Use of CBMS for Governance in Ghana: A Case Study of Dangme West District

Moses Kobla Joshua

USE OF CBMS FOR GOVERNANCE IN GHANA

A CASE STUDY OF DANGME WEST DISTRICT

BY:

MOSES KOBLA JOSHUA
USE OF CBMS FOR GOVERNANCE IN GHANA
A CASE STUDY OF DANGME WEST DISTRICT.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND
The quest for good and effective governance has assumed greater importance on the national agenda of several African countries over the last two decades.

1.2 DEFINITION OF GOVERNANCE

The term governance is used to describe the way in which a country is governed. It covers the range of political, economic and administrative decisions made by the government, business and civil society sectors as they manage a country’s resources and affairs.

The search for good governance has necessitated the need to decentralize political, administrative and fiscal responsibilities and authority to the sub-structures.

1.3 CHARACTERISTICS OF GOOD GOVERNANCE

Good governance according to the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia has eight (8) major characteristics which are participatory, consensus oriented, accountable, transparent, responsive, effective and efficient, equitable and inclusive and follows
the rule of law. It assumes that corruption is minimized, the views of the minorities are taken into account and that the voices of the vulnerable in society are heard in decision-making. It is also responsive to the present and future needs of society.

1.4 DECENTRALISATION

Decentralization has long been recognized as a spur for rapid development and a tool for giving meaning to democracy. Article 240 (1) and 254 of the 1992 constitution of the Republic of Ghana reinforce this obvious truth.

1.5 DEFINITION OF DECENTRALISATION

The United Nations has defined decentralization as “the transfer of authority on a geographic basis, whether by decentralization, (i.e. delegation) of authority to field units of the same department or level of government or by devolution of authority to local government units or special statutory bodies”. (United Nations, 1965:88).

1.6 LOCAL GOVERNANCE

Effective Local Governance is considered as an essential component of good governance. Local governance is interpreted as the active involvement of the local population within the territorial boundaries of a local government in ensuring improved quality of service and leadership at the local (government) level. It includes greater
participation by civil society in decision-making processes and involves consensus-building and civic awareness.

In Ghana, Local Government bodies play very central roles in administration and development and are directly linked with the Central Government.

The need for strengthening Local Governance is based on the conviction that as a system it;

(i) enhances government responsiveness;
(ii) can effectively identify local need and priorities and mobilize the people on sustained basis;
(iii) affords the majority of the people the opportunity to participate in the governance and the development process simultaneously and
(iv) Can improve the relative poor performance of the District Assemblies.

In Ghana, a major Local Government Reform and Decentralization programme has taken place. The purpose of the decentralization programme and the local government reforms was to devolve power and responsibilities to the District Assemblies to promote local democracy and good governance with the ultimate aim of improving the standard of living of the people in a sustainable manner.
STRUCTURE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN GHANA

Regional Co-ordinating Council

- Metropolitan
- Sub-metropolitan District Councils
- Town Councils
- District
- Municipal
- Zonal Councils
- Unit Committees
- Urban Town Councils

1.7 MAIN LEGISLATIVE TEXTS

The main legislative texts pertaining to local government are;
2.0 PROFILE OF DANGME WEST DISTRICT

In response to the above mentioned legislative texts, the Dangme West District was created in July 1988 as a result of the government redemarcation exercise in response to the decentralization process.

The Dangme West District is located in the south-eastern part of Ghana in the Greater-Accra Region. The district has a total land area of about 1,442 square kilometers. It shares boundaries with Yilo and Manya Krobo districts on the west, Tema Municipality on the south west and Dangme East district on the east. The Volta River and the Atlantic Ocean wash the north-eastern and the southern portions of the district respectively. The district capital, Dodowa is about 25 kilometres from Accra, the capital of Ghana (see figure below showing map of Dangme West District).

Dangme West district is one of the hottest and driest parts of the country. Temperatures are appreciably high for most parts of the year.
with the highest during the main dry season (November-March) and the lowest during the short wet season (June-August). The absolute maximum temperature is 40 degrees celsius. Mean annual rainfall increases from 762.5 millimetres on the coast to 1,220 millimetres to the north and northeast close to the foothills of Akwapim Range.
3.0 OVERVIEW OF COMMUNITY BASED MONITORING SYSTEM (CBMS) AND ITS IMPLEMENTATION IN THE DANGME WEST DISTRICT

The CBMS Network is part of the Poverty and Economic Policy (PEP) research programme of International Development Research Centre (IDRC). Officially launched in June 2002, the network aims to assist its members develop, refine and institutionalize community-based monitoring systems in their respective countries and to promote CBMS knowledge and initiatives internationally.

Dangme West, being the first district in Ghana selected for the implementation of CBMS which is being co-ordinated by the Centre for Policy Analysis (CEPA) has already taken the initiative of briefing some selected communities on the objectives and uses of the CBMS.
Data was collected using a survey instrument-household questionnaire. The questionnaires were administered by teachers to the three (3) selected communities namely: Ningo, Prampram and Dodowa. The processing and analysis of the questionnaire was done by Centre for Policy Analysis (CEPA).

4.0 BENEFITS DERIVED FROM CBMS BY THE ASSEMBLY

The focus on poverty reduction brought in its wake, a whole new research area of understanding poverty issues with questions such as, who are the poor, where do they live, why are they poor, what can be done to reduce their levels of poverty and so on. These pertinent questions can be answered only when there exists sufficient data available to the policymaker.

It is in this direction that the CBMS involves the participation of the communities in its data collection.

It is hoped that the implementation of the CBMS in the Dangme West District will bring about the following benefits:

- Provide needed information to support planning and project implementation at the local level.
- Provide an organized system of collecting information for policymaking and programme implementation at all geographical levels.
• Provide up to date information on the welfare status and needs at the community and household levels.
• It can be used as a tool in monitoring and evaluating the impact of projects and programmes.
• It can also be used as a tool for poverty reduction.
• A tool for better local governance.
• Provide inputs for programme design, implementation and monitoring.
• To help identify target beneficiaries for programmes and projects.
• To provide the basis for resource allocation.
• To provide inputs to development plans and socio-economic profiles and;
• To monitor regularly the welfare conditions of households and individuals.

5.0 CONCLUSION

The Assembly hopes to sustain the CBMS activity which provides useful baseline for poverty monitoring and evaluation by increasing its budgetary allocations for research activities in the district.
REFERENCES


5. The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP).

6. Civil Service Law, 1993; (PNDCL 327).


JUNE 2006