

The empowerment of women and removing gender inequalities remain central to human progress.¹ Yet, gender inequalities in the capabilities of and opportunities for both women and men persist.² According to the UNDP Human Development Report, women represent 58 per cent of the total population of Africa.³ Approximately 75 per cent of these women work in agriculture and produce about 60 to 80 percent of the continent's food. However, they earn very little from these activities; thereby, only owning 10 per cent and 1 percent of Africa's income and resources respectively.⁴ More so, in sub-Saharan Africa, there are about 31 per cent of female-headed households, where the women are solely responsible for decision making and economic management.⁵

In the case of Ghana, women make up 58 per cent of the rural population and head about 40 per cent, with responsibility for children's daily nutrition, food and welfare. In these rural areas, poverty is endemic, particularly among women, due to cultural and religious barriers that prevent them from engaging in viable economic activities and wage employment. Rather, they are made to devote substantial amounts of time (about 10.5 hours daily) to unpaid domestic work and childcare which keep them away from income-generating activities.⁶

Therefore, women remain poor in many developing countries due to persistent gender disadvantages.⁷ These have led to "gender differentials in nutrition, food allocation, health status, mortality rates and life expectancy".⁸ In most cases, women are prevented from fully accessing development projects, expanding ownership and control of resources, increasing income sources channels and challenging subordination to male dominance.⁹ Development aid over the years has failed to alleviate poverty among these rural women because it fails to resolve the fundamental

issues of land ownership, inheritance and decision making at the household or community levels, which are relevant for attaining gender equality and poverty reduction among women. Rather, development aid through welfare, equity, anti-poverty and efficiency approaches have only sought to meet the immediate needs of women. Nabil Kabeer argues that, to really achieve success in development interventions, it is imperative to move beyond prioritizing women's basic needs to empowering.¹⁰ The essence is to rather empower women to identify resources necessary to effect change in their lives and equip them with knowledge and power to effectively utilize such resources to meet their strategic needs.

The UN Decade for Women in 1976 further brought to light the importance of integrating women as active players in development. Esther Boserup's seminal work in 1970 started feminists' engagement in development discourse. It was also the foremost study to recognize "gender as a variable in the analysis of development data".¹¹ In her work, which later developed into the Women in Development (WID) approach, Ester Boserup argued that modernization has impacted women more negatively than men and that women have been excluded from the development process for far too long.¹² In essence, the economic contributions of women cannot be taken for granted as "women can do everything men do as well as men".¹³ It is therefore important to recognize and attach more importance to how the productivity of women can be integrated into development to improve the economy and towards poverty alleviation goals of development aid.

Nonetheless, other scholars argued that the WID approach was non-confrontational, as it only integrated women into the existing development system without questioning women rights and power relations. The result was the emergence of the Gender and Development (GAD) theorists.¹⁴ They recognized that the "social construction of gender and the assignment of specific roles, responsibilities and expectations to women and men is important to understanding how

development affects both women and men in the society”.¹⁵ Gender “is a social construction which refers to the relative position of women and men within the family as well as society”.¹⁶ Hence, GAD acknowledges that, development and women’s involvement takes place in an environment of complex socio-economic and political structures. Consequently, GAD asserts that to liberate women for them, to understand their full potential, would be to “transform unequal gender relations, and perhaps more importantly, regard women as agents of change rather than passive beneficiaries of development. As Jane Parpart puts it, GAD looks at the issue of power as it relates to gender and at strategies for empowering women and challenging the status quo”.¹⁷ This is the basis for the emergence of the empowerment approach as a substitute to the top down modernist approach which had dominated development discourse.

Nabil Kabeer describes empowerment as, “the expansion in people’s ability to make strategic life choices in a context where this ability was previously denied to them”.¹⁸ Caroline Moser, also interprets women’s empowerment as:

the capacity of women to increase their own self-reliance and internal strength. This is identified as the right to determine choices in life and to influence the direction of change, through the ability to gain control over material and non-material resources.¹⁹

The empowerment approach thus, seeks to address the tactical needs of women by altering the dissemination of power at all stages to improve women’s self-reliance, rather than their dependence upon development agencies to change their lives and communities. The approach is grounded and shaped by the knowledge and experiences of women and scholars in the Global South, and recognizes the power and agency of women is essential in the development process.²⁰ It represents a dramatic break from previous approaches to women issues in the development discourse, which largely adopted top-down modernist approaches and relied more on the interests of development planners and International Development Agencies (IDAs). In fact, mainstream

approaches to development often treat women as passive recipients of development outcomes, but women's empowerment theorists acknowledge that true change occurs when the inherent power and productive role of women are harnessed to serve as their own change agents.²¹ Nonetheless, Medie A. Peace and Kang J Alice recognize bias in the nature and output of research on gender, women and politics in Global South.²²

Therefore, the empowerment approach is imperative in light of increasing realization that factors such as lack of control over resources and low self-esteem continue to limit women's potential to contribute in decision-making in developing countries. This goes to enhance and facilitate the role of women in engendering economic and social change in developing countries.²³ This is why the UN recognizes that attainment of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) is contingent on empowering women and reducing gender inequalities. The empowerment approach is not "a stand-alone goal, but a key driver of efforts to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger, achieve universal primary education, reduce child and maternal mortality, and fight against major diseases like HIV/AIDS and malaria".²⁴

1.2 Problem Statement

There has been a continuous and increasing effort in the international development discourse to broadly address women's empowerment as an effective tool of poverty alleviation in the Global South. Women's empowerment emerged as a replacement to the dominant top-down approach to development aid from the 1950s to 1970s.²⁵ Moser delineated five major policy directions that sought to address women's role and benefits in the development discourse. These are the welfare, equity, and anti-poverty, efficiency and empowerment methods.²⁶ Unlike the others, women empowerment attempts to embrace participation and regards women beneficiaries as the agents of their own change, rather than mere passive recipients of development aid.²⁷ Women's

empowerment has since been widely accepted as an effective tool in mainstream development discourse by international, national and local agencies whose role has become central to rural poverty reduction and development progress in developing countries.

International Development Agencies (IDAs) are the endorsed aid agencies of developed countries. Through IDAs, developed countries channel development aid and assistance to developing and poor countries, particularly in the Global South. Across Africa, governments have come to see IDAs as reliable and strategic partners in the provision of basic services and socio-economic development. In Ghana, the key IDAs are: The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), the Netherlands Development Organization (SNV), the German Technical Cooperation (GTZ), the World Bank, African Development Bank (AfDB) among others.

The IDAs in Ghana are present in almost every Region in the country and provide development, technical, and financial assistance in the areas of education, health, agriculture, trade and human resource development. Often, development interventions of IDAs are targeted at areas with specific development constraints with the aim of reducing poverty. One such area is the Northern Region of Ghana which is dominated by low income earning rural women mostly engaged in the shea butter industry.²⁸ In 2007, JICA, in partnership with the UNDP and Africa 2000 Network (A2N), launched a development intervention in the shea butter industry.²⁹ The project set out to promote women's empowerment, reduce poverty and generate employment in Ghana by directly enhancing the socio-economic standards of rural women.³⁰

However, some development agencies often implement a set of standard repertoires of interventions aimed at expanding the scope of women's choices as a front for women's empowerment.³¹ As such, the choices provided by these interventions exist within and sometimes

even unwittingly reinforce an unchanged and unfair social and gender order.³² Furthermore, in “*Discourses on Women’s Empowerment in Ghana*”,³³ Nana Akua Anyidoho and Takyiwa Manuh assert that the empowerment discourse in Ghana is not “framed in terms of power and inequalities in social relations...there is little emphasis on collective action or on ensuring that women gain power to determine what it is that they want in several areas of their lives.”³⁴ Largely, therefore, women’s empowerment is underpinned by welfare issues, which only seek to meet the basic and survival needs of rural women who are considered victims of the development process.³⁵

Scholars advocate that development planners must move beyond prioritizing access to mere basic needs of women to empowering women in order to enable them identify and control the requisite resources to effect the change that meets their strategic needs. Despite the many interventions aimed at empowering the women to generate economic and sustainable livelihoods in the shea butter industry, studies have largely focused on identifying the benefits of shea butter³⁶, efficacy of livelihood strategies³⁷, evaluating market access³⁸, and entrepreneurship³⁹, but not women’s empowerment. There is the need, therefore, to examine how women themselves understand and experience the process of empowerment, as well as what they have gained and learnt from their empowerment experiences in the shea butter industry. Hence, the study examines the role of international development agencies in promoting women’s empowerment in Ghana using JICA’s intervention in the shea butter industry of the Northern Region as a case illustration.

1.3 Research Questions

This study examines whether JICA’s development interventions have positively transformed and empowered the lives of rural women with emphasis on the shea butter industry in the Northern Region of Ghana. Specifically, the research tries to answer the following questions:

1. What are JICA’s interventions in the empowerment of women in the shea butter industry?

2. What is the impact of JICA's interventions on the shea butter industry?
3. What are the challenges to women's empowerment in the shea butter industry?

1.4 Objectives of the Study

This study is guided by the following objectives:

1. To investigate JICA's women's empowerment interventions in the shea butter industry of Ghana.
2. To determine the impact of JICA's intervention on women's empowerment in the shea butter industry.
3. To identify the barriers to women's empowerment in the shea butter industry.

1.5 Scope of the Study

The primary objective of the study is to examine how JICA's development interventions have contributed to empowering women in the shea butter industry in Ghana which is dominated by poor rural women. Specifically, the research examines JICA's development intervention and approach to women's empowerment in the shea butter industry. It is estimated that the livelihoods of some 600,000 women and their dependents in the Northern regions of Ghana is based on the income from the shea tree.⁴⁰ The shea butter industry in Ghana, thus, is located in clusters within communities in Northern Ghana. Since the focus of the study is on the women's empowerment program by IDAs, the research is restricted to the Sagnarigu women's group, who are beneficiaries of JICA's assistance. The field work was conducted at the Sagnarigu center and related agencies within three (3) weeks in July, 2018.

1.6 Rationale of the Study

The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action called for the empowerment and the increase in the involvement of women in all spheres of life on the basis of equality. This is in response to the increasing recognition that women's opportunity to equally partake in decision making processes is largely inhibited by the lack and control over resources. As a result, gender equality and women's empowerment were endorsed as a prerequisite to attaining the MDGs by all countries and leading development institutions.⁴¹ The need for women's empowerment is necessary because it expands "women's ability to make strategic life choices in a context where this ability was previously denied them".⁴²

Economic empowerment is crucial because when women control increased income, they gain self-confidence, obtain a voice and have a say in decision making at the household and within the community. Yet, the empowerment discourse in Ghana has largely centered on meeting only the welfare and immediate survival needs of women.⁴³ As a result, endemic poverty and marginalization persists among rural women in Ghana despite several development interventions by IDAs across the country. It is important, therefore, to examine how women themselves understand and experience the empowerment process to help IDAs effectively contribute to women's empowerment in Ghana.

Using JICA's intervention in the Sagnarigu women's group as a case illustration, the research will help:

1. Build the capacity of women in the shea butter industry to empower themselves.
2. Assist IDAs to implement effective strategies to achieve optimum women's empowerment.
3. Contribute to existing knowledge on the role of IDAs in harnessing local resources as a means to women's empowerment in the shea butter industry.

1.7 Hypothesis

The development interventions of JICA contributes to empowerment of rural women in the shea butter industry.

1.8 Conceptual Framework

The study is grounded in Gender and Development (GAD) theory which “looks at the issue of power as it relates to gender and at strategies for empowering women and challenging the status quo”.⁴⁴ In 1978, Whitehead stated that:

no study of women and development can start from the viewpoint that the problem is women, but rather men and women, and more specifically the relations between them. The relations between men and women are socially constituted and not derived from biology. Therefore, the term gender relations should distinguish such social relations between men and women from those characteristics, which can be derived from biological differences. In this connection, sex is the province of biology, i.e. fixed and unchangeable qualities, while gender is the province of social science, i.e. qualities which are shaped through the history of social relations and interactions.⁴⁵

From this perspective, therefore, proponents of GAD recognize “gender” as a social construction of the “relative position of women and men within the family as well as society”.⁴⁶

The GAD theory emerged in the 1980s and it is rooted in socialist feminism.⁴⁷ Unlike the earlier approaches, GAD shifted the focus from “women” to “gender” in the development discourse. Rathgeber’s 1990 publication, *WID, WAD, GAD: Trends in Research and Practice*, captures this as:

socialist feminists have identified the social construction of productive and reproduction as the basis of women’s oppression and have focused attention on the social relations of gender questioning the validity of roles that have been ascribed to both women and men in different societies.⁴⁸

As such, development and women’s involvement take place in an environment of complex socio-economic and political structures, which necessitate holistic development strategies. It is

imperative to investigate what roles women and men play in the development process at the same time, without overly focusing on women. From this perspective, GAD advocates for a transformation of unequal gender relations which put women in a disadvantageous position and consider women as agents of their own change instead of just beneficiaries of development outcomes.⁴⁹

The GAD concept emphasizes women's emancipation and empowerment to enable women effect change by themselves which addresses both their survival and strategic needs.⁵⁰ Nabil Kabeer defines empowerment as, "the expansion in people's ability to make strategic life choices in a context where this ability was previously denied to them".⁵¹ According to Janet G. Townsend, empowerment is the gaining of power by the vulnerable.⁵² From the foregoing, it is evident that to empower is to solve the problem of the vulnerable regarding "power". Moser adds a resource dimension to define empowerment as:

the capacity of women to increase their own self-reliance and internal strength. This is identified as the right to determine choices in life and to influence the direction of change, through the ability to gain control over material and non-material resources.⁵³

From the foregoing, it is evident that the root concept of empowerment is "power...but power less in terms of control over others, and more in terms of capacity of women to increase their own independence and internal strength".⁵⁴ Women's empowerment is thus, is "a key driver of efforts to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger, achieve universal primary education, reduce child and maternal mortality, and fight against major diseases like HIV/AIDS and malaria".⁵⁵

The GAD theory has inspired new debates in the development discourse with some important implications for both theory and practice, however, it has drawn some criticism. Judy El-Bushra emphasizes three main criticisms of GAD: (1) confusion about the meaning of gender

in GAD discourse, (2) confusion about equating gender transformation to women's economic empowerment, and (3) oversimplification of complex issues in simple slogan. First, the interpretation and implementation of gender differs radically among different individuals and agencies.⁵⁶ Arnfred Signe, thus recognizes that despite the good intentions of GAD to politicize women's issues in development, it has rather achieved the opposite where "in the context of development discourse, gender has become an issue of checklists, planning and political correctness."⁵⁷

Secondly, GAD is critiqued for its assumption that gender transformation equals women's economic progress.⁵⁸ As a result, development agencies have not moved away from adopting women's economic progress as their key strategies and assume that progress in women's economic situation would automatically lead to gender equality. In the words of Arnfred, GAD has become a conduit for economic growth based on a neo-liberal economic agenda.⁵⁹ The third criticism of GAD is the tendency to oversimplify complex issues and express them in slogans. She warns that slogans such as "two-thirds of the world's work is done by women" abstracted from the context and used carelessly may be misleading. GAD is dotted with many such slogans and clichés as: "Women account for two-thirds of all working hours, receive only one-tenth of the world income and own less than one per cent of world property" and "Women world-wide produce half of the world's food, constitute 70 per cent of the world's billion absolute poor and own only one per cent of the world's land."⁶⁰ The authors argue that such claims seem to be highly effective as "advocacy slogans" but have the potential to backfire and discredit feminist research since they do not have an accurate basis.⁶¹

The gender mainstreaming approach under GAD has also been an area of major criticism. Scholars argue that a major problem with gender mainstreaming is that it is rather difficult to

implement.⁶² The goal of integrating women in all spheres and at all levels of the society is not an easy task. Gender mainstreaming implies a major institutional change in all areas and levels of the public sphere. Such an institutional change which is supposed to come from above through 'top-down strategies' requires political will of the state. However, women's position in the hierarchy of all social structures (including the state), male dominance and resistance, and a generally hostile environment constitute serious obstacles for gender mainstreaming.⁶³ Fighting for gender mainstreaming thus, may risk diverting the attention of the feminist struggle from the overall impossibility of the task.⁶⁴

Notwithstanding, the theory is relevant to the present study in many dimensions. Firstly, the GAD theory highlights the need to approach development from the gender perspective, attaching importance to the role of both men and women in the women's empowerment process. This is relevant to the present study because patriarchy is entrenched in communities and societies in the Northern Region. It is not sufficient, therefore, to only claim to provide resources and training to women expecting that they attain empowerment, but rather, the involvement of the men – who usually are the local leaders and owners of the land etc. is necessary. From this perspective, the study shall assess how JICA's intervention maneuvered this terrain of male dominance to indulge them to aid the empowerment process of the Sagnarigu women's group in the shea butter industry.

Again, the GAD theory emphasizes the need to perceive women as agents who can change and can affect their own empowerment and economic growth, rather than passive receivers of development aid. This is important to the present study, in that, women in the shea butter industry indeed need more than financial resources and equipment to be empowered. They need appropriate training and support to build up their economic and social standing to overcome the power relations

in the society; only then can they make strategic life choices in all spheres of their lives. Not least, the central theme of the study, women's empowerment, is situated in the gender and development theory in the sense that GAD emphasizes emancipation as a sure means to women's development. Hence, the GAD theory gives a basis to examine the extent to which JICA's interventions have enabled the beneficiaries in the Sagnarigu shea butter processing center to empower themselves towards economic and social development.

1.9 Literature Review

This section reviews some works on women in the development discourse and women's empowerment. The seminal work of Caroline Moser in 1983 distinguished five different approaches to women's issues in development discourse:⁶⁵ welfare, equity, anti-poverty, efficiency and empowerment.⁶⁶ Moser opines that women were first regarded as "welfare concerns" in development projects of the post-colonialist and post-World War II reconstruction era. At the time, development aid was more a plan to bridge the gap between industrialized and non-industrialized nations. According to Moser, the development process was therefore targeted at meeting the survival needs and improving the reproductive capacities of women; solely as mothers and wives through the distribution of free food, relief aid, child and maternal nutrition care as well as family planning programmes.⁶⁷ Women were regarded as mere passive recipients of development aid, and their economic and productive potentials were ignored in the welfare model from the 1950s to 1970s. This is why development aid failed to address the strategic needs of women and generate any positive impacts in their lives.

Esther Boserup's work marked the beginning of feminists' engagement in the development discourse.⁶⁸ Her work critiqued the dominant view of women as mere beneficiaries of development outcomes and resulted in the Women in Development theory. Boserup argued that the development

process affects women and men differently, and that industrialization and agricultural mechanization favor and promote male dominance in economic development to the detriment of women, whose contributions often go un-noticed and un-paid for.⁶⁹ She therefore concluded that despite their economic potential and contributions, women have been excluded for far too long; it was time to integrate them into the development process for more successful outcomes.⁷⁰ In fact, Boserup's work highlights the importance of recognizing women's capability in contributing to economic development.⁷¹

Boserup's groundbreaking work prompted the UN Decade for Women (1976-1985) following the first World Conference on women in 1975 and called attention to women's economic and social development role. Three approaches were adopted to make up for the disadvantages that accrued to women over the years. These include the equity, anti-poverty and efficiency approaches aimed at reducing social and economic inequalities between women and men, as well as encouraging the increase of women participation in development projects. As Kate Young notes:

...to integrate women into the mainstream economic, political and social life, laws and institutions must be reformed, and attitudes changed, women without the right level of qualification have to be persuaded and aided in getting into higher level of education and training.⁷²

However, feminist researchers, activists and political leaders from the Global South, who were collectively known as the Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era (DAWN) believed earlier strategies in implementing development assistance has not helped women in the Global South. DAWN argued that economic independence and the attainment of basic survival needs are not sufficient in liberating women and achieving gender equality without first transforming the economic, political and social system. As DAWN put it, "equality for women is impossible within the existing economic, political and cultural processes that reserve resources,

power and control for small groups of people”.⁷³ It is this lack of power that worsens women’s dependency, marginalization, and increasing poverty. As such, empowerment is more an avenue for women to gain the power they require in order to break the relations of dependency.

Gita Sen and Caren Grown as well as other empowerment theorists have been very critical of the women in development paradigm and reject the premise that women in the Global South are not sufficiently integrated into the development process.⁷⁴ They believe that women’s subordination emanating from existing structures in societies, is the basis for gender inequalities in capabilities and opportunities between women and men.⁷⁵ Thus, “new approaches to development” which “transform gender subordination and in the process, break down other oppressive structures”⁷⁶ are required in order to realize any positive impact in the lives of women in the Third World.

Moreover, Ouida Chichester and colleagues acknowledge that whether at work or in other spheres of life, there are deeply rooted obstacles that limit women’s ability to achieve their full potential.⁷⁷ The authors claim this gender inequality, is the bane of the region’s economic and social stagnation.⁷⁸ This assertion is buttressed by the African Development Bank’s claim that “eliminating gender inequality and empowering women could raise the productive potential of one billion Africans, delivering a huge boost to the continent’s development potential”.⁷⁹

Just like Boserup and other scholars, Chichester agrees that women are economic and development assets. According to them, the assertion that women in Africa have limited economic engagement is false.⁸⁰ Rather, these women constitute the most economically active segment of women globally, except that their contributions are not recognized, rewarded and encouraged⁸¹. The report therefore calls for private sector involvement and collaboration with governments,

NGOs and development agencies to unleash the full productive potential of Africa's women through appropriate empowerment, which would in turn also yield profitability for the private companies.⁸² More importantly, Ouida and colleagues recognize that the piece-meal approach to empowerment is to blame for the failed outcomes of empowerment interventions in Sub-Saharan Africa. They advocate for a holistic approach to women's empowerment since "without addressing the social, cultural and legal conditions that hold women back, companies will fail to promote women's economic empowerment".⁸³

Additionally, Maholtra A., Schuler S. R., Boender, C. make some salient points about the measures for women's empowerment.⁸⁴ After reviewing 45 empirical studies on women's empowerment, they observed that the concept has been measured differently in different contexts with varying foci. Maholtra and colleagues observe that, "behaviors and attributes that signify empowerment in one context often have different meanings elsewhere".⁸⁵ It is difficult to measure women's empowerment directly due to its process and nature. It is rather through proxies such as educational level, employment, health and knowledge. These, together, make achieving a uniform and universal measure for empowerment difficult.⁸⁶ Nonetheless, the authors found that literature on women's empowerment at least agree on two essential components of women's empowerment as agency and process.⁸⁷ The complex nature of the empowerment process is presented by Rowlands Jo when she writes that:

"[E]mpowerment process will take a form which arises out of a particular cultural, ethnic, historical, economic, geographic, political, and social location; out of an individual's place in the life cycle, specific life experience, and out of the interaction of all the above with gender relations prevailing in society".⁸⁸

Rowlands goes further to distinguish between three empowerment processes: "personal empowerment, collective empowerment and empowerment in close relationships. First, personal

empowerment involves a sense of agency through which a woman can interact with her surroundings and cause things to happen.⁸⁹ The core elements for personal empowerment are: self-confidence; self-esteem; sense of agency (being an individual who can interact with her surroundings and cause things to happen); 'self' in a wider context (being able to move out of the gender-assigned roles given by culture); and dignity. Second, collective empowerment is achieved through the collective action of a group and the core elements include: sense of collective agency; self-organization and management; group identity; and group dignity.⁹⁰ Third but not least, empowerment in close relationships requires some level of personal empowerment to enable the individual woman go up against immediate family members, such as husbands and children, and also parents, parents-in-law, etc. This requires: ability to negotiate; communicate; get support; self-organization and management; defend self/rights; sense of 'self' in the relationship; and dignity.⁹¹

Anyidoho Nana Akua and Manuh Takyiwa observe that in Ghana, economic empowerment is a national strategy towards poverty reduction.⁹² According to them, economic empowerment is underpinned by the notion of vulnerability to which much attention is diverted. The Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs (MoWAC) states that the vulnerable comprise of widows, children and extremely disadvantaged persons. The greatest chunk of Ghana's economic empowerment programmes is directed at the poor women and rural women, who are thought to be worse off.⁹³ Therefore, a lot of empowerment discourse in Ghana is framed in the welfare and basic needs of women. This approach to development either sees women as victims to be taken care of, or as marginalized groups to be integrated into the development process, mainly for the sake of the nation.⁹⁴ However, these were the critiques that have culminated in the women's empowerment discourse. Is it then a case that women's empowerment in Ghana is just lip service and a cloak for neo-liberal approaches to development that leave women in a vicious cycle of poverty?

1.10 Sources of Data and Data Collection

Primary data were collected directly from women beneficiaries at the Sagnarigu Shea Butter Processing Center, the Executive Director of JICA and two officials of the Africa 2000 Network. Interviews were used to elicit primary information pertaining to how beneficiaries understand and experience the empowerment process, the benefits of JICA's intervention, the difference in JICA's approach to previous interventions and the challenges encountered on the empowerment journey. The women beneficiaries were interviewed because they were the core beneficiaries of the JICA intervention, and the thrust of the study. The officials of JICA and Africa 2000 Network were also included to provide further information on the project and also help understand the basis for the project, the approach and strategies adopted to women's empowerment and also the challenges to women's empowerment.

In order to corroborate the primary data solicited from the respondents, interview responses with Professor Dodzi Tsikata, an astute gender and women's empowerment scholar was used. Professor Dodzi Tsikata is a Professor of Gender Issues and has spoken and written widely on women's empowerment, particularly in the context of Ghana. When an appointment for an interview with her to solicit her views on the women's empowerment discourse and process in Ghana failed, an audio recording of her interview was used.

1.11 Study Methodology

A qualitative research methodology was deemed most appropriate to guide the study to describe, explain and interpret the role of international development agencies in empowering women to attain economic and sustainable livelihoods. The study provided a historical analysis of international development agencies in Ghana and their role in women's empowerment in practice; noting the approaches, measures and implementation challenges.

A project by JICA in the Sagnarigu shea butter processing enclave of northern Ghana aimed at empowering women was then examined. The case study approach provided an opportunity to gain deep insights and practical lessons that can be useful to provide greater understanding of the of some rural poor women beneficiaries and help shape future projects targeted at empowering women.

1.11.1 Sampling Procedure

The purposive and snowball non-probability sampling techniques were used in the study.⁹⁵ Purposive sampling is a technique dependent on the judgment of the researcher to decide who should take part in the study. Snowballing on the other hand is a sampling technique where researchers ask each respondent interviewed to direct them to other respondents in respect of the study.⁹⁶ The population for the study comprised all 35 beneficiaries currently at the Sagnarigu Shea Butter Processing Center in Tamale. The snowballing sampling technique which enables each respondent to direct the interviewer/researcher to other respondents in respect of the study⁹⁷ was used to collect data through interview from 25 women beneficiaries at the center over a period of three (3) days. This represents a response rate of 71%. More so, the purposive sampling technique was used to select and administer questionnaires to the Executive Director of JICA in Ghana and two officials of Africa 2000 Network: the Former Executive Director during whose tenure the JICA intervention was realized and the current Executive Director.

1.12 Organization of Study

The organization of the study is provided below:

Chapter one is Research Design. It introduces the theme of the study and provides a background, the problem of interest, the research questions, objectives and hypothesis as well as the conceptual framework, literature review and methods of data collection and analysis.

Chapter two is Development Agencies and Women's Empowerment in Ghana. It discusses the concept of women's empowerment and the contributions of IDAs towards empowering women.

Chapter three is the Impact of JICA's Development Assistance: Analysis and Results. The chapter focuses on the analysis of data collated from interviews to address the objectives set out in the study.

Chapter four presents summary of key findings, conclusion and recommendations to further promote women's empowerment towards sustainable livelihoods for rural women in the shea butter industry in Ghana.

Endnotes

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CHAPTER TWO

DEVELOPMENT AGENCIES AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT IN GHANA.

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents an overview of women's empowerment within the development context. It discusses the concept of power in relation to women's empowerment as well as the dimensions and types of empowerment. The chapter also presents the approaches and criteria for measuring empowerment. It then examines the contributions of IDAs to women's empowerment and JICA's strategies for women's empowerment.

2.2 Overview and Definition of Women's Empowerment

National governments, non-governmental organizations and international development agencies have taken steps to tackle the incessant social, economic and political marginalization of women. The empowerment approach emerged in the 1980s, as an alternative to the existing gender models for development which focused mainly on economic status as an incentive for including women.¹ As a grassroots and bottom-up approach to development, empowerment offered a transformational basis to challenge patriarchy and gender prejudice, race and ethnicity.² According to Moser, the empowerment approach is the outcome of feminist writings and grassroots organizational experiences of the First World women and less from the research of the First World women and development planners.³ Proponents of the empowerment approach argue that women can benefit from development projects if power relations that negatively impact on women's lives at all levels are changed, and when women are given a voice to be self-reliant rather than depending on development planners to bring about change in their lives.⁴

Moreover, Kabeer recognizes that the empowerment approach represents a complete departure from the notion that poor women are powerless, but rather possess agency to affect their own change.⁵ She continues that “empowerment from below arises from newly acquired access to the intangible resources of analytical skills, social networks, organizational strength and a sense of not being alone”.⁶ The empowerment approach thus focuses on local contexts and people, regarding women as active advocate of their own lives and active voices in their own progress, which is relative to the power of decision making. Including women’s groups in development programs at the grassroots level by allowing them to make decisions and partake in the implementation procedures, not only empowers them, but also ensures that they contribute to the mainstream development of their communities.⁷

Most literature also associate empowerment with personal control, which enhances the opportunities for people to take control of their lives.⁸ According to Cochran Moncrieff people understand their own needs far better than anyone else hence, they should have the power to act upon them.⁹ In the same vein, empowerment involves the capability and right to make decisions in the social, political, and economic domains.¹⁰ As such, individuals who are empowered tend to have the freedom to choose capabilities which empowers them to change their way life and the decisions they make. Kabeer defines empowerment as, “the process by which those who have been denied the ability to make strategic life choices acquire such an ability”.¹¹ Similarly, Janet G. Townsend regards empowerment as, “the gaining of power by the vulnerable”,¹² whilst Moser argues that empowerment enables women “to determine choices in life and to influence the direction of change, through the ability to gain control over material and non-material resources”.¹³

Table 2.1 shows an extract of definitions of empowerment.

Table 2.1: Definitions of Empowerment

Author	Definition	Dimensions
World Bank (2009)	“Empowerment is the process of increasing the capacity of individuals or groups to make choices and to transform those choices into desired actions and outcomes. Central to this process are actions which both build individual and collective assets, and improve the efficiency and fairness of the organizational and institutional context which govern the use of these assets”.	Access to information, participation and capacity.
Kabeer (2008)	“Empowerment means women's increased control over their own lives, bodies, and environments. In discussions of women's empowerment, emphasis is often placed on women's decision-making roles, their economic self-reliance, and their legal rights to equal treatment, inheritance and protection against all forms of discrimination, in addition to the elimination of barriers to access such resources as education and information.”	Resources, Agency and Achievements.
Alkire (2007)	“Empowerment is control over personal decision, domain specific autonomy, and increase in certain kinds of agency that are deemed particularly instrumental to the situation at hand.”	Autonomy and Agency.

Narayan (2002)	“Empowerment is the expansion of assets and capabilities of poor people to participate in, negotiate with, influence, control, and hold accountable institutions that affect their lives”.	Capabilities, Participation World.
Bennett (2002)	“Empowerment is the enhancement of assets and capabilities of diverse individuals and groups to engage, influence and hold accountable the institutions which affect them.”	Capabilities.
Oakley (2001)	“Empowerment is an increase in power. He argues that power can be either a variable sum or zero sum. The former refers to a process through which the powerless can be empowered without altering the nature and the levels of the power. While the latter refers to any gain in power by one group inevitably resulting in a reduction of the power exercised by others.”	Access to Resources.
Kabeer (1999)	“Empowerment is the process by which those who have been denied the ability to make strategic life choices acquire such an ability.”	Resources, Agency and Achievement.
Surekharao and Rajamanamma (1999)	“Empowerment is a multi-dimensional process, which should enable women or a group of women to realize their full identity and power in all spheres of life.”	Power.

Rowlands (1997)	“Empowerment is more than participation in decision making. It must also include the process that leads people to perceive themselves as able and entitled to make decisions.”	Participation in Decision making.
Batliwala (1994)	“Empowerment refers to how much influence people have over external actions that matter to their welfare. Empowerment is, first and foremost, about power; changing power relations in favour of those who previously exercised little power over their own lives.”	Power.
Sen (1993)	“Empowerment is reflected in a person’s capability set. The “capability” of a person depends on a variety of factors, including personal characteristics and social arrangements. Empowerment is the capacity to fulfil this capability and not just the choice to do so.”	Capabilities.
Moser (1993)	“Empowerment is the capacity of women to increase their own self-reliance and internal strength. This is identified as the right to determine choices in life and to influence the direction of change, through the ability to gain control over material and non-material resources.”	Resources, Agency, Capability.

Source: Developed by Author

The study adopts Kabeer’s definition and framework for empowerment, as it was developed in the context of rural women in developing countries. Kabeer’s definition of empowerment also focusses on choice and regards empowerment as a process of improving the

capacity of individuals or groups through expansion of assets and capabilities.¹⁴ She extends this by stating that there are two options one can choose from: strategic life choices, which are significant to the way people want to lead their lives, classified as first-order choices, and the second-order choices, which do not define life's parameters and are less consequential but still significant for the quality of life and are mostly framed by the first-order choices.¹⁵

Resources, agency, and achievement are considered the three dimensions or pathways through which empowerment occurs.¹⁶ Resources are the pre-conditions for enhancing choice making which include economic, human and social resources; and are acquired through multiple social relationships in a society such as family, market, community, and future claims and allocations.¹⁷ The access to and control over these resources are often determined by the rules and norms of the society. In essence, resources increase the ability of women to exercise choice and are the means through which agency is carried out. However, resources can be seen as a measure of potential, but do not necessarily imply agency and achievements.¹⁸

Furthermore, agency is “the ability to define one’s goals and act upon them”.¹⁹ Agency thus enables women to make purposeful choices, which involve envisioning and purposefully choosing options. As a result, agency is core to empowerment, as it represents the ability to actively exercise choices and put them into effect “in ways that challenge power relations”.²⁰ Agency, thus is considered as having the “power to”; which depends on self-esteem, awareness and education. According to Malhotra Anshu²¹ “... there could be an improvement in gender equality by various measures, but unless the intervening processes involved women as agents of that change rather than merely as its recipients we would not consider it empowerment”. Agency emphasizes social inclusion and participation of those people (women) in disadvantaged positions and communities,

as it rejects the top-down approaches toward development.²² Indicators of agency can be women's mobility in public, group participation, decision influence in the household or male violence.²³

Not least, achievements are the outcomes of the extent to which one's capabilities (i.e. resources and agency) are realized.²⁴ It is important to note that resources and agency alone are not a measure of empowerment, but rather a measure of potential choice.²⁵ Hence, agency and resources together represent the capability and potential people have for living the lives they want, whereas achievements are the actual outcomes of their efforts. Measures of these outcomes can be frequency of domestic violence, control of income or educational level. It is important to note, however, that not all outcomes are positive or turn out as planned. Furthermore, the three dimensions of empowerment are not meant to be seen in isolation, rather, they are indivisible and must be seen with reference to each other.²⁶

As such, power can be considered a blend of agency and resources; therefore, for women to get empowered, they must gain both agency and access to or control over resources.²⁷ It is critical to note whether differences in achievements are because of one's ability to challenge inequalities, rather than a difference in personal preference or individual characteristics, such as laziness, where power is not an issue.²⁸ Failure to achieve one's goal as a result of deep-seated constraints on the ability to choose can be taken as an expression of disempowerment. Thus, the main issue in the concept of power is the ability to choose.²⁹

2.3 The Concept of Power

The empowerment approach seeks to address the strategic needs of women by changing the distribution of power at all levels to improve women's self-reliance and decision-making capabilities. In other words, disempowered people are those who have been denied the ability to

make choices³⁰, and empowered people are those who have the capacity and power to better their lives by acting on important issues. As such, empowered people have personal control, competence, willingness and the desire to exert control over their lives.³¹ From the foregoing, it is evident that the root concept of empowerment is “power”, but powerless in terms of domination over others, and more in terms of capacity of women to increase their own self-reliance and internal strength. Therefore, it is essential to understand the different types of power.

Jo Rowlands categorizes and differentiates among four types of power relations: power over, power to, power with and power from within.³² ‘Power over’ is described as the ability to force and mainly associated with manipulation and control over others.³³ The fear of some men that they will lose control and power over women often is a major hindrance for women’s empowerment. They see women’s attainment of more power rather as a threat to men and at the expense of men.³⁴ As such, empowerment based on this form of power tends to stress the need to participate in existing economic and political structures but not making changes to existing structures.³⁵ In addition, ‘Power to’, involves transforming existing hierarchies and the potential of people to create and make a difference in their own lives. Empowerment based on this form of power emphasizes access to decision-making.³⁶

Furthermore, ‘power with’ arises from collective action and the notion of finding common ground and being stronger together. Empowerment based on this form of power stresses on accumulating power to strengthen the power of others. Organizing, defined as, “the process by which people who are individually weak and vulnerable unite and create power together”³⁷ is considered a key avenue for creating “power with”. In so doing, organizing in a cooperative can give rural women an opportunity to achieve things together, which they otherwise would not have been able to do individually.

Finally, ‘power within’ is described as power from individual consciousness, focusing on building self-esteem, emphasizing each person’s uniqueness and strength, grounded in self-acceptance and self-respect. Rowlands admonishes development agencies to understand the different forms of power to ensure that empowerment is grounded properly to enable women gain and have access and control over resources, by transforming the institutions that perpetuate discrimination based on gender.³⁸

2.4 Measuring Women’s Empowerment

Over the years, Ghanaian women have made remarkable progress in several aspects of life, but although singular and inspiring examples of women in business, politics and sports are evident, available data inform us that overall, women continue to lag behind men in educational attainment, income and employment status.³⁹ Consequently, Cornwall and Anyidoho contend that feminists are disappointed because women’s empowerment which began as a gender agenda demanding for radical and collective transformation of economic, political and social relations to give women the needed opportunity and agency to make strategic choices about their lives has not lived to the task.⁴⁰ For many feminists, “women’s empowerment represents a sorry but not unfamiliar tale of how a once-radical concept was stolen by the high priests of neo-liberalism only to be foisted onto women in the Global South as their putative salvation”.⁴¹ They note further that in contrast to indigenous notions of empowerment that promised transformation through mobilization and collective action, this alien ‘empowerment’ is individualist, instrumental, and neo-liberal.⁴²

In reviewing discourses on women’s empowerment in Ghana dating from the post-colonial era to the present democratic dispensation of the 4th republic, Anyidoho and Manuh point out that Ghana has not adequately supported institutions mandated to promote gender equality, a reason

for the country's inability to attain the full provision of the Beijing Platform for Action which was signed in 1995.⁴³ More interesting, that the National Council for Women and Development evolved into the Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs (MoWCA), but still with no clear direction on women's empowerment. For instance, in *The National Gender and Children Policy*, the term women's empowerment was not explicitly stated nor situated in any theoretical or conceptual framework although dotted with GAD and WID. As a result, the deplorable state of roads is not considered a gender issue, although it is a leading contributor to the increasing maternal mortality.

This is suggestive that one source of disempowerment of women lies in the social constructions of womanhood which concentrate on women's reproductive roles and limit their access to land, credit, training and education as well as to decision making structures at both community and national levels.⁴⁴ As Anyidoho and Manuh rightly put it,

In such circumstances, it is difficult to classify these as discourses on empowerment as they have little transformative potential to question or change power relationships, restructure institutions and confront stereotypical ideas and values. Rather, it is largely basic survival and anti-poverty discourses that masquerade as empowerment discourses in Ghana, and it is necessary, to bring the power back in in women's empowerment.⁴⁵

In fact, the process and nature of empowerment makes it difficult to measure directly, but rather through proxies such as educational level, employment, health, knowledge. These, together, make achieving a uniform and universal measure for empowerment difficult. Although empowerment emerged as a socio-political process, the word's meaning quickly became narrowed, apolitical and a pathway for neo-liberal ideas. What was really a process from within and an alternative to short-term, goal-oriented projects, largely became quantified.⁴⁶ The number of meetings held or the number of women elected to leadership positions became a measure of success rather than acknowledging that empowerment is a long-term process of thinking, learning and acting.⁴⁷ Cornwall and Anyidoho questioned the measures of empowerment when they asked:

How does the word ‘empowerment’ translate across languages, contexts and cultures? What does it mean in the lives of diverse women whose experiences of power, of oppression, of liberty, of pleasure, and of the injuries of discrimination and structural violence may be so very different? And what does it come to mean in contexts with distinctively different histories and configurations of state society relations, of expressions of citizenship, of social mobilization and political engagement, of the rise and wane of religious and ethnic identifications, and of gendered identities and relations.⁴⁸

As a result, the measurement indicators of women’s empowerment should take into consideration the ways in which context shapes the processes of empowerment, because, new possibilities due to access to new resources may be realized differently in different contextual possibilities. “Unless indicators are sensitive to these contextual possibilities, they are likely to miss the significance of those transformations which do occur.”⁴⁹

From the studies of Mayoux⁵⁰, Kabeer⁵¹, Malhotra⁵² and Kabeer⁵³, the components of women’s empowerment include decision making power in the household, access to credit, participation, knowledge & awareness, voice, freedom, mobility, respect, economic participation and development of leadership qualities.⁵⁴ Decision making power in the household comprises women’s ability to make and influence the process of accomplishment of decisions at the household level. Access and control over credit measures women’s ability to access the credit needed for their livelihood so their income level will change. Participation measures women’s role in economic and financial decision making. Knowledge and awareness measure the level of awareness in terms of knowledge, self-worth, and changed mind-set etc. The freedom of expression means that she feels comfortable expressing her views without any hesitation in the family (presence of her husband or other family member) and in group meetings.

Furthermore, freedom and mobility measure women’s freedom of movement such as the ability to visit the local market or go outside with confidence. In rural areas, there are often strict rules that restrict women’s physical mobility. Respect measures the extent to which the family

regards her value and contribution and gives her the due respect. Voice measures women's ability to stand up to and speak up against exploitation and other negative situations that impact their lives. In essence, women's empowerment goes beyond only economic well-being to include women's access to credit, participation in financial decision making, and contribution to economic activity, knowledge and awareness, independence and mobility.

2.5 International Development Agencies and Women's Empowerment

Women make up more than 50% (over half) of the world's population and more than half of the poor population.⁵⁵ The lack of opportunities and denial of basic rights are some of the factors contributing to the high number of poor women globally.⁵⁶ For example, women around the world who do not have access to financial services constitute about 75% because they do not have paid jobs or collateral.⁵⁷ The handful of women who work, are usually restricted to low-paying jobs, segregation positions and sectors that are deemed to be socially acceptable for women to work in.⁵⁸ In addition, women bear the responsibility of housekeeping, childbearing and taking care of the elderly, which are either undervalued or ignored, yet limiting their ability to exercise their productive potential.⁵⁹

The world community as well as national governments have recognized that women's empowerment and participation is crucial for poverty reduction and economic development.⁶⁰ Women's empowerment is also regarded by many international development agencies and donors as an important tool for achieving sustainable human development, making it an end in itself.⁶¹ Additionally, women's empowerment is considered a tool for solving the issue of poverty, lack of education, health, powerlessness, and domestic violence against women. For these reasons, empowerment has become widely popular, taking center stage in the development discourse by policymakers, planners, activists, social workers and other stakeholders.⁶² The World Bank for

example, opines that investing in women promotes economic growth, enhances economic potential and reduces poverty, thus highlighting women's economic empowerment as the main objective in its gender action plan.⁶³ The United Nations adds that the requirements for empowerment are women's full involvement in formulating, implementing and evaluating decisions that regulate people's well-being.

At the International Development Strategy for the Second United Nations Development Decade in 1970, the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 2626 (XXV) stated that:

In recognition of the special importance of the role which can be fulfilled only by official development assistance, a major part of financial resource transfers to the developing countries should be provided in the form of official development assistance. Each economically advanced country will progressively increase its official development assistance to the developing countries and will exert its best efforts to reach a minimum net amount of 0.7 per cent of its gross national product at market prices by the middle of the Decade.⁶⁴

The global development system has since been dominated by Western donors such as the G7 and European Union; emerging powers such as China, India and Brazil and non-state actors such as foundations and international development agencies (IDAs) and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). Together, these actors have been committed to increasing their support to poor countries by enhancing aid effectiveness within the framework of the Paris Declaration. Japan for example, extends ODA to developing countries which have three-fourths of the world's population through various kinds of cooperation. Geographically, Asia has received the bulk of Japan's ODA investment, or about 70%, as a result of Japan's political, economic and historic relations with the region. In recent years, however, the list of regions receiving Japan's assistance has expanded to include Africa, Latin America, the Middle East and Oceania in addition to Asia, reflecting Japan's responsibility as a major aid donor to world economic stability and poverty reduction.

However, the contributions of developed countries and international development agencies to the economic growth and development of developing countries have been criticized widely. For

example, in *Stingy Samaritans; Why Recent Increases in Development Aid Fail to Help the Poor*, Pekka Hiryonen makes some revelations about foreign aid that suggest that the supposed assistance from the so-called rich nations or donor agencies is questionable.⁶⁵ First, foreign aid falls below the 0.7 percent target stipulated by the United Nations some 35 years ago. Second, development assistance is of dubious quality; where in many cases, donor countries and agencies design aid to primarily serve their strategic and economic interests, or to benefit powerful domestic interest groups.⁶⁶ For so long, therefore, development assistance has been rendered inefficient because aid systems are based on the interests of donors rather than on the needs of recipients. Hiryonen notes finally that too little development assistance reaches countries that most desperately need it; but rather gets wasted on overpriced goods and services from the very same donor countries.⁶⁷ As William Easterly puts it:

[A tragedy of the world's poor has been that] the West spent \$2.3 trillion on foreign aid over the last five decades and still had not managed to get twelve-cent medicines to children to prevent half of all malaria deaths. The West spent \$2.3 trillion and still had not managed to get four-dollar bed nets to poor families. The West spent \$2.3 trillion and still had not managed to get three dollars to each new mother to prevent five million child deaths.⁶⁸

Nevertheless, International Development Agencies (IDAs) have been committed to women's empowerment as a strong prerequisite for economic growth and poverty reduction. For instance, the Human Development Report highlights that empowerment is about investing in women's capabilities, as well as enabling them to exercise their choices, which is not only valuable in itself but also a sure way of contributing to overall development and economic growth.⁶⁹ The United Nations Development Programme also believes that increasing access to income and skills is empowering, thus focusing on promoting economic self-reliance, decision-making and provision of skills. The goal of enabling women to exercise their choices seems to be shaped around the belief that this will solve economic issues around the world. That being the case, many

countries, particularly developing countries around the world, have resorted to microfinance because it is regarded as a great strategy to eradicate poverty and empower women while improving the economy.

2.6 Contributions of IDAs to Women's Empowerment in Ghana

In Ghana, the landscape of women's rights and empowerment is shaped by the discourses of state bureaucracy, multilateral and bilateral agencies, NGOs, and women's rights organizations. As such, successive governments in Ghana have adopted the women's empowerment approach due to the demands from donor agencies and development partners.⁷⁰ Among the key contributors are international financial institutions like the World Bank, the African Development Bank, technical and advisory institutions such as the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), United Nations Development Fund, Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), International Development Research Centre (IDRC), and donor organizations including the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), United Nations Women (UNW), the Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA), German Technical Co-operation (GTZ) and United States Agency for International Development (USAID). It is not overly stated to say that these agencies have contributed immensely to Ghana's development through poverty reduction and women's empowerment.

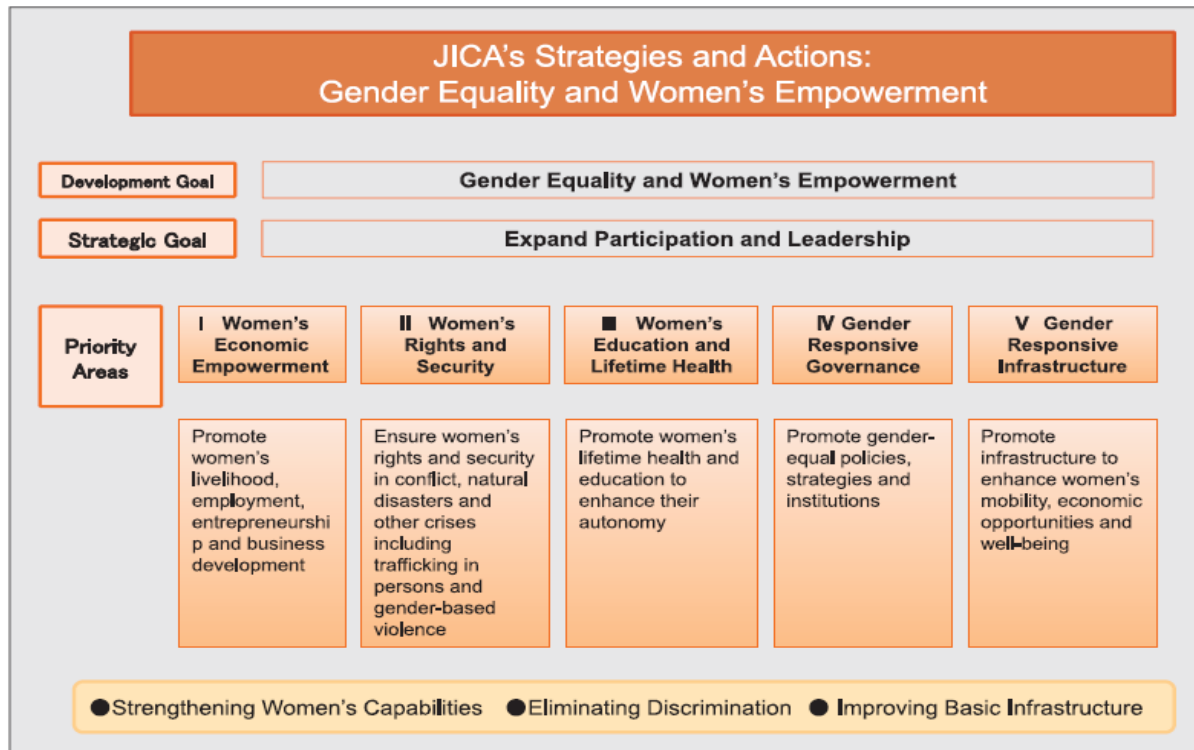
As indicated earlier, IDAs provide development, technical, and financial assistance in the areas of education, health, agriculture, trade and human resource development targeted at alleviating poverty. With support from the Polish-Canadian Development Cooperation (PCDC), Friends of the Earth, an NGO was able to implement the "Women and Youth Economic and Social Empowerment for Sustainable Development" project in the Volta Region of Ghana.⁷¹ The project provided economic empowerment through skills training to youth and women, raised awareness

about HIV/AIDS and also provided an educational facility to the communities involved. Similarly, in the area of women's empowerment, IDAs have been very instrumental, assisting the government in policy formulation as well as implementing several projects and programmes by themselves across the country. The Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) for instance, recognizes "women as a key agent of change for development and ensures that women have an equal voice and leadership in decision-making in all its interventions".⁷² According to the agency,

...gender equality and women's empowerment are crucial drivers of development progress. Evidence vigorously suggests that gender equality and women's empowerment are vital for improving economic, social, and political conditions and fostering poverty reduction and economic development.⁷³

In view of this, JICA has adopted various strategies for promoting gender equality and women's empowerment across its operations around the world and in Ghana. JICA's women's empowerment agenda is enshrined in its guiding framework of gender equality and women's empowerment⁷⁴ as shown in Figure 2.1 below.

Figure 2.1: JICA’s Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment Strategies



Source: www.oecd.org

Notable among these are JICA and UNDP’s collaborative intervention entitled “Empowering Rural Women and Alleviating Poverty by Strengthening the Local Shea Butter Industry in Northern Ghana”.⁷⁵ The UNDP states that the:

project aims at empowering rural women in Northern Ghana and alleviating their acute poverty by reinforcing the feasibility of local shea butter industry as a sustainable business. In order to achieve this goal, this project will: 1) identify the marketable quality of shea butter, 2) explore new markets for shea butter sales promotion, 3) provide business management skills for local women’s producer groups, and 4) transmit shea butter production skills and techniques among local women processors in a coordinated way.⁷⁶

This is on the backdrop that sales of shea butter and other shea-related products currently provide for about 600,000 women in the Northern Region of Ghana.⁷⁷ By empowering women through the provision of production, processing and marketing capacity, the UNDP believes that the women can increase earnings from shea butter to improve their living standards. The UNDP and the Japan

Women in Development Fund (JWIDF), set up by the Japanese government provided the seed funding for this project.

Nonetheless, the work of the international development agencies in Ghana have been largely criticized for their bias and self-interest. Using the World Bank, the Canadian International Development Agency, CIDA and other NGOs including Action Aid as case illustrations, Anyidoho and Manuh demonstrated that IDAs often take a narrow and economic view of women's empowerment tailored to suit their own ideological and institutional agenda. For example, the World Bank views women's disempowerment as a lack of economic opportunity and argues that providing economic opportunities advance women's empowerment necessary for shared economic growth and poverty reduction.⁷⁸ The Bank has therefore supported several interventions to promote women's empowerment in the areas of education and health but with more focus on economic empowerment to generate a spillover effect to households, families, communities and the country as a whole.⁷⁹

In addition, they note that the country office of the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) in Ghana is also steered by a Gender Equality Strategy (GES) to guide the design, provision of resources, implementation and evaluation of all programmes.⁸⁰ CIDA recognizes it cannot hand empowerment to women, but rather support and assist such self-initiatives by women themselves in terms of political and social participation (decision-making), and of increased power (access and control of resources).⁸¹

2.7 Conclusion

The chapter discussed women's empowerment by first presenting an overview, which traces the emergence of the concept of empowerment and provided various definitions of the concept since its inception.

The study adopts Kabeer's definition and framework of women's empowerment as "the process by which those who have been denied the ability to make strategic life choices acquire such an ability".⁸² This definition is essential for the present study because it captures empowerment as a process and the power to make choices.

The dimensions of the empowerment process: resources, agency and achievement were also discussed. Resources are a measure of potential, but do not necessarily imply agency and achievements.⁸³ However, agency and resources together represent the capability and potential people have for living the lives they want whereas achievements are the actual outcomes of their efforts.

Several indicators for measuring empowerment were also discussed as well as the contributions of IDAs to women's empowerment and JICA's strategies for women's empowerment.

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CHAPTER THREE

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a profile of JICA, the Sagnarigu shea butter processing center intervention and its related impact on women's empowerment of beneficiaries. Moreover, the challenges to women's empowerment programmes are identified with appropriate recommendations to address and overcome such challenges both from the view point of the women beneficiaries and JICA. The study is premised on the hypothesis that *“the development interventions of JICA have contributed to empowerment of rural women.”* The chapter focuses on the analysis of data collated from interviews in line with the hypothesis by answering the research questions posed at the beginning of the study outlined below:

1. What are JICA's interventions in the empowerment of women in the shea butter industry?
2. What is the impact of JICA's interventions in the shea butter industry?
3. What are the challenges to women's empowerment in the shea butter industry?

3.2 Profile of the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA)

This study seeks to examine the role of IDAs in women's empowerment in Ghana with emphasis on JICA. It is important to, therefore, understand the history and nature of JICA as an IDA. Japan became a participant in the Colombo Plan for Cooperative Economic and Social Development in Asia and the Pacific in 1954.¹ This marked the beginning of Japanese Official Development Assistance (ODA) which was originally part of the country's war reparations.² By the 1960s however, Japan used ODA as a foreign policy instrument, especially in Asia. Japan

significantly increased its ODA expenditure during the country's economic boom, recording the highest total assistance in the world in 1989. Japan imports over 90% of its natural resources, such as oil, natural gas and iron-ore, and 60% of its food. It exports many of its products to the world. Furthermore, developing countries remain strategic trade partners of Japan, accounting for approximately 60% of imports and 40% of exports.³ Japan, therefore, continues to provide official development assistance (ODA) to these developing countries to further strengthen the trade and bilateral partnerships that exist between them and to also contribute to international stability through the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA).

JICA was founded in 1974 as an aid implementing and administering agency of Japanese ODA. The agency is primarily responsible for promoting international cooperation and the sound development of Japanese and the global economy through the provision of suitable tools that support the socioeconomic development, recovery or economic stability of developing regions.⁴ In this regard, JICA has leveraged technical cooperation, finance and investment cooperation as well as other bilateral assistance to promote technology transfer, human resource and infrastructure development in several countries. JICA has also forged close relationships with the governments of industrialized countries and international aid organizations aimed at achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and resolving global issues such as climate change.⁵ Today, JICA is the world's largest bilateral aid agency with 90 overseas offices and working presence in over 150 countries and regions across the world.⁶

JICA's assistance to Ghana addresses the following priority areas and development issues: (1) revitalization of rural regions (raising incomes, improving basic living conditions, and building infrastructure), (2) agricultural development that utilizes the country's potential (nurturing industries that make use of Ghana's diverse resources, such as culture, traditions, and nature;

human resources development; promoting manufacturing and service industries that can survive intraregional conflict; and putting in place industrial infrastructure), and (3) administrative capacity building (improving the administrative capabilities of central and regional governments).⁷

3.3 The Shea Butter Industry and JICA

The shea tree, *vitellaria paradoxa*, is a tree that grows spontaneously in the bush in 19 African countries including Ghana, where the tree grows in the Northern parts of the country. Due to its varied uses, including as an edible oil for domestic use and products for cosmetic and pharmaceutical uses, the tree is a valuable asset supporting the livelihoods of the rural population in Ghana.⁸ It is estimated that some 600,000 women and dependents in the Northern regions of Ghana depend on the shea tree as a primary source of income.⁹ The shea butter industry in Ghana, thus, is located in clusters within communities in Northern Ghana. There is a total of 185 shea butter processing centers only in the Tamale District, of which Sagnarigu community has 47 processing centers.¹⁰

Shea butter processing comprises of a number of different stages. The process begins with the collection of shea nuts and crushing them by pounding with mortar and pestle. The crushed nuts are then roasted and stirred continuously until ready to be kneaded into paste from which the butter is extracted. Kneading is mostly done manually with the hands by the women, but an improved technology has been developed to replace this manual process of kneading.¹¹ The technology is “semi mechanized with a nut crusher, an improved roaster, a kneader or a hydraulic screw press introduced to reduce the drudgery associated with the traditional manual process of shea butter production”.¹² The industry has long been constrained by poor infrastructure, lack of capital, lack of market for shea butter and the incidence of buying shea nuts from middle men¹³, all of which have greatly limited the production capacity of the industry.

Between 2000 and 2003, JICA attempted to address the aforementioned shortfalls and develop the shea butter sector in the Northern regions of Ghana. However, the intervention was ad-hoc and largely unsustainable because it focused on improving the technical production capacity of the industry to the neglect of enhancing the skill sets of the women processors. In 2006, the Africa 2000 Network, a grassroots non-governmental agency met with women of the Northern region in their operational communities to discuss women's livelihoods as part of the agency's development capacity programmes for local women and other rural community members towards poverty reduction and sustainable livelihoods in Ghana.¹⁴ It came up that most of the women were engaged in shea butter production, but the problems confronting the industry were gradually forcing many to find alternative sources of income. The agency recognized that to avert the situation and revive the shea butter industry in Northern Ghana to support the livelihoods of the women, required improvements in infrastructure, investment in tools and equipment, formation of cooperatives, and the provision of entrepreneurial skills as well as access to capital and markets.¹⁵

The Africa 2000 Network is a grassroots non-governmental organization established in 1989 with support from the governments of Japan, Canada, France, Denmark, and Norway as well as UNDP.¹⁶ It was initiated by Canada during a UN general assembly in 1986 to support grassroots initiatives and it has since worked in partnership with UNDP/UNOPS on projects that promote community development. It has presence in other African countries such as Burundi, Liberia, Tanzania, Togo, Uganda and Zimbabwe.¹⁷ The organization has been in Ghana since 1999, working to build the development capacity of women and youth in communities of the Northern region of Ghana.

Incidentally, the Africa 2000 Network successfully capitalized on its relations with the UNDP and leveraged the earlier interests of JICA in the shea butter industry, to propose a project

aimed at revamping the shea butter industry for sustainable livelihoods of women in Northern Ghana. The rationale for the intervention was to promote women's empowerment, reduce poverty and generate employment in Ghana.¹⁸ The UNDP believed that strengthening the shea butter processing sector would “directly enhance the economic standard and social standing of rural women engaged in this local industry and generate employment opportunities through an industry-led growth”.¹⁹ JICA together with the UNDP and Africa 2000 Network organized a workshop on 2nd June, 2006 in Tamale to address the market demand and other constraints of the shea butter industry. Consequently, JICA and UNDP visited the Sagnarigu and Walewale communities and proposed the establishment of operational shea butter production centers in these communities.

Women who worked individually to produce shea butter as well as those who had stopped processing shea butter due to industry challenges to engage in other businesses like trading, farming, oil processing etc., were encouraged to voluntarily come together and form cooperatives.²⁰ Overall, 30 members joined the Sagnarigu community shea butter processing center and 20 joined the Walewale community shea butter processing center. Today, the Sagnarigu shea butter and soap center is an established registered enterprise in the Northern Region of Ghana. The center, which used to be operated by 30 women entrepreneurs currently operates under 35 entrepreneurs who oversee and coordinate the production, marketing, investments and related business decisions of the center. Most women who started the JICA project in 2007 still work at the center. The subsequent sections shall present analysis of data collected through interviews and questionnaires to examine JICA's intervention in the shea butter industry, assess its impact on the women's empowerment of beneficiaries and identify any challenges encountered and make recommendations for sustaining the viability of the center.

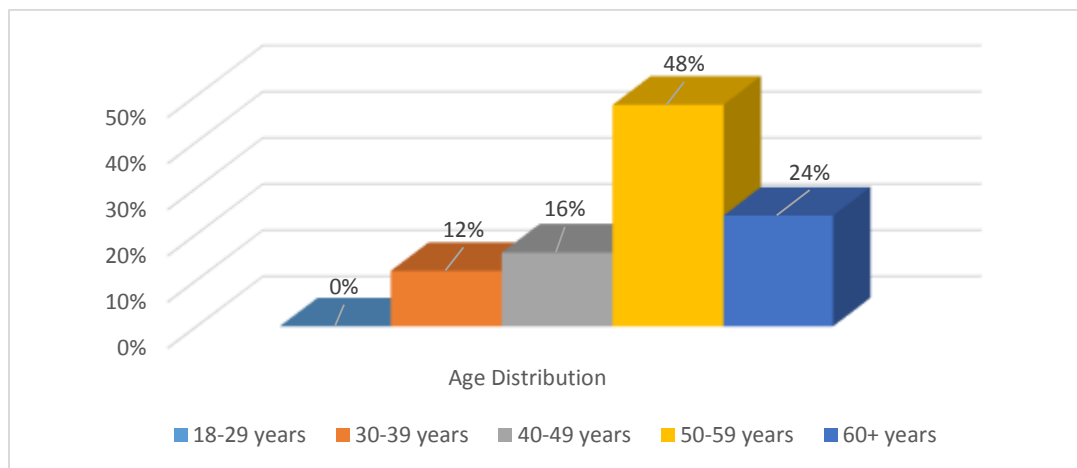
3.4 Presentation of Results

This section presents results of analysis of data collected to answer the aforementioned research questions.

3.4.1 Respondent Characteristics

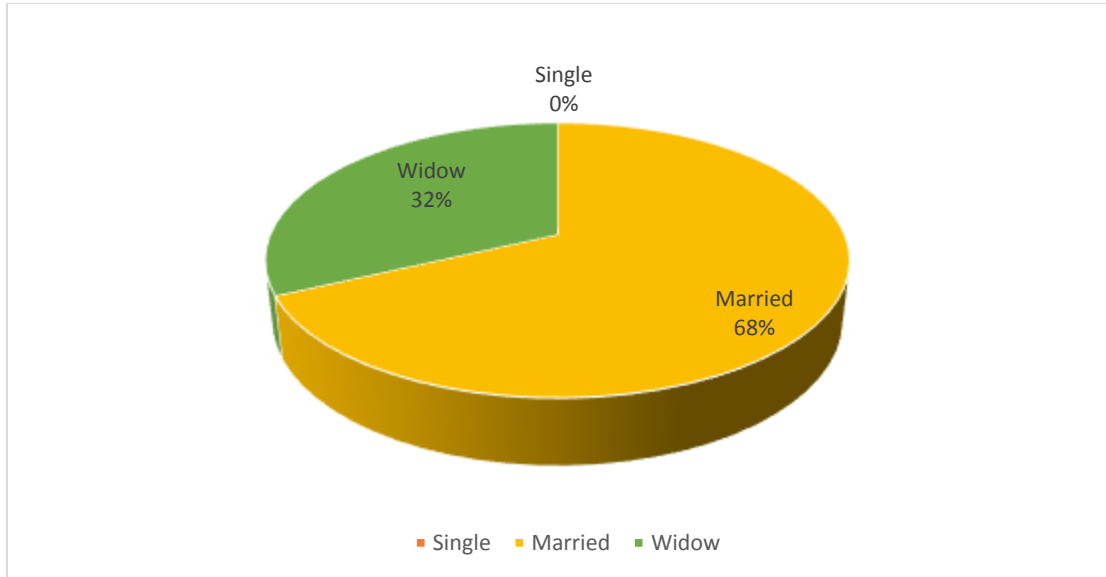
The age distribution of the respondents is shown in Figure 3.1. Of the total 25 respondents, none was between 0-29 years; 3 (12%) were between 30-39 years, 4 (16%) were between 40-49 years, 12 (48%) were between 50-59 years and 6 (24%) were above 60 years. Hence, about half of the respondents were adults between the ages of 50-59 years. This is indicative of the fact that the shea butter industry is largely a preserve of adults, most of whom have been part of the inception of the Sagnarigu center and have not left the center.

Figure 3.1: Age Distribution of Respondents



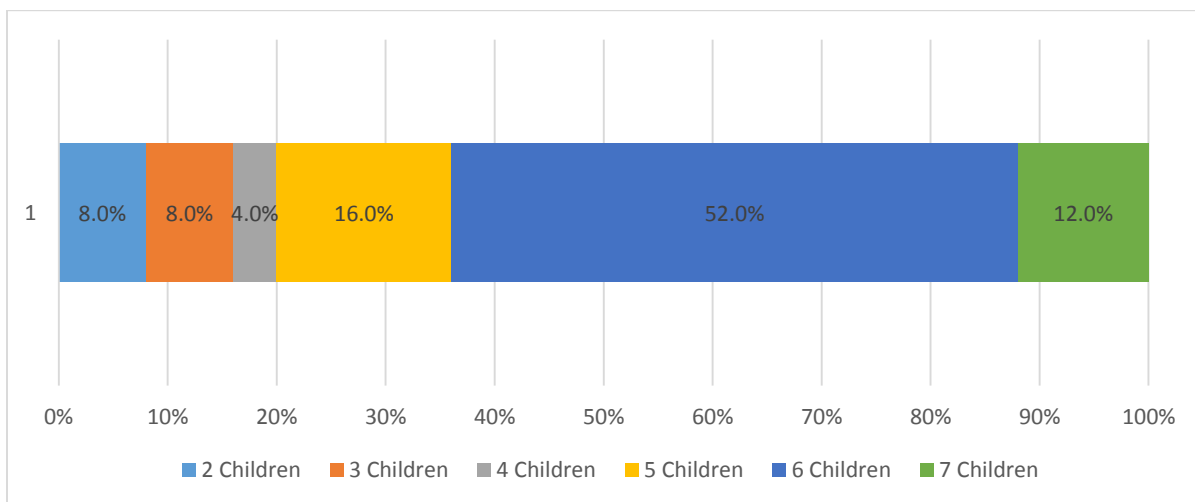
The marital status of respondents is shown in Figure 3.2. It is evident that none of the respondents was single or unmarried (0%), whilst 17 (68%) were married and 8 (32%) were widows. This again goes to affirm the earlier observation that women at the center are old and are probably those who started the center some 28 years ago in 1990. There has been no addition to the group and the young ladies have not been interested in the shea butter processing venture.

Figure 3.2: Marital Status of Respondents



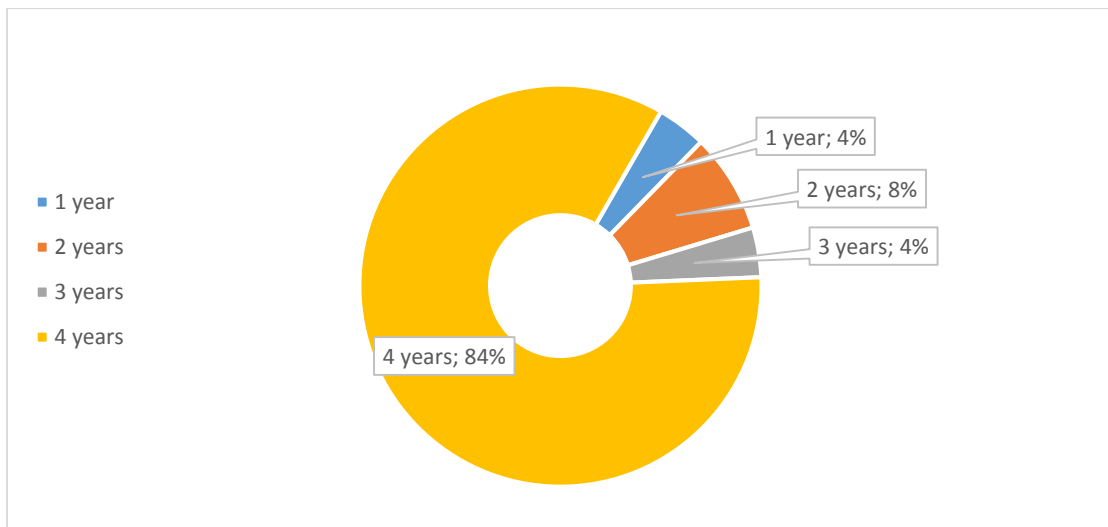
Out of the 25 respondents, 2 (8%) had 2 children, another 2 (8%) had 3 children, 1 (4%) had 4 children, 4 (16%) had 5 children, 13 (52%) had 6 children and 3 (12%) had 7 children. It is evident that the women have high birth rates, and majority had 6 children in total. Details of the number of children of the respondents are shown in Figure 3.3.

Figure 3.3: Number of Children of Respondents



As shown in Figure 3.4 below, 1 (4%) respondent had spent about 1 year on the project, 2 (8%) had spent 3 years on the project, 1 (4%) had spent 3 years on the project and 21 (84%) had spent 4 years on the project. The JICA intervention, hereby the project, spanned 4 years. It is evident therefore that majority of respondents went through the full programme training executed by JICA, while a few joined whilst the project was already ongoing.

Figure 3.4: Years spent on the Project by Respondents



There was the case of one respondent who attested to the fact that she was originally not on the project, but rather a supplier to the center. However, considering the benefits of the project to the women enrolled, she decided to join. Again, another respondent who was hitherto on the weaving apprenticeship at the center switched to join the shea butter processing project two years after its inception.

Figure 3.5 shows how long respondents have been at the Sagnarigu shea butter processing center. 13 (52%) respondents were pioneers when the center was inaugurated in 1990, 8 (32%) respondents joined the center at the inception of the JICA project in 2006, 4 (16%) respondents joined the center during the course of the JICA project, and no respondent had joined after the

project. It is evident that majority of respondents have been at the Sagnarigu shea butter processing center since 1990 when it was established. The JICA project, also brought on board some members of the community who were originally not existing members of the center.

Figure 3.5: Years Spent at the Center by Respondents

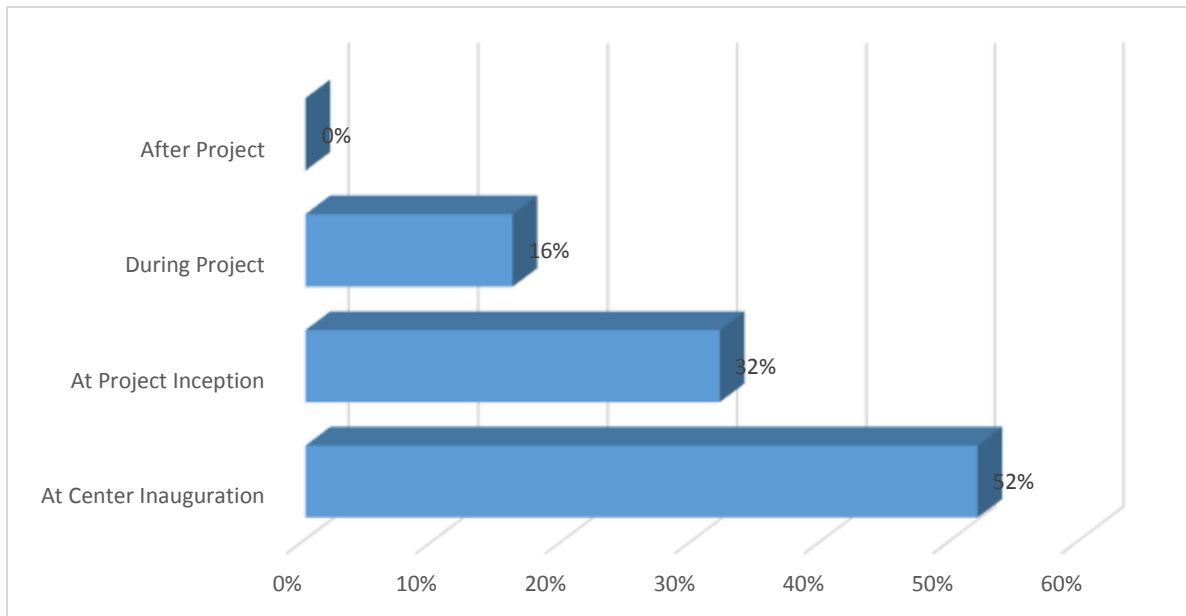
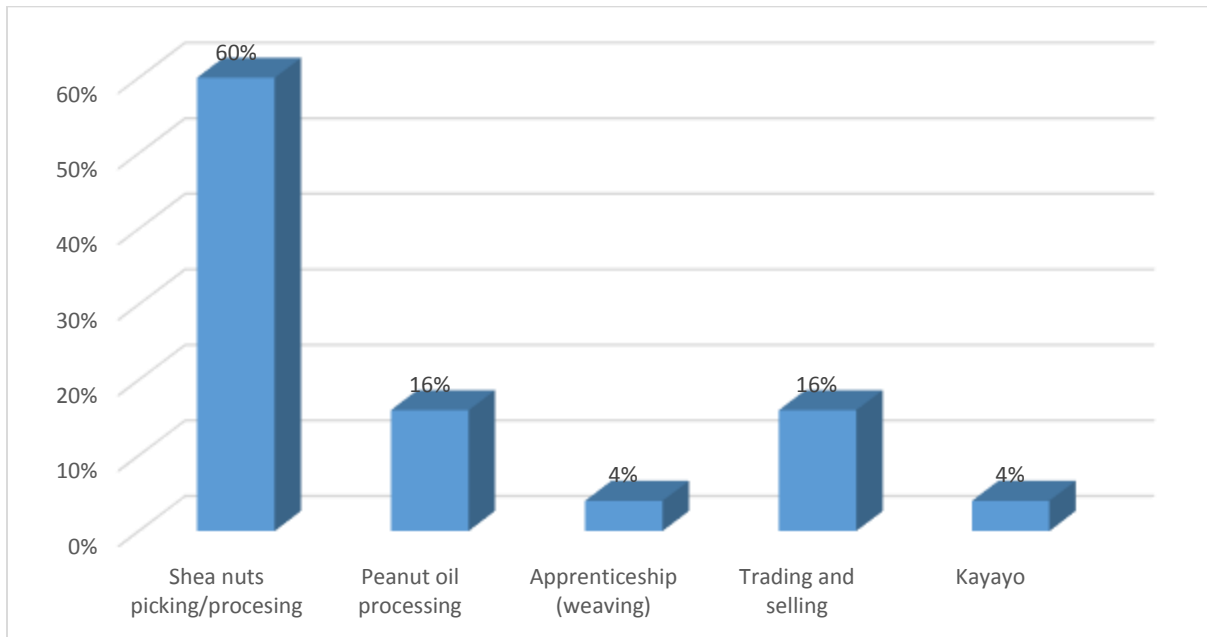


Figure 3.6 shows the occupation of respondents prior to joining the center or the JICA project. Out of the 25 respondents, 15 (60%) were engaged in picking and processing shea nuts at home, 4 (16%) were engaged in peanut oil processing, 1 (4%) was engaged in Kente weaving apprenticeship, 4 (16%) were engaged in trading and selling (e.g. charcoal and food) and 1 (4%) was a head porter (kayayo). This shows that the majority of the women beneficiaries of the project were already engaged in some form of shea nut and butter processing, albeit at home and on an individual basis. When the Sagnarigu center was established in 1990, it did not solely cater to the needs of shea processing, but committed to training women in other trades and fields of endeavor. One such area was weaving, and a respondent was previously engaged in it. She notes however,

that, at the onset of the JICA project to provide training and support for the women at the center, she thought it wise to switch considering the potential and opportunities that it would bring.²¹

Figure 3.6: Respondent’s Occupation prior to joining the JICA project



3.4.2 JICA’s Intervention and Approach

The interviews conducted and responses from questionnaires administered show that the ultimate expected outcome of the JICA project was to empower women and alleviate their acute poverty in Northern Ghana through enhancing the viability of the local shea butter industry as a sustainable business. According to the former Executive Director of the Africa 2000 Network,

Prior research on shea butter in Ghana points out that there has been a major quality gap between the locally produced shea butter and the one demanded by buyers. Indeed, a series of interviews and workshops by JICA’s expert team has corroborated that such low product quality has been one of major obstacles for promoting shea butter sales. Despite this fact, there was no clue on the quality standard that would match with the buyer’s demand, making it difficult for setting up a targeted quality level to be attained by external interventions.²²

As a first priority, therefore, in close collaboration with JICA and related partners, this project concentrated on researching and identifying the marketable quality of shea butter in national as well as foreign markets. JICA then crafted the Shea Butter Production Manual as an output of its own development research study to guide the quality standards of shea butter processing at the center. Asked how JICA supported shea butter production at the center, respondents said:

Before JICA's intervention we just processed the nuts without thinking of the quality of the butter. Through the JICA project we learnt how to improve on the quality of the shea butter. We were taught to pick out the bad nuts and wash the nuts before beginning the process. After extracting the butter, they taught us how to sieve out all foreign matter. In addition to improving on the quality of the shea butter, we were taught how to use the shea butter to make shea soaps.²³

Furthermore, in pursuit of this objective, the expertise of local women was harnessed and incorporated into the research through active participation. Based on this initial analysis, the project provided a conducive environment for shea butter production in order to meet buyer's standards and remove the identified constraints of poor quality. This confirms Kabeer's assertion that the empowerment approach represents a complete departure from the notion that poor women are powerless, but rather possess agency to affect their own change.²⁴ According to Singh and Sharma, "rural women can play a significant role by their effectual and competent involvement in entrepreneurial activities. They have basic indigenous knowledge, skill, potential and resources to establish and manage enterprise".²⁵ The empowerment approach thus focuses on local contexts and people, regarding women as active agents of their own lives and active voices in their own development, relative to the power of decision making. As another interviewee pointed out,

We were already shea butter producers. What we lacked were the means to increase our production and how to sell it. After the JICA project, we got some of the needed things to help improve on the butter and the sales also picked up which enable us make money to take care of our families. I will say I am empowered due to JICA's contribution.²⁶

The JICA project organized workshops to gather first-hand information from local women groups engaged in shea butter processing in order to understand and appropriately equip them with skills that would enable them to improve upon their business viability. To many, JICA provided the resources necessary to improve shea butter production. This is testament to the fact that grassroots participation through direct involvement in the decision-making and implementation processes, not only empowers them, but also gives them the chance of contributing their own efforts to the mainstream development of their communities.²⁷ Kabeer continues that empowerment from below arises from newly acquired access to the intangible resources of analytical skills, social networks, organizational strength and a sense of not being alone.²⁸ In fact, the JICA project looked at providing the beneficiaries with a complete set of skills that would help them beyond just shea butter processing. Asked whether they acquired anything from the JICA project to have kept them empowered to date when the project ended some 9 years ago, an interviewee said:

Yes, we did. Apart from teaching us how to improve the shea butter and the making of shea soap, they created a night school for us. They taught us basic writing and how to calculate so that buyer don't cheat us. We learnt how to write our names, how to calculate profit. We have forgotten some of the writing we were taught. In my opinion they gave us enough of what we need to be empowered.²⁹

Another aspect of JICA's approach that was significant was the collective approach. It was said the women had no work place so only worked when the weather allowed. Therefore, the women proposed the concept of 'Women Work Centers' at a general meeting to discuss 'why women are poor'.³⁰ Therefore, the idea of a center, the involvement of the women in the land acquisition, design of the center and work supervision during the construction, helped the women to take control of its ownership. More importantly, basic working tools were provided at the center for use by the very poor who cannot afford to buy them. In essence, the women found a greater

strength in their collective effort, helping one another and ensuring they rise together. This affirms Moser's view of empowerment as the capacity of women to increase their own self-reliance and internal strength through the ability to gain control over material and non-material resources to exercise the right to determine choices in life and to influence the direction of change. On why they joined the JICA project, respondents cited this collectiveness, saying:

I joined the center because I liked the way the women worked in a group at the center and also, I realized I will make more money working with them than working by myself.³¹

Immediately, three key things are evident in JICA's approach to the project. First, providing a conducive and enabling environment for the women shea butter processors to effectively ply their trade and access markets. Second, it emphasized grassroots participation to ensure the women are part of identifying the problem and finding suitable solutions to address such problems. Unlike the earlier JICA project (2000-2003) which failed due to lack of participation, the 2006 project succeeded on the back of active participation by the women groups. Third, the project used the collectivism approach, where the collective power of the women was harnessed to provide an effective support system and voice.

The main areas of JICA's intervention were skills development and capacity building. In this regard, JICA organized workshops to provide literacy and business management skills for local women producers and promote their entrepreneurship. This comprised of teaching women basic English, numeracy, business communication and book keeping to effectively manage their businesses. JICA also developed Shea Butter Production Manual for beneficiaries, and dispatched Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers (JOCV) to help rural women produce quality shea butter soap to enhance income generation. These volunteers trained and helped the women beneficiaries to understand the manual and how to use it effectively to produce better shea butter. Once the women understood the core principles enshrined in the Manual, they were able to implement them

in their daily work which resulted in the production on quality shea butter. Since 2000, JICA in collaboration with other Japanese development actors such as JETRO has been supporting rural shea butter processors in the Northern Region of Ghana in various ways.³²

Table 3.1: Activity Table of JICA Activities

2000 – 2003	JICA assisted local NGO (Africa 2000 Network Programme) to enhance their support to local shea butter producers through the provision of equipment and business skill training.
2002 and 2003	JICA dispatched a Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteer (JOCV) to help rural women produce quality shea butter and shea butter soap to enhance income generation.
2005 and 2006	JICA assisted Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO) in the successful linking of Ghanaian shea butter producers with the Japanese private company named “tree of life”.

3.4.3 Women’s Empowerment of Beneficiaries

Several definitions have been proffered for women’s empowerment. It was important therefore to investigate how the interviewees understood and perceive women’s empowerment, in order to assess the extent to which the JICA project contributed to their empowerment or not. In responding to the question: what is your understanding of women’s empowerment, interviewees gave a range of responses as sampled below:

Acquiring knowledge that will enable you work to reduce suffering.³³

Being able to earn money to help your husband take care of your family and children and taking care of yourself.³⁴

To me empowerment is when you receive help in the line of your trade and you work hard to achieve your aims.³⁵

Is about being stronger and confident as a woman. Also, being able to take care one self. I can hold my own in public.³⁶

Empowerment to me is when help is given and you take the opportunity to better yourself so as enable you take care of your family.³⁷

From the foregoing, it can be deduced that the women at the Sagnarigu shea butter processing center view women's empowerment as acquiring knowledge, income, help, confidence, or even opportunity to reduce suffering, take care of family and self, achieve one's aims, gain respect and become self-reliant. This is no different from the key items in the definitions of several scholars such as Kabeer, who sees empowerment as, "the process by which those who have been denied the ability to make strategic life choices acquire such an ability". This is seen in the definitions by interviewees No. 7 and No. 18. Similarly, Janet G. Townsend³⁸ regards empowerment as, "the gaining of power by the vulnerable", evident in the response of interviewee No. 14. Moser's argument that empowerment enables women to determine choices in life and to influence the direction of change, through the ability to gain control over material and non-material resources³⁹ is also seen in the responses of interviewees No. 4 and No. 6. This is consistent with Tsikata's view that empowerment is contextual and its meaning and nature varies across different groups of people. She notes further that empowerment is:

A way of thinking about women and their situation because it denotes an enlargement of women's power, it denotes enlargement of their agency and the ability to do things for themselves and to realize themselves as citizens of a place or a country. However, empowerment is a complicated concept and very contextual, what might be empowering to someone in Ghana might not be as empowering to someone in another country. I feel that there must be some underline commonalities in the ways we think about empowerment. Empowerment is contextual but we can all agree that empowerment is when women show agency, show that they have the power to do things for themselves, to be autonomous and to also enjoy some benefits as citizens.⁴⁰

When asked if they are empowered, all interviewees responded in the affirmative. One interviewee said

“Yes, I think so. I can now take care of my children. There was a time I sold my valuable things in order to pay my children school fees”.⁴¹

Interviewees were then asked to indicate how the JICA project contributed to their empowerment, to which they said:

JICA aided my empowerment by helping me improve on my shea butter production which have increased the value of the butter.⁴²

By teaching me how to improve the shea butter, I realized that I could make a living through shea butter production.⁴³

Because of their training I make enough money to help take care of my family.⁴⁴

On the questions of whether they earn more money now with the shea butter production than before, all 25 interviewees responded in the affirmative. The interviewees intimated that although sometimes there is not enough left after their personal expenses, they earn more money at the center than when they were by themselves. At the center, when a contract comes, each person is assigned a quota. Nonetheless, the group again helps each person to finish her assigned quota, thereby ensuring that the person makes the delivery and gains the income that accrues from the sale. This way, the group offers a support system which not only helps each one in completing their task, but motivates and encourages them to even work harder. In so doing, the income they earn individually through the group effort exceeds what they could have earned processing the shea butter individually at home. Again, due to the high-quality butter produced at the center as a result of the JICA training and support, the center has gained recognition for its standards which has afforded them some lucrative production contracts. All these add up to increase the individual earnings and income of beneficiaries at the center. One interviewee had this to say:

Yes, I do make more money at the center than when I was making shea butter on my own. I sold the butter at a low price and made next to nothing. The money I got at the end of the day went into buying nuts for the next production. Nothing was left over that could be used to take care of myself and the house. Being at the center has changed all that. Now, I make enough to take care of my family and myself.⁴⁵

The Savannah Food Company (SFC) is the women's biggest buyer. Before the SFC, the women bought their own nuts for the production of the shea butter and sold it. In the case of the SFC, the company buys them the nuts for the production. They pay them workmanship when the butter is done. This arrangement is better for the women because it is not all the time they have money to buy the nuts, which means they will be out of work till they can afford to buy the nuts. With SFC buying them the nuts, they are constantly working. Each woman gets three bags of nuts to work with. When the three bags are done, they get another three bags and so on.

- 3 bags of shea nuts produces 3 boxes of shea butter.
- 1 box of shea butter weighs 20kilos.
- 1 kilo of shea butter is priced at GHC1.50p which makes 20kilos GHC30.00.
- The 3 boxes of shea butter is GHC90.00.

Some can produce 3 bags a month, some, 6 bags, some, 10 bags etc. For example, if a woman produces 10 bags of nuts, that will mean 10 boxes of shea butter. The woman who produces 10 boxes of shea butter will earn GHC300.00 for the month. Some women produce more than that. This is what they get from Savannah Food Company. The women are able to buy nuts by themselves now that they get money every month. They produce butter for themselves which they sell at the market or to individuals. When they produce for themselves, 1 kilo of the shea butter is sold at GHC4.50. The 20kilo box will amount to GHC90.00. If a woman produces 3 boxes of shea butter by herself, she will make GHC270.00 additional money.

The center gets visitors two or three times a week. They sometimes come in buses. At the end of their tour, they buy packaged shea butter in various kilos at GHC4.50 per kilo which is also additional income for the women. So, if a beneficiary sells a minimum of three boxes of shea butter

at GHC90.00 to the Savannah Food Company; a minimum of 20 kilo butter at GHC90.00 produced for herself and a visitor buys a minimum of 4kilos a week (GHC18.00) which makes GHC72.00 a month, she makes a minimum of GHC252.00 a month.

Kabeer notes that control over resources in households is measured by who keeps household earnings and who has a say in household expenditure.⁴⁶ This argument is reflected among women in their ability to contribute to the upkeep and running of their households. The interviewees all indicated that they do contribute financially to the up keep of their households since they joined the center by helping their husbands take care of the home. This includes making arrangement for food stuffs and other required items for the house. One interviewee confirmed that she takes care of the education of her three children who are in school; paying school fees, buying uniforms, books and all that is needed. Since this is only possible because of the shea butter production at the center, her involvement in shea butter production has increased.⁴⁷ Similarly, all interviewees said they contribute financially to their children's education and upkeep and this increased with their involvement in shea butter production at the center. This affirms that empowering women through micro enterprise results in "better living for families" and results in increased involvement of women in household decision-making in male-headed families with regard to credit, disposal of household assets, education of children and healthcare.⁴⁸ A widow said:

My husband is no more so my children are my responsibility. I take care of their needs. I still live in the same compound with my husband's other wife. Together, we take care of the house, the food we eat and the general maintenance of the house.⁴⁹

On the issue of how their contribution in decision making in the household, family and community has been impacted, 19 (76%) interviewees claimed that they wield more control in decision making than before, whilst the remaining 6 (24%) said nothing has really changed.

Overall however, three scenarios were encountered: first, there were interviewees whose financial contribution to the household gave them more control in decision making at the household level, but not in the community. An example was an interviewee who claimed that “my husband is really happy with me because I am able to help so he does not ignore my suggestions. In case of the community, I am not expose to decision making”.⁵⁰ Second, there was the situation where despite financial contribution, there is no increase in decision making control at the household level, however, such people are accorded respect in the community. An instance is one interviewee who lamented that although she helps the household financially, “nothing has changed, I was never included in decision making and I am still not included even though I help him financially. But within the community, I am respected now than before”.⁵¹ Third, was the situation where a person enjoys both higher control in decision making at the household level and in the community. The response of one interviewee truly captures this scenario:⁵²

Yes, things have changed. Before I came to the center I had to borrow money from friends and family to take care of my children. One loses respect when you are always borrowing money, your thoughts mean nothing and your voice is not heard. Now that I make money from the production of the shea butter at the center, I do not borrow money any more. I am not ignored like before. My contributions are considered now. I am now the women organizer in the community. I get the women together and we talk about our wellbeing, how to take care of our homes and solve our problem. I sometimes talk to women who are not in the group and having problem in their home. They listen and take my advice.

Out of the 25 respondents, 13 (52%) were able to save from their earnings at the center, whilst the remaining 12 (48%) were not able to save. Most of the interviewees who could not save indicated that they used their money on household expenditure, and in times that they saved, it was rather towards their children’s education. Interestingly, some beneficiaries interviewed exhibited exemplary saving attitude to the extent that they operate active bank accounts and have saved enough to undertake capital projects. Three (12%) of the beneficiaries interviewed indicated that they had acquired properties such as land and were building by and for themselves. According to

Kabeer⁵³, control over resources is one of the most common measures of empowerment. The interviewees demonstrated that they have control over money and time in their business and household management. Women in the Sagnarigu shea butter processing center, have gained access to money and are managing their own bank accounts. For instance, one interviewee intimated that:

I have a bank account where I save my money. I have been able to build a seven-room house for myself and my children.⁵⁴

Overall, there has been significant improvement in local shea nuts/butter processors in terms of the competitiveness of their products' quality, quantity, cost and delivery, which has ensured sustainability of the industry. The project has benefited a total of 660,000 women in the Northern Region of Ghana: comprising of 403 (10 JICA groups), 20 (Cheyohi), 30 (Walewale-Tampulungu), 706 (other groups in the Northern Region), the Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MOFA) extension and WIAD Officers (Regional, Municipal, District), Extension Field Agents in the 3 Northern Regions (215 in Northern Region, 92 in Upper West Region and 116 in the Upper East Region).⁵⁵

Overall, the beneficiaries received adequate training and technical support from JICA to improve the quality of shea butter produced and also effectively manage their lives and work processes. Below are some of the trained activities that are still being practiced by the women:

- A national Shea Nut Pickers and Shea Butter Producers Association have been formed to help the women learn from each other and to have a common voice.
- A training manual on quality shea butter production has been developed to help transfer and disseminate knowledge and skills.

- The use of weighing scales to determine the butter quantity during sale by the women.
- Production of quality shea butter under better hygienic conditions.
- Packaging of shea butter into boxes instead of open calabashes.

3.4.4 Challenges to Women's Empowerment in the Shea Butter Industry

At the beginning of the project, some husbands did not want their wives involved until they saw the benefits to those involved. Some husbands clearly said they did not want their wives to get richer than themselves. Through constant meetings and discussions, most men in the society now appreciate their wives' involvement at the center. Most homes now have better meals, more children in school and send children for higher education. Women are now consulted during community meetings. Various meetings and workshops on the project and its programmes involve men in the community. Practical benefits to individual families have been the main drive of husbands' support for their wives in the programme.

Another problem that respondents attested to was the language barrier during the training sessions. Apparently, the training facilitator was Japanese who did not understand the local language, and the women did not also understand English. Hence, there was need for a translator to coordinate and bridge the language gap between the training facilitator and the trainee women.

One interviewee said:

There was a translator during the training but it was not the same as talking to them (Japanese facilitators) yourself. There was never a challenge when it come to the training, we worked well together.⁵⁶

Another did not see any challenge at all, claiming "we didn't have any challenges during the training. It was actually a happy moment for us. We played with them and had a lot of laughs".

On the question of why young girls in the community do not like to join the shea butter production, some respondents thought the young girls were lazy, others thought it was due to the excessive laborious process of shea butter production and others attributed the occurrence to modernization and the appeal of urban life. Furthermore, the youth believe shea butter production is for the elderly, because it is time consuming and they do not have that patience. In fact, the youngest members at the center are 30 and 35 years old. All others are above 40 years hence; it is just prudent if the youth think shea butter production is for the elderly. In the view of the former Executive Director of the A2N, the attitude of the youth towards shea butter production is that the older women are witches since they are superstitious, other youth complain that the processing methodology is too laborious and advocate the need for improved processing machines. One interviewee lamented about the laziness of the youth:

The youth of today does not like hard work. I have tried to get the ones at home doing nothing to join us at the center but they will not come.⁵⁷

3.5 Conclusion

JICA is the implementing and administering agency of Japanese ODA that provides technical cooperation and other forms of assistance to partners in the South. Today, JICA is the world's largest bilateral aid agency working in over 150 countries and regions across the world with some 90 overseas offices. JICA's intervention in the shea butter industry of Northern Ghana is of paramount interest to this study. The shea butter industry in Ghana, thus, is mainly located in clusters within communities in Northern Ghana. The women indicated problems in the shea butter industry which led to many leaving the industry to find other sources of income. The major constraints identified during meetings with women included poor infrastructure, lack of capital, lack of market for shea butter and buying shea nuts from middle men.

Sagnarigu shea butter and soap center is an established registered enterprise in the Northern Region of Ghana. The center used to be operated by 30 entrepreneurs but currently it is being operated by 35 entrepreneurs who oversee and coordinate marketing, investments into the center and decisions about the business. In the past (2000-2003), JICA attempted to develop the shea butter sector but this was done on an ad-hoc basis and was unsustainable. According to A2N, prior intervention focused on the production side and ignored the lack of skills of the women. The rationale for the intervention under study was to promote women's empowerment, reduce poverty and generate employment in Ghana. As indicated earlier, the UNDP was of the view that revamping the shea butter processing sector would improve the economic and social standards of rural women engaged in this local industry and generate employment opportunities through an industry-led growth. Therefore, there was the need to improve infrastructure, machines, forming cooperatives, providing entrepreneurial skills, providing funds and the demand market.

The interviews conducted and responses from questionnaires administered showed that the ultimate expected outcome of the JICA project was to empower women and alleviate their acute poverty in Northern Ghana through enhancing the viability of the local shea butter industry as a sustainable business. The project was inclusive, participatory and contextualized women's empowerment thereby harnessing and incorporating the expertise of the local women through active participation to device suitable solutions to the problem. The JICA development intervention in the shea butter industry thus, focused on skills development and capacity building of women to create a viable and sustainable industry. Overall, there has been significant improvement in local shea nuts/butter processors in terms of the competitiveness of their products quality and quantity wise, cost and delivery, which has ensured sustainability of the industry. The project has benefitted some 660,000 women in the Northern Region of Ghana.

In the work of Sen, women's empowerment approach has always advocated for a departure from providing women with their immediate needs as a means to empowerment, but rather regarding them as agents of their own change. It has been demonstrated that the success of the JICA project was founded on inclusiveness, participation and contextualizing women's empowerment in the domain of the shea butter industry. The emphasis was not on providing women with a set of tools and telling them what to do, but rather on the involvement of women in planning the solution to the problems, which in the end left them with skills and the capacity to sustain the center and themselves years after the project had ended. Unlike the welfare, equity, anti-poverty and efficiency approaches which focus mainly on implementing a set of development remedies as outcomes for poor rural women, the JICA project has shown that women's empowerment when done right, achieves the right results.

Just as scholars have argued, therefore, the findings reveal the contextual nature of women's empowerment and the women understood it to mean help, opportunity, or knowledge that enables women to reduce suffering, achieve their aims, attain self-reliance and take care of themselves and their family. The majority of the women attested to becoming empowered through the project, and were now capable of generating a steady income, making strategic decisions, controlling household decision making and contributing financially to the upkeep of the home. Nonetheless, some challenges encountered include the reluctance of husbands to allow their wives to participate in the project until they realized the benefits. There was also the need to improve technology at the center to enhance shea processing and bring the youth into the trade to ensure sustainability.

Endnotes

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- ¹ The Colombo Plan is an international organization established in 1950 to support economic and social development of countries in South Asia, Southeast Asia and the Pacific region. Its head office is in Colombo, Sri Lanka.
- ² Japan International Cooperation Agency, *JICA Profile*, Tokyo: JICA, 2018, p.3.
- ³ Japan International Cooperation Agency, Countries & Regions: Ghana. Accessed 13 July 2018 from <https://www.jica.go.jp/ghana/english/index.html>.
- ⁴ Ibid
- ⁵ Japan International Cooperation Agency, *JICA Profile*, p.4.
- ⁶ Ibid
- ⁷ Japan International Cooperation Agency, Countries & Regions: Ghana.
- ⁸ Jibreel M. B., Mumuni E., Al-Hassan S. and Baba N. M., Shea butter and its processing impacts on the environment in the Tamale Metropolis of Ghana, *International Journal of Development and Sustainability*, 2013 2(3), pp. 2008-2019.
- ⁹ Africa 2000 Network, *Project Document*, Accra: Africa 2000 Network, 2007.
- ¹⁰ Jibreel, Mumuni, Al-Hassan and Baba, Shea Butter and its Processing Impacts, 2013.
- ¹¹ Ibid
- ¹² Ibid, 2010.
- ¹³ Africa 2000 Network, *Project Document*, p.4.
- ¹⁴ Ibid, p.8.
- ¹⁵ Ibid
- ¹⁶ Ibid
- ¹⁷ Africa 2000 Network, *Shea butter Stories*, Accra: Africa 2000 Network, 2008.
- ¹⁸ UNDP, 'Empowering Rural Women and Alleviating Poverty by Strengthening the Local Shea Butter Industry in Northern Ghana', 2007. Accessed 10 July 2018 from http://www.gh.undp.org/content/ghana/en/home/operations/projects/poverty_reduction/all-projects2/
- ¹⁹ Africa 2000 Network, *Project Document*, 7.
- ²⁰ Annan, Adjoa Tsetsewa, *Transforming the Lives of Poor Rural Women in the Shea Butter Industry through Entrepreneurship: A Case of Sagnarigu Shea butter and Soap Centre*, The Hague: ISS, 2013, p.25.
- ²¹ Interview with women beneficiaries, Field work, 2018.
- ²² Interview with former Executive Director of the Africa 2000 Network, Field work, 2018.
- ²³ Interview with woman beneficiary (No. 3), Field work, 2018.
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- ³⁴ Interview with beneficiary No. 6, Field work 2018.
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- ⁵⁴ Interview, No. 9.
- ⁵⁵ Interview with Owusu-Achaw, JICA.
- ⁵⁶ Interview with beneficiary No. 2. Field work, 2018.
- ⁵⁷ Interview with beneficiary No. 6. Field work, 2018.

CHAPTER FOUR

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Introduction

The study sought to answer the central question of whether JICA's development intervention in the shea butter industry in the Northern Region of Ghana resulted in women's empowerment of the beneficiaries. Specifically, it set out to examine JICA's intervention in the shea butter industry, determine the impact of JICA's intervention on women's empowerment in the shea butter industry and identify the barriers to women's empowerment in the shea butter industry in Ghana.

The study was premised on the hypothesis that JICA's development intervention provides opportunity for women's empowerment to enhance the economic and social standards of rural women in the shea butter industry of Ghana. This chapter presents a summary of the major findings of the study from the data analysis, draws conclusions from the findings and makes recommendations to ensure the sustainability of the shea butter industry to further promote women's empowerment towards sustainable livelihoods of rural women in the Northern Region of Ghana.

4.2 Summary of Findings

The ultimate expected outcome of the JICA project was to empower women and alleviate their acute poverty in Northern Ghana through enhancing the viability of the local shea butter industry as a sustainable business. The JICA development intervention in the shea butter industry thus, focused on skills development and capacity building of women to create a viable and sustainable industry. The project emphasized inclusiveness and contextualized women's empowerment in the local context, thereby, making it possible to effectively harness and

incorporate the expertise of the local women through active participation to understand and find suitable solutions to the problem at stake. Overall, there has been significant improvement in local shea nuts/butter processing in terms of product quality, production capacity, cost and delivery, which has ensured sustainability of the industry.

Another aspect of JICA's approach that was significant was the participatory and collective approach. It was said the women had no work place so only worked when the weather allowed. Therefore, the women proposed the concept of 'Women Work Centers' at a general meeting to discuss 'why women are poor'. Therefore, the idea of a center, the involvement of the women in the land acquisition, design of the center and work supervision during the construction, helped the women to take control of its ownership. More importantly, basic working tools were provided at the center for use by the very poor who cannot afford to buy them. In essence, the women found a greater strength in their collective effort, helping one another and ensuring they rise together.

The findings reveal that:

- Eighteen (18) beneficiaries interviewed understood and perceived women's empowerment to mean the acquisition of knowledge, skill, help, opportunity or other resource that enable women to reduce their suffering, achieve their aims, attain self-reliance and cater for themselves and their family.
- Empowering women through micro enterprise increases their involvement in household decision-making, disposal of household assets, education of children and healthcare.
- The youth are disinterested in shea butter processing. Contrary to popular belief that their disinterest is due to laziness, the study notes that it is rather due to the continuous use of conventional methods of shea butter processing which are indeed laborious.

- There is the need to improve the technology base of the center to attract more people, especially the youth, considering that the average age of the current beneficiaries is between 40-60 years.
- The center requires expansion to accommodate the many people who wish to get involved in the shea butter processing industry.

4.3 Conclusions

The study has confirmed that women's empowerment increases women's agency and achievement. For instance, it was noted that most women who hitherto had no respect and recognition in the community or did not have a say in household decision making now do so due to their economic and social status as a result of their association with the center. Women are also able to make strategic choices about their lives and family when they are empowered. In many cases, beneficiaries contributed to the upkeep of the household and were even responsible for their children's education, nutrition and health needs. Furthermore, the women did not rely or depend on their husbands or society but strived to achieve by themselves due to their economic independence.

This control over resources and income has increased their decision-making power, where in some instances, beneficiaries operate bank accounts and have even gone to the extent of acquiring land and building houses for themselves. This ownership of property by women is important as it reflects their assets. Women who have ownership of lands and houses enjoy good living conditions and social status. Just like Boserup, Moser and Chichester agree, women are indeed economic and development assets. The findings only affirm the African Development Bank's stance that women's empowerment could "raise the productive potential of one billion Africans to deliver immense economic and social development for the continent."¹

The need to empower women responds to a growing recognition that women in developing countries lack control over resources, opportunity and self-confidence to participate in the decision-making process. More so, it is in furtherance to the increasing acceptance of the important role women play in social and economic development. The women's empowerment approach embraces participation and regards women beneficiaries as agents of change rather than mere passive beneficiaries of development aid. The JICA project under review has demonstrated that it was participatory, actively involved the women beneficiaries from the onset and throughout the entire duration of the project. It also emphasized collective action, which indeed, was the reason that encouraged several beneficiaries to join the project. To date, it is this collective action that has sustained the center and served not only as a business network for the beneficiaries, but also as a social support system of encouragement and has brought a feeling of belongingness.

The study finds ample evidence to support the hypothesis that JICA's development intervention provides opportunity for women's empowerment to enhance the economic and social standards of rural women in the shea butter industry of Ghana. Perhaps, there is yet hope to avert the disappointment of Cornwall, Anyidoho and the several other feminists in the women's empowerment rhetoric, and to revive the concept which began as a gender agenda demanding for radical and collective transformation of economic, political and social relations to give women the needed opportunity and agency to make strategic choices about their lives, which has not lived to the task.²

4.4 Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions drawn from the analysis, the study makes the following recommendations to enhance the sustainability of the shea butter industry as a viable business sector. There is the need for the Government of Ghana to design a national policy

directive on Ghana's shea nuts and butter industry to ensure an adequate support for the shea butter and nuts producers.

The study recommends that:

- The center must be expanded and equipped with modern technology to improve production processes and ultimately production capacity which may attract the youth to join the shea butter processing industry.
- Beneficiaries of women's empowerment initiatives should be considered as agents of their own change, rather than passive recipients of development outcomes.
- Women's empowerment initiatives should emphasize grassroots and bottom-up approaches to development.
- The women empowerment approach must emphasize grassroots participation and collective action, where beneficiaries are co-creators and co-executors of development that affects them.
- Beneficiaries should be encouraged to take advantage of their opportunities, potential and resources to attain the best possible life for themselves and family.

Women empowerment is instrumental for increasing women's social, economic and political status, as well as increase the probability of share household income spent on family welfare. It is therefore essential to remove social and community practices that act against empowerment and self-respect of women.

Endnotes

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

LEGON CENTRE FOR INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS (INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR WOMEN BENEFICIARY INFORMANTS)

**TOPIC: THE ROLE OF INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AGENCIES IN THE
EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN: A CASE STUDY OF JICA IN THE NORTHERN
REGION OF GHANA**

Informant Background Details

1. Name:
2. Age:
3. Marital status:
4. Children:
5. Location:
6. How many years have you spent on the JICA project?
7. What were you doing before enrolling on the project?
8. How long have you been at the centre?

The JICA Project

1. Why did you join the JICA project?
2. What were you told is the aim of the project?
3. How has JICA supported shea butter production at the centre?
4. How do you see shea butter production at the centre after JICA's intervention?

5. How has JICA's intervention impacted your involvement in shea butter production?
6. The project finished long ago, would you say you were given what you need to be empowered?

Empowerment of Beneficiaries

1. What is your understanding of women's empowerment?
2. Would you say you are empowered?
3. How did JICA's project aid your empowerment?
4. Would you say you earn more money now with the shea butter production than before?
5. Do you contribute financially to the up keep of your household now, since you joined the centre? Please give examples of situations you have done so.
6. Do you contribute financially to your children's education and upkeep (if any)? Has this increased with your involvement with shea butter production at the centre?
7. Do you have more or less control in decision-making in your household, family and community than before?
8. Are you able to save more money from your shea butter production than before? What do you do with your everyday profits?

Challenges and Recommendations

1. What are the challenges you faced during the training with JICA? If so, kindly specify.
2. How has your family and people's attitude changed towards you since you started working?
3. Why do you think young girls in the community do not like to join the shea butter production?
4. What do you think can be done to improve women's empowerment in the shea butter sector?
5. What would you prefer JICA to do differently on this project to empower women more?

APPENDIX II

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR JAPAN INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AGENCY

JICA.

1. Name and position of Informant
2. How many empowerment projects do you have in Ghana?
3. Which of your projects would you classify as women's empowerment?
4. Where are these projects implemented?
5. How successful have the women empowerment projects been?
6. Please elaborate on your contribution towards the women in shea butter production in the following areas?
 - a. Skills development and capacity building
7. What have been the outcomes of your intervention in the shea butter sector?
8. How would you describe the beneficiaries of your project now?

APPENDIX III

AFRICA 2000 PERSONNEL

1. How successful was the JICA project?
2. Would you say the women got the needed training from JICA to empower them?
3. What was JICA's contribution towards the production of shea butter?
4. Has the centre brought about change in the society? How?
5. How did Africa 2000 get the women to be a part of the centre?
6. How has the programme influenced the behaviour of the husbands of the participants?

7. Would you say the women have been empowered with the intervention of JICA?
8. Why are the youth not interested in the shea butter production?
9. Would you say the centre is still productive after the JICA project?
10. It is the view of many that empowerment programmes don't really provide the participants with what they really need to be empowered. Would you say it was the same with the JICA's project?