PRESENTATION ON:

DECENTRALIZATION AND THE ROLE OF CBMS IN GHANA: A CASE STUDY OF THE DANGME WEST DISTRICT

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1.0 BRIEF HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN GHANA

- The earliest attempt at local administration during the colonial era was with native authorities, centered around chiefs, which were not democratic because the chiefs were handpicked.

- Their main interest was to help the British colonial government, with limited involvement in local administration, to administer law and order.

- The municipal Ordinance of 1859 established municipalities in the coastal towns of the Gold Coast (Ghana), and in 1943, a new Ordinance set up elected town councils for Accra, Kumasi, Sekondi-Takoradi and Cape Coast.
In 1953, the Municipal Councils Ordinance was passed and this was followed by the Local Government Act of 1961, Act 54.

In all of these pieces of legislation, the distinction between Central and Local government institutions was maintained, and there has always been two different machineries for administration of Ghana.

(i) One based on capital with branches at the local (district) level.

(ii) Based in well defined localities and referred to as Local Government.
In all these, decision-making took an unduly long time because these bodies had to refer decisions on most matters of any meaningful significance to a Ministry in Accra, which, bogged down with matters of national significance.

Certain problems had developed as a result of this Dual Hierarchy Model of Administration:

(i) Central government agencies encroached on rights and responsibilities of the weaker local government bodies because areas and limits of responsibilities as between the two had not been clearly defined.

(ii) The various bodies had gone their various ways without sufficient consultations with each other, etc.
Against this background, there were several committees set up to enquire into the administration of the country notably

(i) The Watsan Committee (1949)
(ii) Sir Fredrick Bourne Committee (1955)
(iii) The Greenwood Commission (1957)
(v) The Mills Odoi Commission (1967)
(vi) The Constituent Assembly (1969)

In spite of the far reaching nature of the recommendations most of which were accepted, attempts at decentralization could not materialize until 1974 due to the change of Government in 1972

The 1972 Local Government described as the “Single
Hierarchy” Model sought to abolish the distinction between local and central government at the local level and create one common structure (District Councils) to which was assigned the responsibility of the totality of government at the local level

- Though, well intentioned, the system never worked due to several problems

  (i) No effective accountable and legitimate political authority was established at the District level to oversee the structure, etc.

- The above background provided the reason and the structure, form and content of the 1988 local government reforms in Ghana
2.0 THE NEW LOCAL GOVERNMENT SYSTEM IN GHANA

- The new local government system in Ghana began in 1988 with a redemarcation exercise.

- This is a four-tier Metropolitan and three-tier Municipal/District Assemblies structure designed in line with the Decentralization policy.

- The 1\textsuperscript{st} level of the system comprises 10 Administrative Regions, co-ordinated by the Regional Councils (Regional Co-ordinating Council).

- There is sub-division of the regions into Local Government Assemblies (Metropolitan – population of over 250,000,
Municipal (population of over – 95,000 and District – population of over 75,000). Presently there are 3 Metropolitan Assemblies, 4 Municipal Assemblies and 103 District Assemblies

- Classification of the Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies is done according to the following

(i) Size of the population in the area
(ii) Demographic Characteristics
(iii) Ability of the area to generate revenue for development
The Local Government Assemblies have sub-units such as the Zonal, Area, Town and Urban Councils.

At the lowest level of the tier are 16,000 Unit Committee Members.

The Unit Committees are the base structure of the local government system in Ghana and represent the basic unit of planning and political administration.

Generally, the main objective of the local government system in Ghana is to ensure that people are directly involved in the decision making process and responsible for their own development.
3.0 STRUCTURE OF THE NEW LOCAL GOVERNMENT SYSTEM IN GHANA

REGIONAL CO-ORDINATING COUNCIL

- METROPOLITAN
- SUB-METROPOLITAN DISTRICT COUNCILS
- TOWN COUNCILS

- MUNICIPAL

- DISTRICT

- URBAN/TOWN/AREA COUNCILS

- ZONAL COUNCILS

- UNIT COMMITTEES
4.0 DISTRICT LOCATIONS AND SIZE

- The Dangme West District is situated in the southeastern part of Ghana in the Greater Accra Region.

- The District has a total land area of about 1,442 square kilometer representing 41.5% of the regional land area.

- The District Capital is Dodowa (25 kilometers from the national capital, Accra).
5.0 DISTRICT CHARACTERISTICS

- Purely rural with over 65% of the population relying on subsistence agriculture as the main source of livelihood
- Low incomes and low investment
- Low level of infrastructure lack of industrial set ups
- Mass out migration of the economically active population
- Weak revenue base
- Presence of donor supported agencies: UNDP/GOG Poverty Reduction Programme, DANIDA/CWSA Project, etc
6.0 THE ROLE OF CBMS IN GHANA

(a) Preparation of Poverty Profiles and Pro-poor programmes

- Identification of community poverty indicators to design programmes to target the poorest of the poor
- Complement the very little data on core poverty indicators available in the District
- Preparation of accessibility maps
(b) Regularity of Data

- CBMS will provide District Assemblies with regular data that would continually be updated to feed the information management unit of the District Assembly
- Available data at present is irregular especially with regard to poverty indicators
- Living Standard Surveys are confronted with problems notably

(i) Poor design of questionnaire making it difficult to capture data at the District level
(ii) Failure to analyze poverty at the community level
(iii) Difficulties due to global nature of living standards surveys, which make it, gloss over poverty at the
community and individual levels, thus making it difficult for the average Ghanaian to identify him or herself with some of the results

© Reliability of Data

In addition to regularity of data, CBMS would serve as a reliable source of data to facilitate the District Assembly’s prioritization process as well as effective planning and monitoring and evaluation of various development projects
(d) Strengthening the District Planning and Co-ordinating

(i) The District Planning Co-ordinating Unit (DPCU) serve as the Information Management Unit of the District Assembly

(ii) The District Planning Co-ordinating Unit is plagued with inadequate data to feed the various programmes/projects being implemented by the District Assembly

(iii) The District Assembly intend to use CBMS to feed the Information Management Unit of the Assembly

(iv) The CBMS will also provide the District Assembly with adequate data for programme implementation
(e) Capacity Building/ Skills Development

(i) The CBMS is intended to provide basic skills in the collection, processing and analysis of data due to the active involvement of the people at the sub-district structures

(ii) This will provide skills to the people for the District Assembly's planning and budgeting processes

(iii) There will be sustainability of programmes/ projects due to the involvement of the people in the processes (data collection, collation and analysis)

(iv) The people at the sub-district level will “own the project” and “pass on” the knowledge learnt from CBMS to others
(f) Conclusion

The Dangme West District is very grateful for the choice of the District in the implementation of the CBMS and hopeful that the CBMS will be extended to all Districts to enable the District Assemblies have regular and reliable data to facilitate the design and implementation of programmes/ projects to address the issues of poverty in the Districts of Ghana

Thank you and God Bless Us All