

**Sustainable Rural Livelihoods and Women's
Access to Resources in a Southern Ghanaian Forest
Community**

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The candidate confirms that the work submitted is her own and that appropriate credit has been given where reference has been made to the work of others.

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Abstract

This thesis examines the organization of livelihoods in a forest reserve fringe community in south western Ghana. Livelihoods in these communities have been organized within three main contexts. These are community vulnerabilities of increasing population, decreasing soil fertility and poor infrastructural development; commoditisation of agriculture to incorporate cocoa and oil palm production for export and industry; and forest reservation and logging policies. The above processes have dwindled the community's livelihood base most particularly farmland and non-timber forest products, changed the mode of production towards greater diversification of livelihood activities into non-farm income sources, transformed customary livelihood activities and their organization, community structures and institutions and promoted social differentiation and class formation. Community livelihood activities and organization have transformed to incorporate elements of cooperation, mutual support and interdependence as well as exploitation, marginalization and conflict. Customary production relations that involved communal rights of tenure have changed to land sales, renting and share cropping. This change had reduced the security of tenure and therefore the social protection offered by customary production relations. Although community laws and taboos, District Assembly rent and market toll policies, interpretation and enforcement of forestry regulations by forestry officials, state agricultural policies and bank regulations mediated livelihood activities and resource access, it was the micro-political production relations of exploitation that appeared to be more important in ensuring access to resources. The social relations of production presented winners and losers in both categories of women and men. Women have had increased work burdens compared with their male counterparts as well as less access to resources, although amongst the group of women some have had more access than others. Cleavages have appeared within the community as a result of resentments and tensions and these have a capacity to disintegrate social structures.

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ABBREVIATIONS

AgSSIP	Agricultural Sub-Sector Investment Programme
BOPP	Benso Oil Palm Plantation
CBNRM	Community-Based Natural Resource Management
CDRs	Committees for the Defense of the Revolution
CFCs	Community Forest Committees
COBRA	Conservation of Biodiverse Resource Areas
COCOBOD	Ghana Cocoa Board
CPP	Convention People's Party
DACF	District Assembly Common Fund
DFID	Department for International Development
ERP	Economic Recovery Programme
EPP	Expanded Programme of Immunization
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation
FBOs	Farmer Based Organisations
FIDA	Federation for International Women Lawyers
FRMP	Forest Resources Management Project
FSD	Forest Services Division
GAD	Gender and Development
GED	Gender, Environment and Development
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GoG	Government of Ghana
GPRSP	Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
GPRTU	Ghana Private Road Transport Union
HIPC	Highly Indebted Poor Country
IMF	International Monetary Fund
ISL	Intestate Succession Law
ICDPs	Integrated Conservation and Development Projects
IT	Information Technology
IUCPs	Integrated Conservation and Development Projects
JFM	Joint Forest Management

JSS	Junior Secondary School
LAP	Land Administration Programme
MOWAC	Ministry for Women and Children's Affairs
MTADF	Medium Term Agricultural Development Programme
MWED	Mpohor Wassa East District
MWEDA	Mpohor Wassa East District Assembly
NCWD	National Council for Women and Development
NGOs	Non Governmental Organisations
NHIS	National Health Insurance Scheme
NRC	National Redemption Council
NTFPs	Non-Timber Forest Products
PIP	Policies, Institutions and Processes
PNDC	Provisional National Defence Council
PRA	Participatory Rural Appraisal
RRA	Rapid Rural Appraisal
PRSPs	Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers
RNFE	Rural Non Farm Economy
SAPs	Structural Adjustment Policies
SLA	Sustainable Livelihoods Approach
SLF	Sustainable Livelihoods Framework
SIPL	Subri Industrial Plantation Limited
SMC	Supreme Military Council
SRA	Social Responsibility Agreement
SSNIT	Social Security and National Insurance Trust
STDs	Sexually Transmitted Diseases
THLD	Twifo-Heman Lower Denkyira District
TOPP	Twifo Oil Palm Plantation
UNCED	United Nations Conference on Environment and Development
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WAOPP	West Africa Oil Palm Plantation
WED	Women, Environment and Development

WEN Women's Environmental Network
WID Women in Development
WILDAF Women in Law and Development in Africa

CHAPTER ONE

Gender, Political Economy and Livelihoods

1.1 Introduction

This thesis examines the organisation of livelihoods in a community that fringes the Bonsa Ben forest reserve in the Mpohor Wassa East District of the Western Region in Ghana. It makes a context specific analysis of livelihoods in the face of historical processes and contemporary policy of incorporation into a global capitalist economy. I identify the livelihood strategies and activities undertaken by community members in the face of increasing land shortage. The thesis indicates the importance of natural resources in the livelihood strategies of rural communities and it identifies the drivers of change within the case study community. It identifies and examines formal and informal institutions and processes at the household, community, market and state administrative levels that provide an environment of vulnerability for livelihoods organisation. In particular, this thesis examines and discusses the social relations across gender, age and status and social class within the community and how these relations impact on members' access to, control over and use of basic livelihood resources. It also identifies how community members have employed social agency to resist and challenge their marginalisation and exclusion from basic livelihood resources. The thesis especially focuses on the changing position of women in the community under investigation.

I concentrate on the political economy of livelihood organisation and women for two reasons. First, rural Ghana is largely agrarian and access and control over land remains the basis of livelihoods. Within forest regions, forest resources also become important particularly for the poor and landless and this includes most women. The mid 1980s and 1990s witnessed sporadic rural community protests against mining and forestry agents in the country. Since the new millennium, these protests have intensified with clashes between reserve fringe communities and forest guards. Some civil society groups such as the Third World Network have also championed the cause of communities advocating the rights of people to a livelihood on the land, security of tenure and to work in a healthy and safe environment. I was concerned to explore and examine the policies and processes that tended to alienate land and resources from peasant communities, create land

shortages and the relations of patronage, exploitation, discrimination and exclusion upon which the available livelihood resources were distributed, controlled and used. Second, women have been assigned a customary role of household managers who seek to ensure household food security. Any land shortage affects women harder and makes it difficult for them to discharge properly this 'customary' role. I concentrate on women to explore what has happened to their livelihood, how they compare to men and whether within the group of women some have done better than others. I carry out this task by using both secondary and primary printed sources of data and qualitative interviews.

1.2 Capitalism and Underdevelopment – The Research Context

Perceptions about rural livelihoods need first to be situated within the context of development theory and policy. The idea of 'development' is shaped by contrasting views on socio-economic growth and poverty reduction. Views of development place livelihoods at the heart of development and provide a policy environment for tackling rural poverty.

Neo-Marxists present a radical political economy paradigm to explain both development and underdevelopment in terms of the same historical processes through which present day developed capitalist countries became developed (Rodney 1972; Frank 1978; Roxborough 1979; Hoogvelt 1982). These historical processes are part of the formation of a world market driven by imperialism and colonialism. For proponents of the radical political economy paradigm, external global structures and dependent relations have accumulated wealth in developed western countries and created poverty and underdevelopment in developing countries.

Underdevelopment is situated within a historical process of struggles, one of developing countries' relationships with the dominant capitalist economies. Sub-Saharan Africa's relationship with dominant capitalist economies started with the contribution of slaves towards capital accumulation in Europe during the era of the Trans-Atlantic trade (1500- 1800). Since the beginning of the 20th century, it has contributed natural resources in the form particularly of agricultural raw materials, minerals and timber (Iliffe 1995; Bond 2006). Incorporation into the world capitalist system was driven by a number of administrative and political tools employed by the western colonisers. Thus cash crops were introduced to revolutionize

subsistence agriculture and land policies evolved to ensure control over the means of production of the indigenes. Independent states in the South have often continued land and agricultural policies of colonial predecessors.

Ghana was incorporated into world capitalism mainly through agriculture, timber logging and mining. Agriculture has been the major traditional subsistence livelihood activity using family labour and any surplus is marketed on the local market. The mode of production involves two components. First are the forces of production; the basic technology, labour (family labour) and raw materials (land) crucial in any livelihood activity. Second are the relations of production, the way in which surplus is extracted and distributed. The forces and relations of production are related and define the particular mode of production of any livelihood activity and this helps to understand the dynamics of change (Klein 1985). In addition to food crop farming, Ghana now produces cash crops such as cocoa, oilpalm, pineapples and spices (ginger, black pepper etc.) for export as well as subsidiaries of foreign industrial firms that operate locally. It also produces timber logs for processing and export (Beckman 1976; Howard 1978). Timber firms encroach into farmlands and destroy farm crops as they log but the concerns and protests of forest fringe communities have not been addressed by the state. State concessions of forestlands to logging companies typically exclude communities from control over their land, from participating in the productive process and from direct access to the economic benefits of forest exploitation (Messerschmidt 1999; CED 1999). In addition, forestry legislation has made it difficult for local communities to engage in other lawful livelihood activity such as hunting and collection of non-timber forest products (NTFPs) which serve as food sources and are the basis of small-scale industries in craft, medicine, charcoal, carpentry and construction. They therefore provide livelihood security.

This thesis argues that the introduction to a cash economy in the 1960s for cocoa and mid 1970s for oil palm and land policies of reservation and logging since the late 1930s (but more importantly from the mid 1980s under the economic recovery programme) has forced a change in the case study community in the customary mode of production. This raises some agrarian concerns that deal with issues of productivity and food security. The forces of production have changed only just slightly as land is still the primary means of production. Labour power still forms a significant part in production and very few innovations have been

introduced in terms of technology. The relations of production have been transformed significantly albeit slowly. There has been a transitional conjuncture in which hybrid forms of production have predominated to combine features of both the old and the new (Murray 1980). The household mode of production involved specific production relations within and between households to ensure that community members enjoyed a minimum of subsistence. This was enshrined in an ethic which employed both social and technical arrangements – reciprocity, redistribution of wealth, communal land ownership, and other land preparation and farming arrangements.

Land shortage has occurred as considerable farm land has been reserved for logging purposes for the global market. This situation is worsened by the attractiveness of cocoa and oil palm production which has seen a lot of migrant farmers moving into the community to take advantage of the prospects of the cash economy. Land sizes have dwindled; land has been overworked to reduce fallow periods; and new and diversified sources of livelihoods have emerged. Communal land tenure systems have changed with new rights put in place. The extent to which both forces and relations of production have changed has implications for food security in the country. African tenure systems have become more and more exclusive as rights to land are (re)defined more narrowly in the context of new political, social and economic conditions (Basset 1993:4). This suggests that African agrarian economies are not universally transforming into fully commodified economies. Explanations for this situation have been variously located. First in the manner in which these economies were inserted into an already blossomed industrialized and monopolized capitalism; second the presence of a dialectic of change and continuity resulting from the incorporation of such societies; and third, a contradiction in the colonial project of promoting commodity production and capitalist enterprise without encouraging the formation of competing and conflicting classes as created by industrial capitalism in Europe (Bernstein 2004).

Agrarian questions of productivity and food security direct attention first, to specific rural complexities and opportunities for rural transformation; second towards the ways in which rural power is maintained and by which social groups and third, how rural people interact with powerful classes beyond the local level (Bush 2007).

The change in customary relations of production also has gender implications. Women as household managers and providers of household sustenance have increasingly been marginalized as pressure is brought to bear on farm land and NTFPs in terms of access, distribution, control and use of such resources. At the same time, their work burdens have increased since in addition to farming food crops, they have had to add cash crop production and diversified activities that include food and NTFP processing. Such an increased work burden for women is evident in the case study area and must not be misconstrued as a gender myth or feminist fable in development (see O’Laughlin 2007).

The incorporation of Ghana’s peasantries into capitalist systems of production and exchange has been uneven. This is because accumulation has always gone hand in hand with dispossessing rural areas of their natural resources and labour. This position is buttressed by Bush’s (2007:xiv) observation that:

The world’s poor have been unevenly incorporated into the world economy in a fragmented manner that creates winners and losers. Broadly speaking, the winners are in the northern economies, where there are also many losers; and the losers are in the Global South, where there are also many winners who benefit from expulsion of the poor during primitive accumulation of capital.

Incorporation of Ghana’s peasantry has been shaped by paternalistic development and dependency and buttressed by ideology and the implications of core- periphery relations (see Rodney 1972). In contemporary times however, rural livelihoods and environments have been linked with new forms of market institutions and a variety of transnational flows related to migrations, transnational development networks and the circulation of ideas – globalization (Bebbington and Batterbury 2001:372); incorporation having changed from its colonial and imperial expressions to globalization of capital. The nature of Africa’s incorporation and the consequences of this have been misunderstood by states and international agencies. This is because they have failed to identify the root causes of the food crisis with the character of international food regimes, class, rural transformation and capital accumulation as well as issues of politics and power (Bush 2007:148). African states and international agencies have rather sought to explain the food crisis in terms of neo-liberal explanations of low productivity resulting from drought, civil strife and population increases, poor infrastructure and inadequate access to capital. As a result, they have called for the continent to be further incorporated into the

global trade regime by 'encouraging cash crop production within the context of revamped and efficient markets, and export-led growth' (Bush 2007:159). The problem is not that the continent has not been sufficiently incorporated into the global economy but as Bush shows in the quotation above, Africa's problem is one of uneven incorporation which has led to an underdevelopment of its resources of people and raw materials (land and labour in this context). This solution to Africa's food crisis does not offer any explanation that attacks the structures of power that create and perpetuate food insecurity.

A discussion of the relations of production enables us to identify the power structures in the community and the nature of power relations between individuals, groups and social classes and also between community and state agencies as community members negotiate their own spaces for sustained livelihoods. Although power relations between community and state are identified and explained as they mediate community livelihood resource and livelihood activities, I concentrate on the micro-politics of community social relations created along lines of gender, age and seniority as well as social class. This is because while it is less difficult to describe the nature and structure of the mediating institutions, policies and processes as well as the ways in which people engage with them, it is far more difficult to trace how they actually mediate livelihood assets and activities. This is borne out by studies that have suggested structural adjustment policies encouraged livelihood diversification and de-agrarianisation (Bryceson 1999b, 1999c) impacting negatively on the livelihoods of recipient economies (Amanor 1994; 1999; Manuh 1997; Bush 2007) or improved livelihoods especially of women through micro-credit schemes. The literature on sustainable rural livelihoods identify rural communities as employing their agency in the face of institutional constraints and spatial, environmental and demographic vulnerabilities to combine resource assets to achieve livelihood strategies (see Carney 1998; Scoones 1998; DFID 1999a). How have livelihood activities diversified in the face of land shortage and what other strategies have been employed to take pressure off the land? This study describes the socio-economic profile of the case study community to establish its livelihood activities and trajectories using 1980 as the base line. It takes cognisance of the historical and contemporary processes of incorporation that have led to land shortages. The study moves beyond the particular processes that created the initial land shortage into how relations of production have been (re)structured

over the available land. The study is structured to provide answers to among other things: what social relations characterise the organisation of livelihood activities and how do they affect women's access to, control over and use of livelihood resources? What other axis of exclusion and marginalisation can be identified in the community? In what ways have community members employed social agency to resist or challenge their marginalisation and exclusion?

Ghana's experience with the premier cocoa growing frontier in the Eastern region is one of degradation, waste and impoverishment (Hill 1963; Okali 1983; Amanor 1994) Impoverishment has been caused by exploitation of labour, the appropriation of the means of production and the transfer of surplus value from the region (Rodney 1972; Frank 1978; Crisp 1984). These are in addition to the fact that the social structures and institutions have been greatly transformed. I will also identify and explain the key features of social transformation within the case study community and establish the axes along which cleavages have formed. The case study that I develop contributes to an understanding of the differential impact of capitalist development in the new frontiers of Ghana. While most studies have looked at the general underdevelopment of countries seen to be in the periphery of capitalism, I address the effect on livelihoods of different groups of people in the new frontiers. The changing position of peasant women is discussed in relation to others in the community. Gender therefore is not the only variable that is used here. Gender relations are examined alongside social class, age and seniority within community structures.

1.2.1 Research Questions

This thesis has been guided by four main research questions. These have been developed by reviewing literature on incorporation of developing countries into capitalist world production systems as well as sustainable rural livelihoods. They are:

1. How have livelihood activities been diversified in the face of land shortage and what other strategies have been employed to take pressure off the land?
2. What social relations characterise the organisation of livelihood activities and how do they affect women's access to, control over and use of livelihood resources? What other axis of exclusion and marginalisation can be identified in the community?

3. In what ways have community members employed social agency to resist or challenge their marginalisation and exclusion?
4. What are the key features of social transformation within the case study community and how can these be explained?

1.3 Gender and Development

The concern with women's role in development particularly in developing countries and the inequalities in the distribution of development benefits have long been a focus for researchers, development practitioners and activists. The United Nations since 1945 has issued charters and documents on women as well as generated four major conferences on women. These include the UN Charter (1945), and the UN Declaration of Human Rights (1948), Convention for the Suppression of Traffic in Persons and the Exploitation of the Prostitution of others (1949), Equal Remuneration for Men and Women Workers for work of equal value (1951), and Convention on the Political Rights of Women (1952) (Brett 1991: 1). Attention has been drawn to the fact that without the full participation of women in development processes Third World Countries will see little improvement in their Gross Domestic Products (GDPs). Yet development programmes and policies generally have failed to recognise women's potential and contribution. This may be because of false assumptions made about the household structure and how it works in developing countries (Whitehead and Bloom 1992; Evans 1992; Young 1992). Development strategies have mostly recognised the needs of the most vocal and politically active in addition to making assumptions about the needs of women and programmes suited to those needs (Hardiman 1988; Moser 1989; Brett 1991; Evans 1992; Whitehead and Bloom 1992).

A number of arguments have been made mainstream women's needs in development policy and programmes. One argument is the fact that women make up half the world's population and so do have equal interests in the development of policies for their countries (Levy 1996:2). Yet in many countries women tend to be overlooked and made invisible when it comes to decision making. It is often assumed that their interests would be taken care of by their husbands, fathers, uncles, brothers and sons (Hardiman 1988; Whitehead and Bloom 1992). Another argument has been that women as a group perform special culturally assigned roles in society namely, reproductive, productive and community roles. As such they

have special interests and needs that must be satisfied to enable them to carry out their roles successfully (Hardiman 1988; Moser 1989). Thirdly it is argued that women play important economic roles in development but this has been made invisible as these roles are not accounted for in the GDPs of their countries. Hence women's contributions to family incomes have been lost in the labour statistics of their countries. Bringing them into development accounting would highlight what contributions they make and help them access resources that will improve their contributions (Evans 1992:11; Whitehead and Bloom 1992:42). A fourth argument is that women's situation particularly in poor countries has deteriorated markedly with respect to education, health, employment and their integration into national development plans. Poor development planning has deprived women of important resources and intensified their work load while at the same time reduced women's control over their own work patterns (Hardiman 1988:71). Another argument made is that women make positive contributions to socio-economic development. It is argued that when more women are literate and have a better status, this is reflected in more favourable social indicators such as reduced infant mortality, increased life expectancy, improved nutritional status and the low incidence of morbidity and mortality from easily preventable diseases (Hardiman 1988:71).

In the light of the above arguments efforts have been made to address the issue of women's contribution to development, identifying the various constraints inhibiting their efforts and suggesting appropriate remedies. In particular, research and debates arising out of it have highlighted the complexity of issues that relate to women and development warning that these need to be viewed in historical perspective within both a national and international context. This is expected to provide an understanding of the deeply rooted reasons which prevent women's issues being considered as an integral part of development questions. Development planners and practitioners have been called upon to be gender aware in their activities, noting that men and women play different roles in society and therefore have different interests, concerns and needs (Moser 1989; Ostergaard 1992; Mosse 1993). These debates and arguments have been prompted by relating to women's uneven integration in the development process. Yet they have been criticised within gender circles as misrepresentations of women and gender issues in feminist development advocacy and mobilization (Cornwall et. al 2007:2). The arguments need to be put then within specific research contexts to make them meaningful. I

examine gender and other social relations as they impact on women's access, control and use of dwindling land and forest resource. I do this by simultaneously exploring the role of women as household managers and as economic actors.

This study therefore is set within the overall discussion of the Women in Development (WID) approach to development and the conceptual shift to a Gender and Development (GAD) approach. WID and the shift to GAD have placed women's issues and gender relations as integral to development policies across the globe. Policy makers and practitioners have been urged to be gender aware and incorporate gender planning into their activities. Early WID practitioners pointed to women's invisibility, the lack of data on their activities and argued that women were excluded from development processes. They concentrated their efforts in trying to ensure women's better integration into development, and the alleviation of work burdens through the provision of appropriate technologies. WID practitioners also addressed women's lack of access to modern knowledge and other resources through credit programmes, agricultural extension or other training. The various conferences for women helped to institutionalize WID concerns both within the United Nations system and at the national level. Through these conferences, demands for social justice and equity for women were strategically linked to mainstream development concerns and national machineries were established to promote women's interests as well as legislation to promote their rights. Equity issues however received cursory treatment as they aroused hostility among development experts. This is because equity involved the redistribution of power between men and women and most development experts at least rhetorically did not want to interfere with the internal power structures of countries.

WID however had two major impacts (Razavi and Miller 1995; Levy 1996). First, it generated discussions and research. It challenged both the definition of work and the methods of data collection used for generating official statistics. Such challenge was aimed at making women visible in production as family labour, previously categorised as housework, was brought into the productive sphere to be measured. Discussions and research also encouraged the evaluation of development projects for women which revealed that there was overt discrimination against women as intra-household gender relations were not considered. The second impact of WID was the growth of institutional mechanisms within development agencies and governments. Hence resources could flow in and between international,

national and local agencies and organisations concerned with WID. Hence the recognition that development was not benefiting women led to a women only focus whether in terms of research or the delivery of benefits via projects (Young 1993:130).

One major criticism of WID has been that it has not reflected a homogeneous policy since its inception (Levy 1996:2). WID has taken the form of establishment of separate structures in countries, ministries and departments and even in NGOs and international agencies with a mandate for women. But this has happened as if women were uninvolved or unaffected by the activities of other structures. Thus these varying structures have focused on women as an analytical and operational category, changing the original political focus of women put forward by the women's movement. While structures for women (e.g. ministries, departments, centres and projects) have been severely under resourced relative to other government expenditure, the primary means of intervention by these structures has been women-specific policies, programmes and projects. Another criticism is the fact that in spite of the analysis of women's subordination, the relational nature of subordination has been left unexplained (Young 1993; Razavi and Miller 1995). WID had identified lack of access to resources as the key to women's subordination without raising questions about the role of gender relations in restricting women's access in the first place. This is because women are not the sole agents of their destiny for their lives are shaped in great measure by their relations with men.

GAD emerged as the critique of WID and stressed the importance of gender relations as an analytical category which is based on an understanding of the roles of women and men, their responsibilities as well as their access to and control over resources (Connelly et al. 2000:9). The conceptual framework of GAD therefore was constructed around several propositions (Young 1993:134). First, that focusing on the role of women alone in development was inadequate to understand the opportunities women had as agencies for change. Second, women are not a homogeneous category but are divided into class, colour and creed. Third, any analysis of social organisation and social process has to take into consideration the structure and dynamic of gender relations. Fourth, the totality of women's and men's lives has to be the focus of analysis, not merely their productive, or their reproductive activities. Finally, women are not passive, nor marginal, but active

subjects of social processes. Men and women are seen to be differently located within the socio-economic structure and thus tend to have different sets of interests and needs that will contradict but which may or may not be antagonistic. Thus in trying to understand the particular patterning of women's lives, GAD took a holistic perspective, taking into consideration the totality of the social organisation, economic and political life as they shape particular aspects of society (Levy 1996; Young 1997). Unlike WID, GAD structures do not deal with only women but act as catalyst for the integration of a gender perspective as a regular part of the practice of all development activities. Such gender mainstreaming into development involves use of specific methodology that makes a gender analysis of all policy programmes and projects (Moser 1989; Levy 1996; Young 1997). Advocates of GAD believe that a gender planning methodology ensures that women or gender are not factored into already fixed operational steps in the development process (i.e. women's issues are not just added on); but that their inclusion ensures their participation and integration both in the project cycle as well as in the traditional policy and planning process. Finally a GAD approach to development raises the consciousness of women to their plight. GAD makes women aware of the structures that create poverty for some and wealth for others, the maldistribution of social wealth and capital, the unbalanced distribution of power and the structures of inequality between men and women which weaken both in their common struggle for survival and betterment, through organising, creating alliances and coalitions, exerting influence, communicating and public education (Young 1997:54).

A number of approaches therefore were considered to mainstream women into capitalist development policy. The equity approach for developing women sought to gain equity for women in the development process. It used legal means to identify the origins of women's subordination and advocated for a redistribution of development benefits. This approach however was criticized for its lack of development emphasis as well as its limited potential to impact on the vast majority of women who are illiterate and rural-based (Moser 1989; Snyder and Tadesse 1995; Connelly et al. 2000). The anti-poverty approach to women in development linked the inequality between the sexes to poverty but not subordination. It therefore emphasized the reduction in income inequality with women becoming the focus in strategies to overcome hunger and malnutrition (Moser 1989:1811-1813). The approach placed emphasis on income generating and entrepreneurship projects

for women. The approach has been criticized for three main reasons. First, poverty reduction projects are small scale and provide few benefits for the women engaged in them. Second, it has potential for disrupting the power dimension of the status quo especially within the family (Snyder and Tadesse 1995:12). Third, anti-poverty projects have a tendency to worsen the plight of women who are already overburdened with work (Mosse 1993:156; UN 1995:17). The efficiency approach was development oriented and sought to increase productivity in order to enhance the quality of people's lives rather than solely to achieve economic growth. It was expected that women's involvement in the design and operation of development activities would expedite overall development as women constitute half of the available labour force and also bear heavy economic responsibilities (Moser 1989; Snyder and Tadesse 1995; Connelly et al. 2000). The final approach to women in development, that of empowerment, acknowledged inequalities between the sexes and women's subordination in the family. Questioning the fundamental assumptions concerning the interrelationship between power and development, this approach emphasised mobilization and consciousness-raising particularly among grassroot women's groups as a source of empowerment (Moser 1989; Snyder and Tadesse 1995; Connelly et al. 2000).

1.4 Livelihoods, Gender and Understanding Social Transformation

Rural livelihoods in sub-Saharan Africa are mainly agrarian although there is an increased tendency to venture into other non-farm livelihood sources. Historical processes of incorporation and current globalization policies and processes have pervaded all areas of social life, made porous national boundaries, reduced local autonomy and therefore made communities and regions increasingly connected and mutually dependent (Castles 2001:14). The economic restructuring programmes that culminated in structural adjustment policies in many African countries during the early 1980s to mid 1990s have been cited as key in transforming many rural African societies (Bryceson 2000d; Bush 2007). SAPs entailed the removal of agricultural subsidies on inputs, and dismantled parastatal marketing boards that had serviced peasants input requirements, enforced commodity standards and provided single channel marketing facilities and controlled prices (Bryceson 2000d:6). At the same time that SAPs made commercial agriculture uncertain and reduced incomes, it

removed subsidies from education and health thus shifting the burden onto households.

The term 'social transformation' generally implies an underlying notion of the way society and culture change in response to such factors as economic growth, war or political upheavals. It does not imply any predetermined outcome or that the process is essentially a positive one (Castles 2001:15). Social transformation as a perspective helps to identify and understand transnational processes as well as their effects on regional, national and local levels. The perspective also helps to identify the ways in which various communities and individuals experience and react to such processes.

Within the context of this thesis, it may be argued that the historical processes of incorporating rural agrarian economies into a global capitalist production system and other state and community processes have created significant changes in the case study community. Suffice it to say here that there is deterioration in agriculture with households and individuals turning to multiple livelihood activities outside the farm; a change in household structure such that the husband and father no longer becomes the sole income earner; decreasing social isolation and increasing social differentiation. The trend towards less community coherence with respect to agrarian livelihoods, family structure, social and community identities also has presented tensions and resentments between women and men, the youth and community elders and leaders and indigenes and migrant farmers. These are significant transformations to community structures and institutions.

1.5 Methodology for the Study

A scientific endeavour is undertaken in so long as science is defined as a specific and systematic way of discovering and understanding how social realities arise, operate and impact on individuals and organisations of individuals (Berg 1998:11). Researchers may emphasise a more positivist view or may be primarily interested in individuals and their life-worlds. In the former, positivists utilize empirical methodologies borrowed from the natural sciences to investigate phenomenon. Quantification serves this positive science ideal by providing rigorous, reliable and verifiable large aggregates of data and the statistical testing of empirical hypothesis. On the other hand, in researching life-worlds, qualitative researchers focus on naturally emerging languages and the meanings individuals

assign to experience (emotions, motivations, symbols and their meanings, empathy and other subjective aspects associated with naturally evolving lives of individuals and groups). As these social facts are directly observable, they may be viewed as objective. However, certain elements of symbolism, meaning or understanding usually require consideration of the individual's own perceptions and subjective apprehensions (Berg 1998 citing Swartz and Jacobs 1979).

This study is qualitative in nature. Qualitative research seeks answers to questions by examining various social settings and the individuals who inhabit these settings i.e. how individuals arrange themselves and their settings and how they make sense of their surroundings through symbols, rituals, social structures, and social roles and so on. The conclusions of quantitative methods, however arithmetically precise, may fail to fit reality. Qualitative procedures provide the means of accessing unquantifiable facts about actual people researchers observe or talk to or people represented by their personal traces of letters, diaries and so on. Consequently, such techniques allow researchers to share in the understandings and perceptions of others and to explore how people structure and give meaning to their daily lives (Berg 1998:7). Analysis of qualitative methods allows researchers to discuss in detail the various social contours and processes human beings use to create and maintain their social realities. Qualitative research however has been criticised as non-scientific (Berg 1998). It appears such a criticism arises out of an 'erroneous equation of the term "empirical" with quantification rather than with any real defect in the qualitative paradigm itself' (Berg 1998; citing Bauman et al. 1986:51).

This thesis also utilises a case study approach. This is defined as a 'strategy for doing research which involves an empirical investigation of a particular contemporary phenomenon within its real life context using multiple sources of evidence' (Yin 1994, cited in Robson 2002:178). The case study thus contrasts with a social survey in that it concentrates on a few cases (in my instance just one) in considerable depth. I concentrate on one forest community to discover and analyse the historical, physical, social and institutional processes at work in the organisation of livelihoods. Hence the phenomenon I seek to research is the organisation of livelihoods and I do this by focusing on its specified historical, social, institutional and physical contexts. My case study captures the uniqueness of the processes and dynamics of the forest community. However I make comparisons with other similar

case studies in order to confirm general findings and theories or to throw a different perspective on what others have revealed in their research. This is in spite of the fact that others have raised a methodological problem with generalizing conclusions from case studies (Hammersley and Gomm 2000). By undertaking an in-depth case study, I identify causal processes of social transformation in a way that may not be feasible in survey research.

1.5.1 Gender Analysis Framework: Social Relations Analysis

The approaches of WID and GAD recognise that the household is a differentiated grouping with a common production and consumption function. Both approaches also see the household as a system of resource allocation. WID advocates however identify gender divisions in productive and reproductive work as well as gender differences in access to and control over income and resources (Young 1993). From this perspective there is need to ‘analyse the production system to see what women do, how much time it takes, how much control they have over the proceeds, and what is needed to lighten the burden of work and to give women greater control over the fruits of their labour’ (Young 1993:140).

Analysis of gender division of labour looks not only at who does what and for how much, but how tasks are acquired and how much resources and rewards are distributed. In addition, it examines the links between these divisions and the relationships of authority, decision-making and control at all stages of the production and distribution process.
(UN 1995:19)

The WID perspective thus highlights the key differences between the incentives and constraints under which men and women work so that insights gained may be used for tailoring planned interventions in such a way as to improve overall productivity. The major difference possibly between the views of WID and GAD is the way the gender division of labour is conceptualised. GAD views the gender division of labour not as a social separation of activities undertaken by men and women but as a form of social connection (Young 1993; UN 1995) since by undertaking different activities women and men are made dependent on one another. In assigning women and men to different responsibilities, activities and spheres, the gender division of labour also makes it essential for them to engage in relationships of co-operation, exchange and conflict. From a GAD perspective then, the gender division of labour

constructs women in relation to men and is critical in maintaining and or recreating inequality between them. GAD also recognises the inter-relations of other forms of social differentiation such as class, age, ethnicity and caste. This means that any group of women will have both commonalities and differences and any analysis needs to recognise and emphasise this. In addition, GAD pinpoints other relational areas or spheres, processes and mechanisms where exclusionary prescriptions and processes to some social groups of women and men make it more difficult for them to access certain benefits, opportunities and resources that will enable them to co-determine the achievement of household, community and societal wellbeing (Young 1993; Kabeer 1994; ILO 1998; March et al. 1999; Francisco not dated). The use of a social relations analysis or framework from a GAD perspective thus becomes very useful in any research of this kind. Its potential strengths include the following: the fact that poverty is seen not just as material deprivation but also as social marginalisation, its conceptualisation of gender as central to development issues and not an add-on and the highlighting of interactions of various forms of inequality such as gender, race and ethnicity. Other strengths are the fact that it centres analysis on institutions and thus highlights their political aspects; it's dynamism in trying to uncover the processes of impoverishment and empowerment, its ability to link micro to macro factors and finally, its use in different levels of analysis. The frameworks potential limitations include the fact that its examination of all cross-cutting inequalities may subsume gender under other analytical categories and its seeming appearance of being complicated, detailed and demanding (ILO 1998; March et al. 1999).

Gender analysis thus involves the use of approaches that deal with the roles and relationships between women and men and their access to and control over resources. It becomes a cognitive tool for structuring and framing the interactions and responsibilities between the sexes. It also involves a needs assessment, an analysis of responsibilities and activities, access and control, benefits and incentives as well as institutional constraints and opportunities (Bashaw 2002:1). In this direction, women are described as a category who share experiences, strengths and obstacles that bond them as a group and bestow them with common needs and interests (UN 1995:12). This is again not to discount the fact that even within the category women, differences may exist based on age, class, ethnicity, caste and other variables of distinction. Treating women as a category of analysis implies that

men are also treated as a category and to recognise that sometimes certain categories of men based upon the variables of distinction identified above may be found to be worse off than certain categories of women. Gender analysis reflects that women's gender position is relational compared to men as well as being a concrete condition that reflects the reality of being female in poverty (Pearson 2005 citing Young 1988). Adopting a gender perspective in this thesis enables me to identify obstructions to livelihoods that are relatively inflexible to change and those that are relatively transformable. It also helps me identify those groups of women and men whose access to livelihood resources have been inadequate and thus may require external interventions to ensure sustainability of livelihoods. Data collection tools and the methods of analysis of information gathered in the field were thus informed by the WID/GAD debate to women in the development process.

1.5.2 Primary Data Collection Methods

Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) methods and approaches were used to generate qualitative data for analysis. PRA has its roots in Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA). It stresses a rapid acquisition of sufficient knowledge for development activity decision-making (Chambers 1992; Bagchi et al. 1998). PRA involves learning about and analysing rural life and conditions from, with and by rural people, as well as planning and acting in concert with them (Chambers 1992:5, 13). It can be seen as 'a family of approaches and methods to enable rural people to share, enhance, and analyse their knowledge of life and conditions, to plan and to act' (Chambers 1992:5). Unlike RRA, PRA emphasises participation allowing researchers to be conveners, catalysts and facilitators to enable people to undertake and share their own investigations and analysis.

I have utilised secondary and primary sources of information. PRA generated primary data includes the use of semi-structured interviews, key informants, focus group activity and discussions and life histories. Data have been generated around themes such as household and labour organisation, gender/social relations, livelihood strategies and trajectories, resource conflicts and resistance, knowledge of the environment and social change/rural transformation. Material has also been explored examining mediating institutions, forestry policy and community expectations. A team of four was involved in the data collection process. This included the researcher; two male assistants and a driver (see Plate 1, Appendix A).

I had access only to professional male research assistants based at the Centre for Development Studies in the University of Cape Coast (Ghana). This research centre did not have any female research assistants at the time that the field work was undertaken.

Fieldwork started with three reconnaissance visits to communities that fringe the Bonsa Ben forest reserve in the Mpohor Wassa East District of the Western region (the study area); and three to communities that fringe the Bimpong forest reserve in the Twifo-Heman Lower Denkyira district of the Central region (the pilot district). These early visits were used to become familiar with major social issues within these communities, hold discussions with community leaders and gain acceptance for entry. The final choice of a pilot and research communities was determined by deliberations with leaders, acceptance and more importantly candid responses to initial questions on village reliance on reserve resources. Ten pilot interviews were conducted. This helped to restructure some of the field questions that respondents seemed to have misinterpreted or had different names locally for describing them. One area that had to be clarified for instance was the use of the word forest in the local dialect. Forest communities make a distinction between the secondary forest (*mfufu kwae*) and the forest reserve (which they referred to simply as 'forest'). It became necessary to distinguish between resources of the *mfufu kwae* and those of the 'forest', effects of logging within the two on livelihoods and which category of community members relied on which type of forest for a livelihood. Clarifying between the two types of forests meant that issues regarding culture and taboos had to be made specific in their relation to the secondary forest as it was indicated that the community had no control over the forest reserve. This is in spite of the fact it was later detected in the actual fieldwork that some community laws dealt with access to game from both the secondary and reserve forests. The pilot study also highlighted the need to probe some responses further. This was because respondents tended almost always to give short and quick responses but further probing gave rich information that might have been lost.

Interviewing may be seen as a conversation with a purpose; a face-to-face interaction designed for the purpose of gathering information (Berg 1998; Robson 2002). The study employed this method with the use of semi-structured questions as a guide built around themes from the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework. Interviewing was chosen over other methods such as the questionnaire because of

the numerous advantages that it offers particularly in rural, semi-literate communities. A total of forty-seven interviews were conducted with women in households. The relatively small size of the community permitted the inclusion of all widows, single parent women, and unmarried independent women in the sample. The respondents were identified by local contact people. All interviews were recorded and transcribed later. The use of tape recorders, with the permission of respondents, improved the quality of the interviews as maximum attention was given to the discussion process without interrupting of notes taking. Themes for discussion centred on demographic characteristics of households, livelihood activities and resources and household changes.

The two research assistants and I are all Akans and thus spoke the same dialect as the respondents. Non- Akan migrants could also speak Twi fluently. There was therefore no language barrier as we interacted directly with respondents. The presence of male interviewers interacting with female respondents or myself interacting with male community elders and leaders did not in any case intimidate the respondents. Neither did our different urban-rural backgrounds or statuses. Respondents appeared relaxed as they provided responses to questions posed to them.

The focus of life histories elicited from ten elderly women was to study livelihood change and changes in labour organisation by gender. These involved qualitative, open-ended interviews in which respondents were encouraged to tell the story of their own lives. The realisation that respondents could describe events according to their own perspectives and priorities, prompted the use of semi-structured questions as a guide. These questions helped to discuss how processes of change were operating at the individual and household levels. The use of life histories and one-on-one semi structured interviews in the investigation of livelihood changes depend on respondents' recall of the past. Facts on income were recollected vaguely, inaccurately or not remembered at all and respondents had to be guided to recollect incomes from various livelihood activities and or incomes from farm produce or NTFPs.

Focus group discussions and the use of key informants exposed the vulnerability context of rural livelihoods as well as the structural, historical and the institutional environment within which livelihoods are carried out (i.e. the macro context). They also discussed themes around resource conflicts, gender relations,

household organisation and rural transformations. Community maps drawn by the groups demonstrated a knowledge and understanding of their environment. Important landmarks were captured in addition to land use patterns and forest reserve demarcations.

PRA methods and approaches used are however not without limitations. Bagchi et al. (1998) categorise five main limitations faced within livelihood trajectories studies. Among the limitations is the fact that it is difficult to involve all members of a local community in the PRA data collection exercise. It is also difficult to aggregate the results as each PRA group possesses unique characteristics. It is unclear how far generalisation can be made using locally derived data and the fact that aggregation may be undesirable as qualitative investigations are concerned with a range of perceived experiences rather than typical reported activity. Within the context of livelihood studies however, Murray (2001: 10) argues that the essence of such a research is to ‘understand the ways in which diverse modes of livelihood are inter-related through the management of complex household portfolios in circumstances of structural change, *not simply to identify the supposedly discrete concerns and interests of distinguishable social categories of the population*’ (*emphasis mine*). The first limitation was not applicable to the study because the community was small in terms of population. With the second limitation and agreeing with Murray (2001), this study seeks to establish broad trends and patterns of gender and other social relations, livelihood changes and forestry policy, conflict and social transformation. Although individual perceptions, interests and experiences and actions are important, there is need to establish patterns worth examining within a macro context.

A third limitation put forward is the premise of relative homogeneity of interests or a shared position within a local community and yet some groups such as women may be marginalised in constituting such groups. The contention is that there may be unequal power relations among group members which may colour the testimonies of participants. To get around this limitation, the present study utilised three homogeneous focus groups for activity and discussion. These were mainly women, men and community leaders. Members of such groups were homogeneous in terms of livelihood activities pursued and social class. Hence the women and men’s groups comprised mainly peasant farmers who also rely on forest resources for a livelihood while the third group comprised mainly community leaders who

happened to be all men. Inequality of power did not become an issue as a level field was created for fruitful discussions.

Two important lessons were learnt in the process of using PRA approaches and methods in the study. The first involved the role of trust and rapport in facilitating participation and sharing. Chambers (1992:20) contends that when researchers show humility, respect, patience and interest in what villagers have to say and show; pay attention, listen, watch and not interrupt, the participatory process is facilitated. The second was recognition that rural people have knowledge about their environment and activities that goes beyond what 'experts' carry into participatory discussions. In addition, they are capable of communicating such knowledge as well as representing them with maps. This was evident in the focus discussions and community mapping processes in which the dearth of knowledge about forest resources, environmental management and livelihood activities displayed and showed was awesome. Triangulation occurred as participants crosschecked and corrected one another.

1.5.3 Analysis of Data

The Sustainable Livelihoods Framework (after DFID 1999a) provided a conceptual tool for the collection of data on community livelihoods and institutions that mediate access to livelihood resources particularly for women in the community. Field data collected were however analysed with a gender (social relations) lens to reveal women's relative access and control of livelihood resources to men and relations between community members that affected control and distribution of resources. Gender becomes an important basis for analysing not only roles and responsibilities within livelihood activities but also the social relations within households and community that place women in particular at a disadvantage. An analysis such as this explored and highlighted the relationships of women and men in the community, and the inequalities in those relationships. It asked questions on the gender division of labour, which gender has access to resources, who makes decisions and about what issues, and which gender gains or loses within the organisation of livelihoods. In addition which men and which women have access, make decisions, gain or lose? Efforts were made to inter-relate power relations at the household level with those at the community, market, state and international levels. As much as possible women's voices and others in the community have

been used to bring to the fore people's roles, experiences, interests and marginalisation.

1.6 Academic significance of study

This study adopts two approaches. The first is a Sustainable Livelihoods Approach (SLA). This is a participatory approach that highlights great diversity in the goals to which people aspire and in the livelihood strategies they adopt to achieve. It encompasses activities intended to help economically disadvantaged members of society meet their daily subsistence needs in a manner that is dignified, locally appropriate and environmentally sustainable. The SLA's core objectives are first improved access to high quality education, information, technologies, training and better nutrition and health. Second, is to provide a more supportive and cohesive social environment; third, ensure more access to and better management of natural resources and fourth, offer better access to basic and facilitating infrastructure. A fifth objective of the SLA is to ensure more secure access to financial resources and sixth provide a policy and institutional environment that supports multiple livelihood strategies as well as promote equitable access to competitive markets. It is an approach that concentrates on the assets people have rather than on what they do not have. The approach however does not make any strong case (in my opinion) for a gender and rights analysis nor a conflict analysis at the community level. It is generally acknowledged in the literature that gender relations to an extent influence access, distribution, control and use of resources and that men and women interact differently over resources (Dankelman and Davidson 1988; Rocheleau 1995; Leach et al. 1995) while a community's access to natural resources depends in part on their customary rights of tenure (Dankelman and Davidson 1988; Fairhead and Leach 1995; Shepherd et al. 1999; Messerschmidt 1999). The literature also highlights incidents of conflict over natural resources between communities and their governments as a result of the latter's management policy as well as conflict over available resources between community members (Amanor 2005; Afikorah-Danquah not dated). The analysis of such relations and dynamics in the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework is not made manifest. A further discussion of the SLA and its framework is held in chapter two (2.2.4 and 2.3 respectively). The study seeks to fill the gap in two main areas of research and knowledge. First is an inclusion of a rights and gender analysis in the sustainable

livelihoods discourse, an area which is relatively new and needs to be investigated to provide a firmer grounding. Second is the provision of a micro-level insight into the dynamics of rural transformation from the perspective of a conflict analysis or political economy.

Another important aspect of this study is the analysis of livelihoods not only from a neo-liberal perspective but also from one of political economy. These are contrasting perspectives and they emphasise different dynamics of livelihood organisation. The radical perspective allows for an emphasis on the consequences of competition of resources and the inequalities that emerge from differential access to the market for goods, services and forest resources.

This thesis does have policy implications. This is important in the face of arguments by international agencies and researchers for rights of access to natural resources for communities, a central role for women in natural resource management and the incorporation of indigenous knowledge in natural resource management (Dankelman and Davidson 1988; Leach et al. 1995; Barraclough and Ghimire 1995; Rocheleau 1995; Mackenzie 1995; Hobley and Shields 2000 (ODI); CBD 2001 (UNEP); Leach and Fairhead 2002 a and 2002b; Baumann 2002 (FAO); Gururani 2002).

The findings on the dynamics of rural transformation feed into policy on land and forestry, the market economy and economic liberalisation. Findings on livelihood activities, the power dynamics within livelihood organisation and change in the mode of production also shape appropriate interventions by policy makers and development NGOs. Of particular importance is the analysis of gender. This helps provide a greater awareness of community dynamics as they relate to sustainable livelihoods and access to, control of and use of livelihood resources. Policy interventions addressing community disadvantage in terms of poverty and deprivations may take three forms. These are gender-neutral, gender specific and gender redistributive or transformative policies. These policies attempt to benefit women and men, specific community groups or seek to transform existing gender relations in a more democratic way by redistributing resources, responsibilities and power between men and women more evenly.

1.7 Structure of Thesis

This chapter has introduced the study by providing a background discussion of the central position given to women in the thesis. It has presented the research context and explored issues concerning livelihoods, political economy and social transformation. I have also discussed the general methodology adopted and in particular the social relations (gender) mode of analysis. Finally I have indicated both a policy and academic rationale for the study.

Chapter two reviews literature on livelihood perspectives, exploring its benefits and shortcomings.

Chapter three explores issues in gender and natural resource management. It presents a review of the politics of the environment from a political ecology perspective and moves into the variants of gender, environment and development and feminist political ecology. The chapter also reviews issues in indigenous knowledge and feminist constructions of knowledge and forest management

Chapter four covers the political economy of forestry in Ghana. It presents a historical account and analysis of the country's incorporation in the capitalist world economic system as a result of colonialism and imperialism. It also identifies land alienation policies of both colonial and post-colonial governmental administrations geared towards forest conservation and the extraction of timber logs and minerals for national development; policies that have disenfranchised the peasantry of land and other non-timber forest products. This chapter thus situates the study within the context of colonial and modern forestry agendas and which has deteriorated following the economic crises and structural reforms of the 1980's and 1990's.

Chapter five presents the community setting including the forest reserve and administrative district within which the community falls. The chapter gives a general description of aspect of the social organisation of the Akan people of Ghana and introduces the community in terms of kinship system and relations, worldviews and politics. In particular issues in inheritance and land rights and appropriation of family labour made possible by the Akan descent and inheritance systems and which have a bearing on access to livelihood resources have been highlighted. Chapter five also discusses the commercialisation of agriculture and its effects on commoditization of land and discusses the active participation in land commoditization of both paramount and sub-chiefs. Chapter four and five thus

provide the formal and informal contexts within which community livelihoods operate.

Chapter six discusses and analyses the organisation of livelihoods from a social relations perspective within the community. It presents the gender division of labour within both the domestic setting and the economy in terms of cooperation and exploitation. It also examines the pathways along which individual, household and community livelihoods have traveled since the structural adjustment policies in forestry were introduced in the early 1980's. The chapter identifies instances of livelihood trajectory and establishes how community livelihoods have diversified as well as which groups have diversified more and why that is the case. This chapter also examines other social relations along class and across generations and between community members and the role of outside agencies as these affect sustainability of livelihoods. Finally, the chapter examines community perceptions of their environment and some traditional environmental management practices that affect livelihoods.

Chapter seven concentrates on an examination of gender and access to livelihood resources. It explores beyond community social relations to community relations with local state agents and formal policies, institutions and processes in the market and within the state that have mediated community access to livelihoods and how these have operated. This chapter therefore identifies and discusses the key processes in the acquisition of livelihood that highlight women's marginalisation.

Chapter eight examines the political economy of social change within the community. The chapter discusses the drivers and dynamics of change within households and production. It examines how customary land rights and labour processes have changed highlighting the consequences for deagrarianisation and depeasantisation. It also discusses identified axes of rural and social differentiation brought about by socio-economic mobility, day migration and access to resources; power and how community leaders and some household heads have maintained their hold on power through investing in social networks and consequently access to livelihood resources. This chapter identifies the cleavages that become obvious in the community as a result of the dynamics of change (along lines of gender, seniority and power, and wealth) and the consequences of these for the community.

Chapter nine presents a summary and discussion of the main findings of the study, conclusions and some recommendations.

CHAPTER TWO

Rural Livelihood Perspectives and Issues

2.1 Introduction

There is a plethora of literature on sustainable rural livelihoods. I review here those debates relevant to this study. Perspectives on livelihoods have tended to focus on previous and current notions of how households and communities live from the land (Chambers 1983; Dixon 1989). These have also examined how activities have been diversified to include non-farm incomes or intensified agriculture (Ellis 2001a; Davis and Bezemer 2003; Start and Johnson 2004); as well as embark on sustained livelihoods through a consideration of the multiple facets of poverty (Carney 1998; Scoones 1998; Scoones and Wolmer 2003). Such perspectives have in the main presented the benefits and disadvantages of the various strategies involved in livelihood acquisition. I review some livelihood strategies and activities namely large scale agriculture, small scale farms and diversified activities into the non-farm economy. I also review the sustainable livelihoods approach and framework; the access to livelihood resources framework; access to natural resources as well as livelihood vulnerability and social protection mechanisms. Whether livelihood strategies were generated by households, i.e. from within communities, or introduced into communities by outside agents such as the state or NGOs, it appears much of the literature tends to ignore or relegate to the background the social, gender and power relations that underlie the construction of people's livelihoods. This thesis begins to fill this gap by directing attention to the fact that underlying the construction of livelihoods is a myriad of relations of power within households and communities, among men and among women of various ages and statuses, and between communities and state agencies that determine how individuals and households earn their livelihoods and the quality of such livelihoods. Thus I highlight the social context within which these livelihoods are earned. In addition, I provide an analytical framework for the thesis by expanding the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework to include information capital and an analysis of gender and social relations. The review also serves as a baseline against which livelihood activities identified in the thesis will be compared and explained.

2.2 Livelihood Perspectives

Early narratives on rural development centered on the promotion of livelihoods through agriculture for the rural poor: large-scale agriculture and small farms (Chambers 1983; Dixon 1989; Ellis 1998; Ellis and Biggs 2001; Ashley and Maxwell 2001). This has been followed by narratives on diversification to promote the non-farm rural economy (Ellis 1998; Arnold 1998), sustainable rural livelihoods (Scoones 1998; Carney 1999; Ellis and Biggs 2001a; Ashley and Maxwell 2001; Scoones and Wolmer 2003a), access to natural resources (Hobley and Shields 2000; Freeman et al. 2004) and the provision of social safety nets to buoy up vulnerable rural families (Conway and Norton 2000; Devereux 2001, 2002; Morduch and Shamar 2002; Kabeer 2002).

2.2.1 Large-scale Agriculture

Agriculture has been suggested as the best way to improve rural livelihoods and reduce poverty. This is particularly so as the majority of rural people in the developing countries engage in it for a living (Chambers 1983; Dixon 1989). A number of reasons have been given why agricultural growth might reduce poverty at the farm level as well as nationally (Ashley and Maxwell 2001). These include high incomes to farmers, agricultural job creation, investment of taxes and savings into the rural economy and improved wellbeing. Ashley and Maxwell (2001) view agricultural productivity as an important determinant of poverty. Increases in yields have the potential to lift a large number of individuals out of poverty (p. 403). Large-scale agriculture in many countries during colonial times took the form of estates, plantations commercial farms and ranches.

Perspectives on large-scale agriculture as a means of achieving rural livelihoods centered on the 'Green Revolution', an idea that was to revolutionize cereal production particularly in South East Asia through irrigation and the application of high yielding varieties of seeds, use of fertilizers, pesticides and improved mechanization (Dankelman and Davidson 1988; Dixon 1989; Parks not dated). The Green Revolution thus was associated with large-scale state investment in infrastructure, research and support for the adoption of new technology (Ashley and Maxwell 2001:401). Its purpose was to eliminate hunger by improving crop performance. The Green revolution has had its successes as well as critics. One success story is that of increased food production that reduced global chronic

malnutrition from 35% to 20%, reduced famine and increased global carrying capacity (FAO 1996a; Parks not dated). In India for instance, a record grain output of 131 million tons was recorded between 1978 and 1979, yield per unit of farmland improved by more than 30% between 1947 and 1979 and crop area under improved seeds increased from 7% to 22% of the total cultivated area during the ten years of green revolution (Ganguly not dated). Thus the rate of absolute poverty fell in India from 50-65% in the 1960's to 33% in 1990 although it is said to have risen later to 40% in the year 2000 (Fan et al. 2000). Another success of the green revolution is the linkages it introduced into the economies of countries that adopted it. For instance the need for pesticides, fungicides and other chemicals spurred the growth of local manufacturing sectors and increased employment. The irrigation dams were also used to harness hydro-electric power (Ganguly not dated).

One concern about the Green Revolution was that it has been unable to eliminate famine and therefore the question as to whether it indeed had any long-term achievements. Increased food production did not mean increased per capita food consumption. (Dankelman and Davidson 1988; Parks not dated; Ganguly not dated). Another concern is the fact that inequality increased between rich and poor farmers in the adopting countries (Dixon 1989; Freebairn 1995) but this is disputed as lacking empirical basis (FAO 1996b). Two counter arguments have been made on the probable source of this inequality. One is that the researchers' methodology and nationality influences the findings (FAO 1996b:9). A further argument states that such inequality emanates from policy because governments tend to influence equity in the distribution of benefits (Leisinger 1999:13). Another concern raised has been the fact that the green revolution interrupted the path of sustainable development particularly in India as it occurred during a period of land transformation based on sustainable agriculture and land reforms (Shiva 1991:1-2). For example, the introduction of improved seed varieties led to soil erosion, a reduction in crops available for local use in addition to a 25% reduction in landholdings in the Punjab region.

Yet another concern has been that improved crop varieties have come with costs as well as benefits. It is thus argued that the high yielding seed varieties require more chemical inputs to maximize their productivity and this makes large scale farmers as the only group to afford and profit from such inputs (Chambers 1983; Dixon 1989). A more political connotation has been that the real benefits

from such improved seed varieties go to the companies who own and sell them each year to farmers who hitherto saved their own seed from previous years' crops (Shiva 1991:6). For Dankelman and Davidson (1988), the green revolution that appeared in Asia, Mexico and some parts of Africa contributed to erosion, desertification, a greater concentration of land ownership and a removal of land from those in most need especially women. Within the Africa region, mention is made of Cameroon, Sierra Leone, Kenya, Uganda and Zimbabwe in which the application of hybrid rice seeds, mechanization, use of pesticides and irrigation displaced women from the farms. These environmental concerns in addition to concerns with health, water management and shifting gender roles have also been raised by the FAO (1996b:7). The use of large-scale agriculture as a means of sustaining rural livelihoods and promoting development has thus been problematic.

2.2.2 Small-Scale Farms

Peasants' fear of technological innovation and social change translates into the adoption of a 'safety first' principle or risk aversion position with regard to their environment; what Scott (1976) has called a subsistence ethic. In this regard peasants prefer to minimize the probability of having a disaster to maximizing average returns. The subsistence ethic involves the use of both technical and social arrangements to avert risk. Rural farmers have used seed varieties, planting techniques and timing tried and tested over long periods to produce a stable and reliable yield. They have also evolved patterns of reciprocity, forced generosity, communal land and work sharing to even out declines in a family's resources. Thus they seek social insurance in the form of support from friends, family and neighbours, relations of mutual support that may be lateral in the case of equals or vertical in the case of patron and their clients. These social arrangements are the societal safety nets which buoy up marginal producers from disasters. Rural households themselves have also used non-farm income diversification and migration as a self-help mechanism while the traditional state and modern state may help them survive with public welfare packages. Embedded in all these arrangements (except self help) is a tacit consensus about reciprocity, a principle that ensures that mutual assistance is given in order to spread the risk of poor returns. The social arrangements are also seen as redistributive mechanisms, although not radically egalitarian, ensure a minimum of subsistence insurance and

socially experienced as a pattern of moral rights and expectations (Scott 1976; Hyden 2006).

These social relations that are slow to change, have been identified by neo-liberal schools of thought as the bane of full commodity production in developing economies. Neo-liberals argue that these societies are 'traditional' and not rational maximisers of income and accumulation through market exchanges. This implies that these farmers are neither captured by the market in terms of commodity production and exchange nor the state through its promotion of agricultural commodity production. Peasant farmers remain embedded in social relations of kinship, ethnicity and patronage – relations that identifies their mode of production. Such primordial relations of kin and ethnicity are used to generate and socially accumulate prestige and power rather than economically accumulate for productive investment and development. It is important to note that issues of class and power in rural Africa override farmers' inability to take advantage of market incentives. Bernstein (1990; 2004) however identifies the prevalence of petty commodity production within contemporary peasant societies of sub-Saharan Africa. He rebuffs neo-liberal schools of thought seeing the behaviour on the part of African peasants not as an index of irrationality but rather of a rationality which is quite different from the maximization of utility through a market exchange. Rationality in the economy of affection is contextualized and within sub-Saharan Africa helps to throw light on the forms of social, economic and political behaviour that are significant and yet not covered by concepts in mainstream political economy. Sub-Saharan African peasants are agrarian producers within the capitalist economic system. In contemporary times peasants are seen as capitalists because they own the means of production yet they may also employ themselves and others as labour (Bernstein 1990; 2004). As capitalists they employ and thus exploit themselves. African rural economies thus can either be seen as fully capitalist or merely commercial without being capitalist even if their dynamics links into and confronts the capitalist market (Peters 2004). Petty commodity production is internalized in rural economies, but this does not determine social and economic relations as is implied in the claim of fully capitalist economies; nor does it act to dissolve the ties that connect locality and community. Like all 'economic processes, commodification shapes, reshapes, and transforms pre-existing social and cultural ideas, practices and relations even as it is shaped by these' (Peters 2004:283).

Attention on large-scale agriculture has shifted in developing countries to explore arguments about smallholder farm efficiency (Ellis and Biggs 2001). Supporting evidence for small holder productivity is that they are labour intensive and make efficient decisions, they can be located in places that do not allow the use of machines and they take advantage of new technology successfully being neutral to scale. Other arguments favouring small-scale farmers note that incomes from small farms are often spent within the rural economy to generate growth linkages particularly in the non-farm economy, small holder farms participate successfully in chains of marketing either alone or in cooperatives and also cause very little environmental damage (Ellis and Biggs 2001; Ashley and Maxwell 2001; Irz et al. 2001).

The discourse on the small farm as the engine of growth and rural development has also had its fair share of criticisms. One criticism has centred on how the landless poor benefit from small farms when they do not have land in the first place (Ellis and Biggs 2001). A number of studies suggest that these are employed in the buoyant labour-intensive small farm sector. Another concern has been the neutrality of technology to scale (Carswell 1997). In parts of India and Bangladesh mechanization that are not neutral to scale (such as mechanical ploughing, harvesting and irrigation) have been employed with consequences for yield deteriorations and the environment (including loss of nutrients, water table problems etc) (Carswell 1997:5). Studies from Southern Africa also suggest that small-scale farming contributes little to the total income derived from agricultural sources and as such cannot be viable (Scoones and Wolmer 2003a:3). Small farms have become inappropriate as the main motor of development in contemporary times and the focus should be on supporting new, commercially oriented agricultural entrepreneurs or diversify outside the agricultural sector to boost employment and incomes. Agricultural sectors are often uneven in their growth with many becoming capital intensive. In the light of the above, the case of scale-neutrality for technology transfer and economic viability of small-scale farms is untenable (Scoones and Wolmer 2003a:3). Without capital, skills, quality assurance and others, small-scale farmers have difficulty engaging with the global market.

Based on the above flaws in the use of small farms to improve rural livelihoods, certain suggestions emerged. First is the promotion of an economic reform package to involve the wholesale liberalization of the agricultural sector.

Here efforts were geared towards supporting new, commercially-oriented agricultural entrepreneurs rather than the conventional clientele of the mass of small holder farmers. However, the viability of such a proposal has been questioned in terms of benefits to the mass of rural dwellers who live in poverty and who do not fit the nascent commercial farmer category (Scoones and Wolmer 2003a:3). The second proposal involves the use of policy interventions that incorporate the diversity of ways in which livelihood portfolios are constructed in an effort to support effective migration, improve remittances transferred and encourage off-farm enterprises. In this direction, emphasis has been placed on the centrality of natural resources to rural livelihoods in terms of local consumption, their potential for commercial activities and joint ventures with private sector operators (Scoones and Wolmer 2003a; 2003b) and their role as buffers against contingencies (Chambers and Leach 1987:9).

2.2.3 Non Farm Rural Economy

Perspectives on livelihoods have shifted to debate on the non farm rural economy with its potential for livelihood diversification outside the agricultural sector after both large-scale agriculture and small farms did not resolve food security issues (Ellis 1998; Arnold 1998; World Bank 2000). Livelihood diversification is a process by which households construct an increasingly diverse portfolio of activities and assets in order to survive and to improve their standard of living (Ellis 2000: 15). Research on the diversification of livelihoods has been organized along two main axes and in four main areas. Diversified livelihoods reveal either or both of the following: first different income-earning activities that the household or an individual engages in and second, the relative proportion of income gained from each activity. Although both axes are important in describing the importance of the capability to diversify a household strategy, the second axis is more important as it provides policy directions as to routes out of poverty. Thus income portfolios of households identify the diversity of income sources and their contribution to the total household income (Ellis and Mdoe 2000; Ellis 2001a). In furtherance to this, two types of non-farm diversifications have been identified. First is the income-driven diversification which coincides with a period of capital accumulation; and second, activity-driven diversification which occurs after capital accumulation has taken place (Davis and Bezemer 2003:14). Income diversification

does not necessarily exclude activity diversification. It is a mixed and dynamic process in which the two overlap or occur at the same time. Diversification studies have also centered on factors that cause households to adopt more diverse livelihood strategies rather than switching between full-time specialized occupations (Ellis 2001a, 2001b), the asset basis of livelihoods that promote diversification, the income distribution effects of different patterns of diversification as well as the beneficial or detrimental effects of diversification on farm output and productivity (Ellis 2001a). Such studies have also explored and expanded the debate on the impact of structural adjustment policies on the viability of natural resource based livelihoods. While one group of studies has seen SAPs as contributing to the 'deagrarianisation' of livelihoods (Bryceson 2000b), women's marginalization (Young 1993:37-38; Manuh 1997) and general poverty within implementing countries (Bush 2007); others have on the contrary registered that the policy has positively enabled diversification (cited by Ellis 2001a: 4; 2001b: 3).

The non-farm economy is important to rural households in Africa, Latin America and South Asia in terms of its contribution to household incomes (Ashley and Maxwell 2001; Start 2001). Obtained from multiple sources such as off-farm wage work, wage work in non-farm activities, non-farm self employment and remittances from urban areas and abroad (Ashley and Maxwell 2001, Ellis 2001b; Scoones and Wolmer, 2003a: 4; de Haan 2006:7), it contributes to between 40-45% of household incomes in Africa and Latin America and 30-40% in South Asia (Start, 2001: 491). The rural economy is thus not confined to the agricultural sector, but embraces the broad spectrum of the needs of all rural people including social service provision, economic activities, infrastructural and natural resources in rural areas. Rural livelihoods are thus constructed from a portfolio of resources or activities which is growing more diverse, cutting across economic sectors and which governments tend to be ill-equipped to service or support. This difficulty is because they are organized along sectoral lines (Ellis 2001b: 2). Diversifying into the non-farm rural economy helps rural households survive in risky resource poor environments by mitigating seasonality and spreading risk to reduce vulnerability to adverse events and trends (Ellis 2001a; Davis and Bezemer 2003). It is also argued that self employed activities offer benefits of flexibility, home working and cultural acceptability that is otherwise lacking in labour market participation (Start and Johnson 2004). The RNFE also absorbs rural surplus labour, offers more

remunerative activities to supplement or replace agricultural income, exploits rural comparative advantages (resources, location, labour costs), fosters rural growth and improves the overall quality of life, goods and services in rural areas (Davis and Bezemer 2003: 4).

There is general consensus that rural households diversify into the non-farm economy because of increasing population growth, farm fragmentation, increasing input costs, adverse environmental changes, decreasing participation in agricultural markets, declining returns to farming compared to other activities, and deterioration in access to rural public services (Ellis 1998; 2001a). Diversification could be embarked upon either as a coping strategy where it is an enforced response to failing agriculture, recession and retrenchment (distress-push) or as a thriving mechanism where the economy is growing and flexible (demand-pull) (Start 2001: 497; Davis and Bezemer 2003:4). Thus while distress-push diversification occurs in an environment of risk, market imperfections, and of hidden agricultural unemployment and is typically triggered by economic diversity which sets the household on a downward income trajectory, demand-pull diversification is a response to evolving market and technological opportunities to increase labour productivity and household incomes (Davis and Bezemer 2003:12). An understanding of the reasons why people diversify their livelihoods as well as the social structures and processes that determine their opportunity sets or lack of them throws light on how mechanisms of rural change, transformation and diversification affect the rural poor and how they in turn respond (Start and Johnson 2004:1).

Livelihood diversification differs in different contexts (Hussein and Nelson 1998), often differentiated according to location, gender, age, class and culture and usually structured by a wide range of motivations, restrictions and opportunities (Hussein and Nelson 1998; Ashley and Maxwell 2001; Ellis 2001a). Policy and institutional factors promote or hinder people who wish to diversify their livelihoods. Decentralised political and administrative structures have become one policy directive that has had profound negative and constraining effect on diversification. Of particular importance are lost voices of the poor in determining their priorities, bye laws that constrain choices and opportunities, and local tax regimes that stifle local initiatives rather than provide resources to support and expand efforts (Ellis 2001b: 19-22).

Household level survival strategies within the non-farm rural economy help to overcome instability arising from seasonality and improve food security. Such strategies also take advantage of the opportunities provided by nearby or distant markets. They can generate income to meet family objectives or may be embarked upon out of necessity to survive after a misfortune and are enhanced by wealth and education of people as these overcome barriers to access (Chambers and Leach 1987; Ellis 1998, 2001a). However the importance of micro-enterprises in rural livelihoods in generating income and employment is skewed in favour of men and against women (Hussein and Nelson 1998). Livelihood diversification within the rural non-farm economy produces both positive and negative outcomes (Hussein and Nelson 1998; Ellis 1998, 2001a). Positive outcomes reduce vulnerability of individuals and households to deprivation and disaster. This is done through improvements in household livelihood security, a reduction in the adverse impacts of seasonality as well as raising poor rural households out of the poverty trap. Negative outcomes involve an increase in the vulnerability of households through negative effects on income distribution, agricultural productivity, diversion of resources into productive networking and adverse gender effects.

2.2.4 Sustainable Livelihoods Approach

The sustainable livelihoods narrative has come in recent years to replace the small-farm perspective on rural livelihoods (Ellis and Biggs 2001) and is compatible with progress made in bottom-up rural development. The livelihoods approach shifts attention from the exclusion and marginalization of households from the benefits of economic growth to a search for more effective methods to support people and communities in ways that are more meaningful to their daily lives and needs. The approach takes its roots from the works of Amartya Sen on food security and famine analysis which culminated in his 1981 publication. It also draws on the multiple realities of rural poverty presented by Chambers in 1983 (Ellis and Biggs 2001:444-445; Start and Johnson 2004:15-16). Sen's work focused attention away from development in terms of GDP per capita, food security in terms of food availability and poverty in terms of income deprivation. He shifted attention from issues in development that focus exclusively on income, growth and utility to a focus on individual entitlements, capabilities and freedoms proposing an incorporation of the latter issues into the conceptual foundations of economics and

social choice (Sen 1981; ODI 2001). Using an entitlements approach to development, Sen provided a framework for analyzing the relationship between rights, interpersonal obligations and individual rights to things. For him rights are relationships that hold between distinct agents while entitlements become the totality of a thing a person can have by virtue of an individual's rights. Thus the entitlement set of an individual is his overall command over things taking note of all relevant rights and obligations. This is defined by an individual's endowments (their original bundle of ownership). Under customary ownership these endowments would include the rights of access and extraction open to them (Start and Johnson 2004:15). Sen's work revealed that most cases of starvation and famines across the world arise not from people being deprived of things to which they are entitled but from people not being entitled in the prevailing system of institutional rights to adequate means for survival (ODI 2001:2). This work has shifted focus of international attention away from statistics that describe per capita calories and food supplies towards those that describe the differential ability of individuals, groups and classes to command food in practice. The study of famine and food security continued in the 1980s as a major area of empirical research and conceptual debate. Chambers (1983, 1987) built on the existing interest in food security and the new unsustainability of environments. Hence new approaches to food security place increased emphasis on the identification of the precise cause of food vulnerability of population groups.

A livelihood comprises the capabilities, assets (including both material and social resources) and activities required for a means of living. A livelihood is sustainable when it can cope with and recover from stresses and shocks and maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets both now and in the future, while not undermining the natural resource base.

(DFID 1999a:1)

Sustainable livelihoods, among other things, connote multi-dimensional perspectives of poverty, an asset based approach to development with a focus on institutions and policies, participation and empowerment (Scoones and Wolmer 2003a citing Ashley and Carney 2002). The approach focuses on a number of issues that affect rural livelihoods and poverty (Ellis and Biggs 2001; Scoones and Wolmer 2003a). First is the asset vulnerability context (Scoones 1998; Carney

1998; DFID 1999a). This deals with factors that make rural families vulnerable. These factors include trends in population, resources and technology; shocks such as ill health, conflict and economic shocks; as well as seasonality of prices, production and employment opportunities. Glavovic et al. (2002) use the concept 'waves of adversity' (p 1) to embrace not only the vulnerability context but also the process and policy environment within which livelihoods are organised. Thus 'waves of adversity' become important as they impact directly on people's asset positions and dictate the livelihood options that they can pursue. They thus provide a context over which people have little control. The second issue focuses on capital assets in terms of economic, social, human, physical and natural resources as the basis on which people construct complex livelihood portfolios. The sustainable livelihood concept takes an open ended view of the combination of assets and activities that turn out to constitute a viable livelihood strategy for the rural family (Ellis and Biggs 2001:445). It constitutes a livelihood system that provides people with layers of resilience (such as the capacity to absorb sudden change and the ability to deal with surprises) to cope with various disturbances (Glavovic et al. 2002:1). In other words, a sustainable and vibrant livelihood system enables people to pursue robust livelihood strategies that provide layers of resilience that not only enable people to cope with change, but create the potential to translate adversity into opportunity (Glavovic et al. 2002:3). The livelihoods approach focuses on local actors, often households. It also focuses on a number of livelihood strategies to help eliminate poverty at the household and community levels. These are agricultural intensification, diversification into non-agricultural income earning livelihood activities and the use of migration.

There are a number of livelihood approaches identified and used in research on livelihoods (see Blaikie et al. 1994; Moser 1998; Bebbington 1999). This thesis uses the approach and framework adopted by the DFID. The choice is based on the fact that DFID has widely used this approach in the developing countries of Africa and Asia with good results. It is again the latest livelihood framework that has wide use by both NGOs and bilateral agencies. I was drawn to the objectives its use hopes to achieve and the fact that it is people centred, building on the assets that rural people have to construct their livelihoods.

Blaikie et al. (1994) present a framework that integrates both livelihoods and the political economy of livelihood construction at the micro (individual and

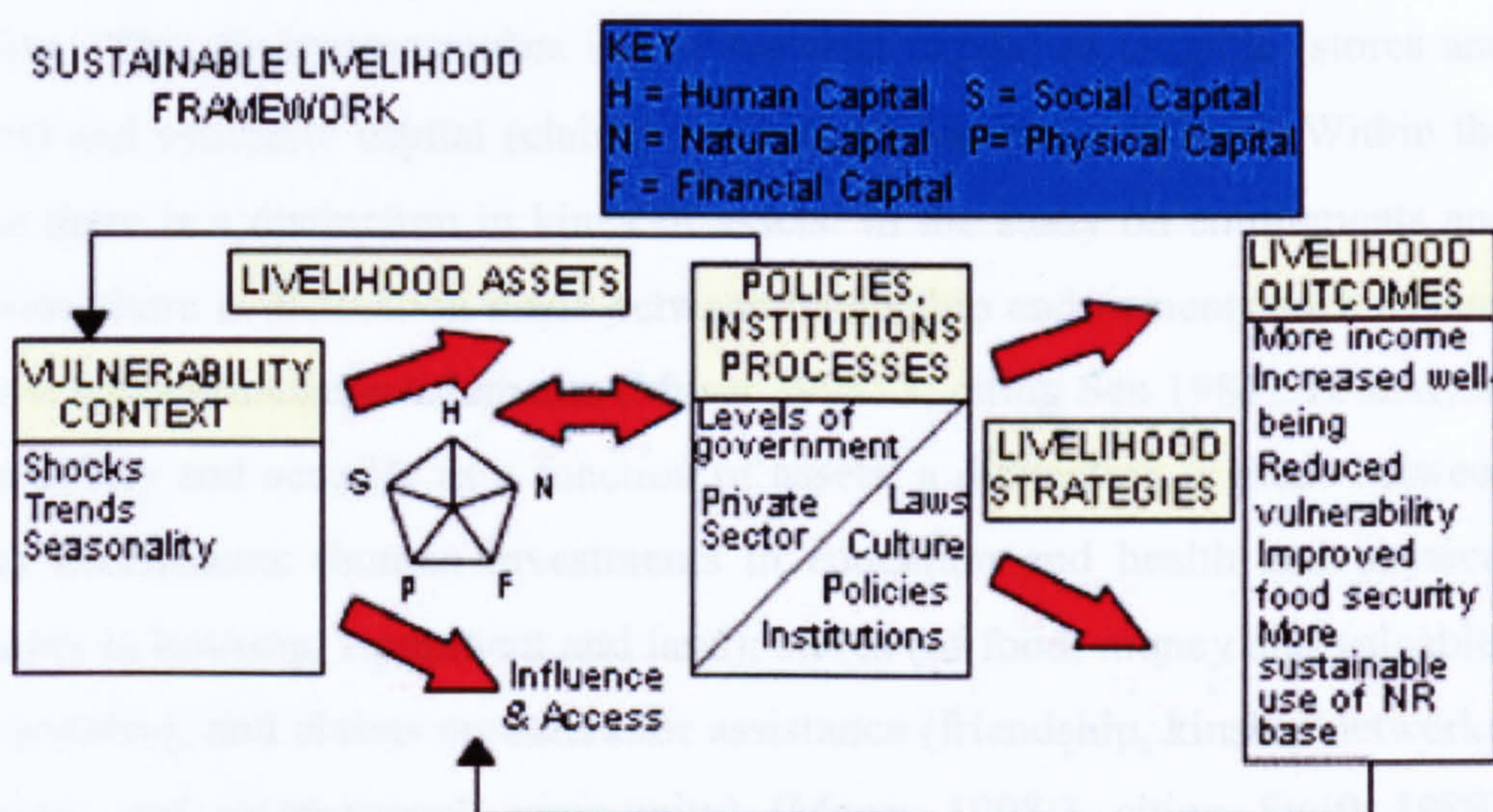
household) and macro (community, state and market) levels. This framework deals with access to livelihood resources within a vulnerability environment of hazards (such as famines, degradation and earth quakes). The social relations within households influence household access profiles and present a range of income opportunities that present their own access qualifications. These income opportunities and access qualifications are influenced by structures of domination (property rights, rights of women in marriage and others sanctioned by law or custom within households) and by the social transactions involving rights and expectations which give people access to resources within the society. Households thus make a choice of one or more income opportunities that constitute their livelihood. The choices households make influence their budget and consequently affect later decisions concerning consumption, investment and the realization of assets. The outcome of such decisions then feed back into and modifies the social relations that govern the next cycle of household production.

2.3 The Sustainable Livelihoods Framework

The 'Sustainable Livelihoods Framework' was developed by Scoones (1998) for the DFID although a number of organizations have used various versions of it in their work in developing countries. It is based on the SLA and developed as a tool for analysing rural livelihoods in a holistic and dynamic way. It identifies the complexity of livelihoods and helps to understand the myriad influences on poverty (de Haan 2006:4). The SLF recognises the many complex interactions in rural livelihoods, providing an understanding of sustainable livelihoods and sustainable natural and physical environments. It recognises that people must have access to resources labeled capital assets (natural, financial, physical, human, and social) if they are to engage in livelihood strategies that are sustainable (Carney, 1998; Singh and Wanmali 1998; Scoones 1998; DFID 1999a). There is however recognition also that, structures of government, the community and the private sector can set in motion processes that impinge on the vulnerability of livelihoods first in terms of access to the capital assets needed for sustained livelihoods, and second in terms of the type of livelihood strategy or activities that are open and attractive. Hence these structures and processes (also known as policies, institutions and processes) can provide environments in which people become vulnerable and therefore embark on coping livelihood strategies within the short term or adapt to the environment in the

long term (Chambers and Conway 1992; Scoones 1998; Carney 1998, 1999; Freeman et al. 2004; de Haan 2006). The framework assumes that people pursue a range of livelihood outcomes by drawing on a range of assets. The activities they adopt and the way they reinvest in asset- building are driven in part by their own preferences and priorities or are influenced by the types of vulnerability, including shocks, overall trends and seasonal variations. The activity options are also in part determined by the structures and processes which people face. Figure 1.1 below highlights five main components of the sustainable livelihoods framework.

Figure 1.1 Sustainable Livelihoods Framework



Source: DFID 1999a, Sustainable Livelihoods Guidance Sheets.

H (Human capital) represents the skills, knowledge, ability to labour and good health important to the ability to pursue different livelihood strategies (Carney 1998; Scoones 1998; DFID 1999a).

P (Physical capital) represents the basic infrastructure (transport, shelter, water, energy and communications), the production equipment and means that enable people to pursue livelihoods (Carney 1998; Scoones 1998; DFID 1999a).

S (Social capital) represents the social resources (networks, membership of groups, relationships of trust, and access to wider institutions of society) upon which people draw in pursuit of livelihoods (Carney 1998; Scoones 1998; DFID 1999a). A subset of this category is political capital (CATAD/IFSP 2003).

F (Financial capital) represents the financial resources which are available to people (whether savings, supplies of credit or regular remittances or pensions) and which provide them with different livelihood options (Carney 1998; Scoones 1998; DFID 1999a).

N (Natural capital) represents the natural resource stocks from which resource flows and from which livelihoods are derived (e.g. land, water, wildlife, biodiversity, forest resources and wider environmental resources) (Carney 1998; Scoones 1998; DFID 1999a).

The ability to pursue different livelihood strategies depends upon the basic material and social, tangible and intangible assets that people have in their possession. This distinction makes use of material capital as tangible (stores and resources) and symbolic capital (claims and access) (de Haan 2006:1). Within the literature there is a distinction in kinds of assets. In the study on entitlements and capabilities, there is distinction made between ownership endowments such as land and labour and exchange entitlements (Moser 1998: 3; citing Sen 1981). In analysis of vulnerability and security as a function of assets, a distinction is made between assets as investments (human investments in education and health and physical investments in housing, equipment and land); stores (of food, money and valuables such as jewelry); and claims on others for assistance (friendship, kinship networks, government and international community) (Moser 1998:3 citing Swift 1989). Again, productive capital, non-productive capital, human capital, income and claims have all been cited as sources of entitlements (Moser 1998:3 citing Maxwell and Smith 1992) for which access provides the capabilities to embark upon particular livelihood strategies and activities. In order to create livelihoods, people must combine the 'capital' resources that they have access to and control over. In analyzing livelihood resources of any community, certain key questions arise. We would need to establish a livelihood strategy and identify whether one type of capital can be substituted for others. The flexibility and interchange of capitals however are bound by property relations and configurations of power. We also need to know the different combinations of capital assets that are needed in the pursuit of particular livelihood strategies (Scoones 1998; Moser 1998; CATAD/IFSP 2003; Start and Johnson 2004).

There is recognition that different categories of people have different access to different livelihood resources. In this instance it is plausible to assume that

women and men have different access to different livelihood resources. This differential access to different livelihood resources would be said to be dependent on institutional arrangements, organizational issues, and power. A socially differentiated view to analyzing livelihoods is therefore critical (Scoones 1998). It should disaggregate the chosen units of analysis and examine the relations between individuals or groups of social actors i.e. women, men, District Assemblies, Forestry Commission, communities and private loggers.

Forest communities gain from a livelihood of agriculture (including livestock, fishing and forestry) and or diversify into a range of off-farm income earning activities. Here, there is the need to identify what livelihood resources are required for different livelihood strategy combinations, and whether women's livelihood sustainability would negatively affect the livelihood strategies embarked upon by other groups within the community.

Institutions and organizations mediate the complex and highly differentiated process of achieving a sustainable livelihood. An understanding of institutional processes allows for the identification of barriers and opportunities to sustainable livelihood (Scoones 1998:12). This is because both formal and informal institutions mediate access to livelihood resources and in turn affect the composition of portfolios of livelihood strategies. There is the need to examine the operations of these institutions and organizations in order to design interventions that improve sustainable livelihood outcomes. Understanding these institutions would also shed light on the social processes that underlie livelihood sustainability. This will give us an insight into the social relationships, their institutional forms and power dynamics. Identifying and analyzing the impact of institutions within the framework takes it beyond analysis of individual to group livelihood strategies. Hence the livelihood choices that individuals make within a given geographic and demographic context using a range of capital assets depend on the operation of policies and processes of institutions and organizations as well as the available group traditions. Although transforming structures, mediating processes, institutions and organizations appear in all livelihood frameworks, part of livelihood studies tends to play down the structural features and focus on capitals and activities (de Haan 2006:11).

A number of concerns have been raised about the use of the Sustainable Livelihood Approach and Framework in alleviating rural poverty (Moser 1996;

Carney 1998, 1999; DFID 1999b; DFID/FAO 2000; Ellis 2000; Neefjes 2000; Conway et al. 2001; Toufique 2001; Davis 2001; Beall 2002;). One concern is the fact that the definition of livelihoods suggests the need to understand the livelihood strategies and vulnerability of the poor as the starting point in a livelihood analysis (DFID 1999b). It is assumed that the poor behave as strategic managers when negotiating their livelihood outcomes by selecting from a range of options available within a particular locality and context. Hence the poor make 'rational' choices when constructing their livelihoods. This is seen to be a narrow view of how the poor obtain livelihoods. A broader view should take account of the resources that people require in order to compose a livelihood as well as the mechanism for redistributing these resources in order not to oversimplify and render ineffective the Sustainable Livelihoods Approach.

Another concern has been raised about the usefulness of the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework in the field (Neefjes 2000). It is argued that the framework works best as a tool but not as an approach. As a methodological framework, it is over codified and institutionalized giving it less dynamism as it fails to capture change both external and internal to households (DFID/FAO 2000; Ellis 2000). Operationalising the framework as a tool is also seen to be problematic. Problems have arisen in the measurement and comparison of the capital assets. Questions have been posed as to whether the five capital assets identified in the original framework are the only ones to measure since there are other alternatives identified to equally reduce the vulnerability of poor households (Moser 1996; Carney 1998; DFID 1999c Davis 2001; Baumann 2002). As different values are placed on the different forms of capital it is difficult to quantify these assets and the relationships between the assets are often disguised (Beall 2002; Odero 2003).

Another concern has been the lack of linkage between livelihoods and rights (Toufique 2001; Conway et al. 2002) and therefore issues of politics, power and authority (Norton and Foster 2001:6). Although livelihood approaches have considerable potential for improving the focus of programmes and policies for promoting poverty reduction, they fail to draw attention to who does and who does not have power, and how this affects the formulation and implementation of the policy. A concern with rights of individuals to development is also important given the premium on entitlements, capabilities and rights of the poor in recent development literature (Sen 1981, 1999; Nussbaum 1995). A rights analysis within

the sustainable livelihoods framework can provide insights into the distribution of power and identify groups that lack effective rights or those who may be denying rights to others. Thus a linkage such as this can highlight the root causes of the generation and perpetuation of poverty and vulnerability while examining the operations of institutions and political processes that influence the livelihoods of the poor (DFID 2000; Conway et al. 2002). It is also within this context that a discussion of gender in sustainable livelihoods may be considered. The discussion of power relationships in this case may be done between men and women as individual players constructing livelihoods and the overt or covert ways in which one group of individuals prevents the other from fully sustaining their livelihoods. The paucity of emphasis placed on gender and social relations in the literature is raised further in section 2.6 below.

In spite of these concerns, the Sustainable Livelihood Approach and Framework have been applied in a number of studies particularly in developing countries as methodological tools to reveal both their complexity and benefits in analysing livelihoods of individuals, households and communities and provide entry points for interventions by states and developing agencies including NGO's. One group of sustainable livelihoods studies has come from Southern Africa under the DFID's project on the institutional, governance and policy environments in which communities earn their livelihoods (see Boyd et al. 2000; Mombeshora and Wolmer 2000; Ellis 2001a). Together with works by Start and Johnson (2004), Brown and Lapuyade (2001) and Moser (1998) such studies have explored how the SLA may be engaged as an analytical methodology in micro studies to reveal a people's vulnerabilities and asset holdings, the political and institutional contexts of diversification, general livelihood strategies as well as interactions between access to different types of resources. Hence such studies reveal the shortcomings of analyzing data in terms of consumption/income poverty as they reveal the multiple dimensions of poverty particularly the importance of both income and livelihood diversification and the constraining institutional environments within which poor people earn their livelihoods.

Another group of studies is also funded by the DFID through their LADDER¹ projects in Tanzania, Kenya and Uganda (Ellis and Bahiigwa 2001; Ellis and Mdoe 2002) These and others by Norton and Foster (2001), Freeman et al. (2004), Ellis (2001b), Ellis et al. (2003) and Ashley (2000) have engaged a micro-level analysis of community livelihoods to probe macro-level policies such as PRSPs and other poverty eradication strategies in order to identify gaps in the macro-level policies that need to be closed. The major thrust of these studies is to determine whether SLA's have anything to add to national level poverty reduction strategies in terms of enhancing their effectiveness at lifting people out of poverty, how this can be done and the steps needed to enhance their potential (see Norton and Foster 2001). Thus the studies have moved beyond the identified measures in the PRSPs to provide a multi-faceted understanding of the factors that distinguish the rural poor from the rural better-off, the micro and local-level, economic, social and political constructs they confront, and the cross-sectoral patterns of activity they pursue in constructing viable livelihoods (Freeman et al. 2004:148). They have identified asset substitutions, agricultural and income diversification, traditional, village and state institutions and decentralised tax regimes to be of importance in charting the poor's paths out of poverty.

It is obvious from the SLA and framework that access to livelihood assets or capitals is core to any step towards achieving sustainable livelihoods. But policies, institutions and processes at the household, community, market and state levels intervene to create vulnerable contexts for accessing the capitals or dictating how they can be combined to create livelihoods. The next two sections focus on access to resources and livelihood vulnerabilities and lead to a discussion of social protection policies and how those with unsustainable livelihoods could be helped through customary and formal ways to climb out of poverty.

Although this thesis did not use Blaikie et al.'s framework, it nevertheless discussed issues in livelihood construction and organization from a social relations and therefore a political economy perspective. Integrating political economy perspective with the SLF presented its own advantages and problems. First was the fact that the combination of perspectives provided a better understanding of livelihood construction and organization. They presented the final livelihood

¹ LADDER refers to Livelihoods and Diversification Directions Explored by Research, an acronym devised to evoke the notion of 'climbing out of poverty'. This is a programme funded by the Policy Research Programme of the UK DFID.

activities or choices that individuals and households pursued to be the product of a myriad of dynamics and processes present at various levels and locations. Thus the analysis of needs (access to resources) within the SLF was combined with an understanding of the dynamics of power at the local level (i.e. causal analysis in political economy). Second, while the SLF is a prescribed package for analysing rural poverty, political economy offers flexibility in identifying the processes and actors at the local, meso and macro levels that shape local livelihoods and development. The use of the SLF therefore did not threaten the status quo in terms of power relations. Political economy however seeks to change the distribution of power and opportunity in favour of the rural poor while at the same time attempts to diminish the influence of those groups that dominate the rural poor and exploit their natural resource wealth. Third was the problem of highlighting the strengths of the community in terms of the assets/resources they have while at the same highlighting its weaknesses in terms of the relations of exploitation and marginalization that made it difficult for people to know what their entitlements were. This required a presentation technique that was sometimes rather difficult to sustain throughout the thesis. Discussion of political economy issues along the axes of age and status and social class tended to subsume those of gender. The tendency was to emphasise one aspect of the discussion to the neglect of the other. Fourth, there was the difficulty in restraining oneself from introducing one's value judgements when political economy issues were presented and discussed.

2.4 Access to Natural Resources

Access is a key issue in the conceptualization of livelihoods. Livelihood assets or resources do not only allow survival, adaptation and poverty alleviation but they are also the basis of a people's power to act and to reproduce, challenge or change the rules that govern the control, use and transformation of resources (Bebbington 1999: 32-33). The improvement of access to natural resources has thus been a constant theme in debates on poverty alleviation strategies. The poor in developing countries depend on impoverished and degraded natural resources and ecosystems for their livelihoods and this has implications for livelihood security and vulnerability (Chambers and Leach 1987; Dankelman and Davidson 1988; Falconer 1990; Barraclough and Ghimire 1995; Fairhead and Leach 1995, 1996; Baumann 2002). The poverty-environment link is mediated by institutions, programmes and

processes which often increase local insecurity and mediate access to resources (Johnson 1997; Baumann 2002; Hobley and Shields 2000; Freeman et al. 2004). One such process has been globalization. Global processes of international trade and related agreements, rapid technological change affect natural resource extraction, programmes of structural economic reform, privatization and decentralization as well as environmental resource management and impact on the livelihood strategies of the poor (Baumann 2002). Power is at play between institutions of state and communities and such institutions are sites of social interaction, negotiation and contestation (Johnson 1997; Hobley and Shields 2000; Baumann 2002). They directly affect the social and economic livelihoods of communities, sometimes ensuring equity in the distribution of resources between community members (Hobley and Shields 2000). Tax regimes have been identified also to regulate resource access and hamper rather than facilitate people's own endeavours to construct pathways out of poverty (Freeman et al. 2004:166-167). This was identified in a study on Kenya. Within Hausa households of Niger, social relations of exclusion based on religious seclusion, inheritance, gender, land insecurity and defeminisation of agriculture have curtailed women's access to farm land (see Doka and Monimart 2004). Social exclusion and relations of power are also at play in the organization of the different property regimes namely open access resources, private, state and common property regimes (Johnson 1997; de Haans 2006). Here some people exclude others from access to resources with the objective of maximizing their own returns using property relations or social and physical characteristics such as race, gender, language, ethnicity, origin or religion to legitimize the fencing in of opportunities. Access does not only affect the use or acquisition of resources. It is also associated with the beneficial exploitation of livelihood opportunities and thus is linked to conflicting interests and the institutional context within which livelihoods are earned.

Institutional roles are changing to among other things accommodate the changes in communities relating to the protection and management of environments (Baumann 2002), to bring about the desired change in livelihood outcomes (Hobley and Shields 2000). Diversification of livelihood strategies is central to the link between poverty, vulnerability, livelihoods and access to natural resources (Baumann 2002: 6) and thus not only becomes a survival strategy for the poor but also leads to the accumulation of capital assets and the conservation of natural

resources. The above factors in no small respect influence women's access to resources, however, perhaps the most important factor may be traced to the long history of colonial rule which imposed laws and social structures particularly harmful to women. Inheritance laws, legislation on land ownership and transfer, as well as social restrictions which seriously limit the activities and aspirations of women particularly in Africa and Latin America alienated women from customary land (Dankelman and Davidson 1988; Messerschmidt, 1999).

2.5 Livelihood Vulnerability and Social Protection

The concept of vulnerability is different from that of poverty. Whilst poverty is perceived to be static, vulnerability is seen to be dynamic and captures processes of change as people move in and out of poverty (Moser 1998:3; citing Lipton and Maxwell 1992). The meaning of vulnerability is expanded to include a range of elements and situations of livelihood security as for instance exposure to risk, hazards, shocks and stress, difficulty in coping with contingencies as well as linked to assets (Moser 1998:3; citing Longhurst 1994). The livelihoods of majority of the poor are beset with cyclical and acute food insecurity caused by seasonality and famine (Chambers et al. 1981; Devereux 2001:507), globalization, structural adjustment and economic reform, regional and international financial crises, environmental degradation and demographic transition (Kabeer 2002:589). These make most livelihoods risky and vulnerable, as the poor face greater exposure to livelihood threats and are made more susceptible to shocks and lower asset holdings.

A number of risk factors have been identified specific to individuals or households that determine their vulnerability or susceptibility. These include the household's relative wealth, access to alternative income sources, the kind of support households receive from extended family and the nature of the social networks available (Devereux 2001:509). But exposure to risk per se does not define susceptibility of the poor in terms of livelihoods. What is important is the ability of households to deal with vulnerability in ways that do not jeopardize their current well-being or their future prosperity. Households and communities are seen to be resilient when they can mobilize and manage their assets and entitlements in the face of negative effects of a changing environment. Hence vulnerability is closely linked with asset ownership and household and communities are deemed

less vulnerable if they have larger asset holdings and vice versa (Devereaux 2001: 509) as well as the capability to manage such assets i.e. to transform them into food or other basic necessities (Moser 1998). While the livelihood strategies of poor households tend to be organized around both immediate and long-term goals, they also incorporate security and the capacity to cope with crisis (Kabeer 2002:593). Households that cannot prepare in advance against crisis are most vulnerable. They become unfavourably positioned to bargain for higher wages, better prices and favourable credit forms and are forced to cope in ways that undermine their capacity to recover or protect themselves against the next crisis (Kabeer 2002:594). Finally, when households rely on coping strategies that cannot be reversed, they are likely to be the most vulnerable or exposed to crisis for longer. Two dimensions of vulnerability therefore have been its sensitivity in terms of a systems response to an external event and its resilience in terms of the ease and rapidity of a systems recovery from stress (Moser 1998: 3).

There is general agreement that poor households who face risk resort to a number of informal coping mechanisms that involve reductions in expenditure (Devereux 2001; Morduch and Sharma 2002; Kabeer 2002). Such households first fall upon their insurance mechanisms such as savings, then dispose of productive assets at distress prices before embarking upon destitution behaviour such as distress migration (Moser 1998; Devereux 2001; Morduch and Sharma 2002; Kabeer 2002; Conway and Norton 2002). The list can be expanded to include a cut in consumption, income diversification through home based enterprises and renting out and borrowing from neighbours and money lenders. Other households often reduce and or cancel planned investment. They may pull school-age children out of school either to save money or to put them in the labour market. They may also substitute private for public goods and services and increase their reliance on extended family support networks.

The concern with livelihood insecurity and the even riskier coping mechanisms that sometimes leave households worst off has generated a discourse on social protection as safety ropes, nets, ladders and trampolines to manage such risks (Devereux 2001, 2002; Conway and Norton 2002; Kabeer 2002; Morduch and Sharma 2002). It is argued that social protection policies and programmes will help poor households to reduce unnecessary exposures to risk, deal with adverse events when they cannot be avoided and help the poor to develop and maintain their

human capital. In addition the policy would help poor households to escape from exploitative social relations that guarantee survival during crises time and also to take calculated investment and production risks that have a net positive effect on growth and poverty reduction (Conway and Norton 2002:534). Social protection policies and programmes are thus redistributive transfers designed to give first social assistance to reduce the incidence or depth of chronic poverty and second, social insurance to smooth consumption and prevent destitution or mortality after transitory shocks (Devereux 2001; Conway and Norton 2002). By so doing social protection policies provide a number of things namely: promotional measures that are designed to reduce deprivation in specific ways and protective measures to give relief from poverty and deprivation (Kabeer 2002; Devereux 2002). Social protection traditionally provides safety nets to the poor to prevent them from falling into utter destitution and to provide a springboard out of poverty. Current narratives however have broadened to include the provision of safety ropes that tether the individual in order to minimize the distance fallen when misfortune strikes, ladders to offer opportunities to climb out of poverty and the trampoline (Devereux 2001, 2002; Conway and Norton 2002; Kabeer 2002; Morduch and Sharma 2002). The trampoline is seen as a social risk management framework that at the macro-level links risk management to prospects for growth and poverty reduction. The fine lines that differentiate these four measures in social policy are sometimes overlooked as they are used interchangeably to represent social protection generally.

A call has gone out for social protection strategies to target the poor whose health or age prevents work or who are made unemployed by the vagaries of climate or market demand (Devereux 2002) as well as to be built upon an understanding of actions already taken by households and communities (Morduch and Sharma 2002: 569). The literature is thus rife with social protection strategies. The two most prominent forms include first cash or food transfer programmes which involve employment based strategies and school feeding programmes and second, microfinance programmes.

Cash or food transfer programmes involve first employment based strategies that transfer food or income in the short term and create permanent assets that have sustainable development benefits (Devereux 2001, 2002). The assumption here is that the rural poor are either unemployed or underemployed and so work opportunities provide additional incomes to the poor. Such strategies however

should be scheduled for the dry season to reduce competing demands on labour time for agricultural work. The provision of work encourages moderate risk-taking behaviour as farmers may be encouraged to plant high yielding rather than drought tolerant crop varieties. Second is the school feeding programmes that provide a range of benefits beyond the direct consumption support to the beneficiaries (Devereux 2001, 2002). Such programmes improve enrolment and attendance of poor school children as well as their performance. Microfinance programmes² make small loans available for the expansion and development of small businesses. They help households to increase their incomes and their savings (self-insurance) as well as cope with consumption shocks (Kabeer 2002; Morduch and Sharma 2002). Micro finance programmes are mostly undertaken by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that provide loans aimed at income diversification in an attempt to smooth consumption over time. In spite of their successes, microfinance programmes have been criticized for failing to reach the extremely poor who operate in a mini economy in which production, consumption, exchange, trade, savings, borrowings and income earning occur in very small amounts (Kabeer 2002:598). Rigid payment schedules within such programmes add to the vulnerability of households but micro financing could design new products and protocols that include a reduction in vulnerability along side poverty reduction (Morduch and Sharma 2002:583). Other social protection strategies include saving banks that focus on helping clients to build up savings through staff paying daily visits to the homes or places of business of clients to collect savings, the amounts of which clients themselves decide; micro insurance against bereavement and ill-health and weather insurance to shore up farmers when crops fail due to poor rainfall (Morduch and Shamar 2002:583).

Safety net strategies have been criticized in spite of their numerous advantages in reducing livelihood insecurity amongst the poor (Devereux 2001:515). The criticisms include the fact that the programmes are introduced too late to provide effective social protection or influence risk taking behaviour, it is beset with logistical and institutional constraints in the implementation process and the fact that they have poor targeting with scale and coverage of public transfers not matching the extent and depth of the problem of poverty. These can be overcome if

²For more information see Jain and Moore, 2003; Simeen, 2003 and Badden et al. 1994.

interventions are tailored to problems that are intended to be addressed as well as proactive policies instituted to mitigate or reduce risk (Devereux 2001:515).

2.6 The Paucity of the Livelihoods Literature

Contemporary livelihood studies have focused on the active involvement of people in responding to and enforcing change (de Haan 2006: 14). This is evident from the Livelihoods Framework which has at its centre strategizing individuals, equipped with variable portfolios of material and non material assets. These individuals attempt to employ their assets in ways that maximize their own preferences in an environment of risk and uncertainty. A number of trends have however emerged that put into question the view of behaviour as strategic. First, households are no longer seen as homogeneous, there are intra-household differences. Second, contemporary individualization has accelerated the breakdown of households such that men, women and children either pursue different goals or have different interests. Third, livelihoods have become increasingly diversified as multiple motives prompt households and individuals to diversify assets, incomes and activities. Fourth, livelihoods are organized in multi-local spatial contexts that diminish coherent decision-making by households.

The view that households are homogenous in the literature on livelihoods raises concerns about the place of the role of gender and/or the gender division of labour. Livelihood literature uses homogenous and genderless concepts such as small farmers, rural poor, household resource access and household diversification. Sometimes the impression is created that farmers are only men. Such categorization does not account for differences in roles, needs and interests within households and thus fails to reveal the inequity therein in terms of resource access and distribution of benefits. It is little wonder that state extension services, subsidized farm inputs and credit were targeted at men. This thesis emphasises the role of the gender division of labour and gender relations in the construction and organisation of livelihoods. It thus highlights the inequality and inequities in accessing resources for constructing livelihoods. In addition, livelihoods literature assumes that all members of agrarian communities benefit from agriculture. In literature on agricultural intensification, the Green Revolution led to great increases in food production but the control of land by a small group of landlords meant that the

benefits of such increases did not necessarily go to those who actually produced the food – the rural poor (Mosse 1993:10).

Livelihoods literature again places a weak emphasis on the social contexts within which livelihoods are earned. A great deal of emphasis is placed on formal institutional contexts of livelihoods i.e. the role played in enhancing or impeding people's entitlements and rights to resources as well as providing the enabling environment to build up their capabilities while the interpersonal relations of kinship, patronage, power, gender and class that directly dictate resource access is played down. Gender, class and other social relations between community members (micro-politics of social relations) may well be the most important determinant of resource access given that availability is pre-determined by these formal institutions.

It is the aim of this thesis to present livelihood concepts not as homogeneous entities but as concepts mediated by gender and class. It also presents peasants not as purely strategizing individuals but people who operate in vulnerable contexts and whose livelihoods are mediated by both formal and informal institutions and by historical processes over which they have not had much control.

2.7 'Sustainability' in Sustainable Livelihoods

'Sustainability' of sustainable livelihoods may be conceptualized along a number of axes: ecological (Chambers and Conway 1992, Singh and Wanmali 1998; Jones and Carswell 2004c); access to resources (Bebbington 1999; Hopley and Shields 2000; de Haans 2006); asset vulnerability (Moser 1998; Glavovic et al. 2002) and entitlements (Sen 1981). All four aspects interrelate to present a holistic understanding of sustainable livelihoods.

In developing countries, livelihoods are in the main extracted from the environment. Research has examined the effects of the environment on peoples' opportunities and livelihood strategies, the impacts of resource use in the environment, and the social relations stemming from competition for resources (Jones and Carswell 2004: xv). Sustainability of the environment emerged with the concept of sustainable development in the mid 1980s with the World Conservation Strategy (1980), Our Common Future (1987) and the Rio Earth Summit (1992). To date the most common acceptance of sustainable development has been adopted from the Brundtland report on our common future which recognizes that

Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own need

WCED 1987: 43

This definition implies some level both of ecological and social sustainability (Lele 1991:611). Ecological sustainability emphasizes the constraints and opportunities that nature presents to human activities. But there are social conditions that influence ecological sustainability or unsustainability of the people-nature interaction. This may be related to factors such as conflict, farming techniques and so on. When linked to the capital concept in the framework, sustainability is viewed as maintenance or accumulation of stocks of capital assets. Unsustainable systems tend to deplete capital, spending capital as if they were income and so leave less for future generations (Bryceson 2000d:18). Environmental sustainability thus is achieved when the productivity of life supporting natural resources is conserved or enhanced for use by future generations (DFID 1999a section 1.4).

In other contexts livelihoods are sustainable when people have access to the resources needed to live- when they are in no way impeded. Here, state agencies and institutions ensure that people have the capability to access their entitlements. Even in the face of vulnerable environments, a livelihood will be sustainable if it is resilient, can cope or adapt and eventually maintain its integrity. Hence it is not just a matter of a people being able to subsist on a day to day basis but moving beyond subsistence level to a more enduring livelihood. This will involve a more diversified livelihood activity and income sources perhaps away from agriculture into the non-farm rural economy. Social sustainability is achieved when social exclusion is minimised and social equity maximised. Institutional sustainability is achieved when prevailing structures and processes have the capacity to continue to perform their functions over the long term (DFID 1999 section 1.4). Livelihoods then must be sustained physically, socially, economically and institutionally. These various aspects of livelihood sustainability are examined in one form or another in the thesis and determine the nature of societal change and conflict.

2.8 Analytical Framework for the Study

The Sustainable Livelihoods Framework would be helpful in broadening the scope of enquiry of this study as it a powerful analytical tool for studies in poverty

reduction and development. There is need however to stretch it for the purposes of the present study to capture elements of gender and social relations, conflict, peoples priorities and empowerment to allow different levels of analysis. The Sustainable Livelihoods Framework described above therefore will be extended to accommodate the variables that this study wishes to incorporate.

The framework will be extended to cover six capital assets in pursuit of sustainable livelihoods instead of the original five. The new additional asset is information. Information capital represents the different kinds of data endowed with relevance and purpose used by people to make decisions in pursuit of livelihood objectives (e.g. market opportunities and outlets, input information, pest control, fertilizer application and investment opportunities)(Odero 2003). Although access has also been identified as a capital in the literature, this thesis only included information capital because of the ease with which data could be collected on access to information. It was difficult to collect data on community access to access capital as it was realized in the field that 'access' was implied whenever access to the other capitals was discussed. Access capital represents the ability to access resources, assets and entitlements given the institutional opportunities and constraints (Baumann 2002:3, 6) as well as the beneficial exploitation of livelihood opportunities such as social networks and market opportunities. Information capital was adapted in addition to the introduction of social/gender relations and conflict in the policies, institutions and processes (PIP) box.

The modified Sustainable Livelihoods Framework will allow data to be collected on what livelihood resources (capital assets) the study community has access to and use, institutional processes, gender and social relations both formal and informal that mediate livelihood resources and strategies and portfolios of livelihood strategies. It will also enable analysis of primary data to be carried out at different levels. For instance analysis may be done on the frame conditions or vulnerability context within which livelihoods are carried out; the nature, availability and access to livelihood resources; the structures and processes that influence access to resources, the dynamics of social and gender relations, rural transformations and livelihood strategy options as well as the composition of the livelihood strategy portfolios.

2.9 Conclusion

Perceptions and issues in rural livelihoods have evolved and changed with time. Of particular importance has been the use of the SLA and framework by development agencies as a goal, approach and analytical tool to improve the livelihoods of the poor and thus ensure their food security. The SLA is a feasible concept and tool for making a livelihood analysis of households and communities in spite of the concerns raised about its workability and shortcomings. It concentrates on people's access to resources needed to engage in livelihoods. It also draws attention to the fact that livelihoods become vulnerable when structures and processes intervene to restrict access or determine how they can be used and how much can be used. The SLA and framework have been used to close gaps within national poverty reduction strategies and to give pointers to areas that policy could be directed to make effective use of national resources so as to create paths for the poor to climb out of their condition. Thus, the SLA is important as its use points to where gaps in macro policies on poverty lie and could have great potential in poverty alleviation policies and programmes. The livelihoods literature however is poor in being explicit about how social relations at the interpersonal level mediate access to resources and create vulnerable environments for some groups of people. Sustainable livelihoods thus depend among other factors upon the availability of resources but social relations will influence how people relate to the environment and raise questions about environmental and livelihood sustainability. The next chapter examines debates concerning the political ecology of the natural resource basis of livelihoods. Important for this thesis are the social relations of gender that dictate access to natural environmental resources and thus have implications for sustained livelihoods.

CHAPTER THREE

Environmental Politics: Gender Relations and Natural Resource Management

3.1 Introduction

I discussed in chapter two the need for ecological sustainability if livelihoods are themselves to be sustained. This was raised because livelihoods in developing countries have a greater dependency upon the natural environment than in developed countries. This can thus lead to degradation. In addition, social relations of gender and class affect resource access, entitlements and create vulnerable contexts for livelihoods. Social relations determine how various groups of people relate to the environment. This chapter explores a number of perspectives which attempt to politicize the environment within the context of development, perspectives that have pushed and extended theories of environment and development to present a robust political ecology (Bryant 1998; Watts and Peet 2004). Research in political ecology has tried to place politics centrally in an attempt to understand how human-environment interaction may be linked to the spread of environmental degradation. However, political ecology deals with a number of themes from which various perspectives emerge. I present this umbrella discourse on the politics of the environment, outlining the major themes and move on to discuss the various perspectives within it. In particular I review the WED, ecofeminist and feminist political ecology perspectives that deal with women's access to natural resources and the role of gender relations respectively. A review of perspectives on political ecology is particularly important for the present study. This thesis is best understood within the broader context of the political economy of forestry in Ghana and it employs to a large extent a gender and political lens in the analysis of data. A review of literature on the politics of the environment reveals a great deal of interest in women and their relationship to the environment but shortcomings in how this has been conceptualized. It is crucial to develop a more adequate understanding of gendered social relations, and recognise the diverse contexts in which women and men draw on environmental resources. It is also

important to understand the relations between classes and their access to environmental resources. These social relations of access to resources based on gender and class are developed in later chapters to deepen an appreciation of the significance of micro-political struggles over environmental resources and their national and global linkages.

3.2 Political Ecology Perspectives of Natural Resources

Starting in the 1970s, writers in political ecology pre-grounded issues of access and control over resources as key to understanding environmental degradation as well as the prospects of green and sustainable alternatives (Watts and Peet 2004:6). The origins of political ecology may be located within two related fields of radical development geography and cultural ecology (Bryant 1998; Watts and Peet 2004). Radical development geography as a discipline criticized neo-Malthusian notions of how best to deal with the world's growing population and ecological crises as well as mainstream environmental research for neglecting questions derived from political ecology. Early researchers in political ecology took a cue and initiated research into the interaction of political economic structures and ecological processes to set the research agenda on disasters and hazards in the early 1980s. Such research revealed why individuals misperceived or ignored environmental threats of tornado, floods and droughts. Although the research agenda focused on disasters and hazards, it offered also a wider comment about the need for work on the political economy of environmental change in the third world. Cultural ecology or ecological anthropology which was active in the 1960s and 1970s provided a Darwinian framework for the thinking not only about historical change but also about patterns of resource use and human adaptation in different environments (Watts and Peet 2004).

The political ecology that emerged was seen and understood differently by researchers. There were two major phases of understanding. Early political ecology drew upon a Marxian vision of social relations of production as an area of conflict. It explored the impact of productive activities and their impact at both local and global levels (Watts and Peet 2004). A tool kit for political ecology during this period assumed three things. First that society and land-based resources are mutually causal in such a way that poverty can induce and in the process be

deepened by poor management of environmental degradation. Second it assumed that regional or spatial accounts of degradation should link through chains of explanation, local decision makers to spatial variations in environmental structure. Third it assumed that land management is framed by external structures of the state, the core-periphery model and elements in the world economy (Watts and Peet 2004:9-10). Early works in political ecology also draw on the work of dependency, world systems and modes of production theories in order to link local social oppression and environmental degradation to wider political and economic concerns that relate to questions on production (Bryant 1998). These could be organized into two phases. Works that appeared in the first phase (late 1970s-mid 1980s) such as Watts (1983) Blaikie (1985) and Bunker (1985) used a structural framework that was informed by neo-Marxist ideas to provide rich empirical insights but their emphasis on structure tended to play down the ability of politically or economically weaker grassroot actors to resist their marginal status. Hence these studies neglected the role of local politics in mediating resource access and conflict, and provided very simplistic discussions of different actors (Bryant 1998:81-82). Political ecology studies that have appeared from the late 1980s to the present seek to demonstrate a more complex understanding of how power relations mediate human-environment interaction than was hitherto the case. These studies highlight the potential power of grassroot actors in environmental conflicts and power relations within households as they influence control of natural resources, labour and capital. In addition, they have used post structuralism and discourse theory to map the ways in which knowledge and power may inter-relate so as to mediate the political-ecological outcomes (Bryant 1998:82).

Political ecologists have researched a number of areas and themes all of which emerge from an analysis of how unequal power relations are often linked to conflicts over access to and use of diverse environmental resources. One area in political ecology deals with an explanation of questions of environmental control and contestation lodged in the colonial histories of developing countries (Bryant 1998:85). This shows how incorporation of third world peoples and environments into a first world dominated global system of capitalist production transformed the lives of millions of people by forcing peasant producers into an imperial economy. African peoples were exploited through trade (unequal exchange) with Europe, North America and Japan. There was also western ownership of the means of

production in Africa and this ensured that not only the natural resources but also labour was lost to the continent (Frank 1978; Rodney 1978; Bryant 1998). Farmers, shifting cultivators and hunter-gatherers were socially and economically disenfranchised because colonial states turned locally owned and operated 'commons' resources into state-run territories. Post colonial elites in third world countries have failed to radically break from patterns of colonial transformation and wherever possible intensified resource extraction (Bond 2006).

The issue of social and economic inequities has also been explored in the Third World. Research here has emphasized the marginality and vulnerability of the poor in terms of social and ecological processes and has identified groups that have been more adversely affected. One group that has been identified is indigenous peoples, affected by modern development in terms of disrupted livelihoods, cultural genocide and degradation of local environments (Obi 2005; Bush 2007). The essence of research here is not to perpetuate myths of indigenous people as wise stewards of the environment or to suggest that they are adverse to participation in the global economy but rather to document ways in which they have been disadvantaged by the development process outside their control (Bryant 1998:86). The exploration of the disadvantages suffered by indigenous groups would be forcefully brought to the fore by disaggregating the disadvantages by gender, class and other variables. This will reveal the group most affected so that appropriate remedies could be designed to ameliorate their condition.

Some writers have researched how contemporary development processes and environmental management are damaging to the interests of women. Thus attempts have been made to explore the connection between politics, ecology, development and gender in an effort to clarify the diverse sources of female oppression (Leach et al. 1995). Research in this direction has explored gender and domestic politics and struggles around the environment, the state, interstate and multilateral institutions and community level resource control. It has also explored international environmental cooperation in terms of participation, community rights and local needs in environmental protection and conservation. Such work claims an emancipatory potential as well as sensitivity to the array of political forms of movements, domestic struggles over property and rights, contestations with state

bureaucracies and ways in which claims are made, negotiated and contested (Watts and Peet 2004).

3.2.1 Women, Environment and Development (WED)

The notion that women have a special relationship with the environment presented a context within which the droughts and famines in Africa as well as land and soil degradation elsewhere in the Third World in the 1980s were highlighted in development circles (Braidotti et al. 1994; Hausler 1994; Leach et al. 1995; Leach 2003). Researchers influenced by gender agendas provided a new recognition of how women's reproductive roles and responsibilities as household managers and providers of sustenance make them closely dependent on natural resources. Dependence on natural resources gave women a distinct interest in the resources, a deep and extensive environmental knowledge and experiential expertise and an affinity with the environment (Dankelman and Davidson 1988; Leach et al. 1995; Leach 2003; Jones and Carswell 2004a).

WED perspectives have shifted over time. One perspective centered on how women in their reproductive roles use and depend upon natural resources for the daily sustenance of their families and communities. This perspective changed in the 1980s to portray women as major victims of environmental degradation who have borne the brunt of pollution and deforestation. Another WED perspective also presented women as victims of ill-conceived scientific and development processes that systematically undermined their resources for living. As a result of their predicament, women were seen as stakeholders in environmental conservation and rehabilitation if they had to survive. Finally, WED presented women as efficient managers of the environment, evidenced by their active engagement in environmental protection and rehabilitation (Dankelman and Davidson 1988; Leach et al. 1995; Leach 2003).

3.2.2 Ecofeminist Perspectives

The term ecofeminism grew out of various social movements in the late 1970s and early 1980s and became popular in the contexts of numerous protests and activities against environmental destruction (Mies and Shiva 1993). Ecofeminists argue that women and nature have a shared history of oppression by patriarchal

institutions and dominant western culture (Mies and Shiva 1993; Braidotti et al. 1994; Leach et al. 1995; Rocheleau et al. 1996; Leach 2003). Ecofeminists emphasize the spiritual dimension of life as against materialism, desiring to recover and regenerate the wisdom, knowledge and close relationship with nature that past heroines had. Within the context of development, they argue that culture is superior and is used to dominate nature. Thus the domination and oppression of women and the domination and exploitation of nature have gone together and give women a particular stake in ending the domination of nature.

Ecofeminists consider women's relationship with the environment as biologically, socially or ideologically determined. Biological determinism uses an essentialist perspective to link women's bodies with their environmental consciousness. This thesis does not share such an essentialist perspective but argues that women's relationship with the environment is dictated by social relations of access. Social determinism links women's roles that are socially constructed to their relationship with the environment. Ideological determinism views women's relationship with the environment as a historical process. According to ideological determinists, pre-colonial periods in these continents had no concept of hierarchies and therefore offered more balanced relationships between men and women as well as between people and their environments. Ideological determinists within ecofeminism suggest the need to recover the non-hierarchical states of these continents in order to build on them to re-orientate development processes. This variant thus raises questions about the historical roots of the gender-environment question (Mies and Shiva 1993; Leach et al. 1995; Leach 2003).

Mies and Shiva (1993) show how the period of enlightenment in western Europe urged western science to violate nature for development purposes and how its reductionist methods were applied to overcome and transcend man's dependence on mother earth in an attempt to subordinate nature to male will. Mies and Shiva further argue that this process contradicts the feminine principle of spirituality that enables women to love and celebrate life by conserving their survival base. That act is seen in the many women's movements (such as Chipko in India and Green Belt movement in Kenya) that have acted to protect their environments particularly in the third world. The authors argue that there is respect for the limits of nature which cannot be violated if women are to survive.

As a radical criticism of mainstream development approaches, ecofeminism becomes the basis for socially and politically transformative struggles and practices for a large range of social and environmental movements (Mies and Shiva 1993; Connelly et al. 2000; Rai 2002; Leach 2003). These range from specific forms of grassroots activism around the environment to large networks such as the Women's Environmental Network (WEN) which seeks to promote green consumerism and other issues in Britain (Leach 2003). Environmental activism made possible the presentation of a united front with a common vision for women in the preparations towards and at the UNCED held in Rio, in 1992. The Women's Action Agenda 21 which contained a vision for alternative development from women's perspectives globally was prepared during the 1991 Women's Tribunal held in Miami and was presented at the UNCED to inform the conference's outcome (Hausler 1994; Leach 2003).

Both WED and ecofeminist perspectives share an essentialist perspective of biological determinism. However, gender-environment relations are embedded in dynamic social and political relations as well as an emphasis on particular contexts rather than universalisms and essentialism. Ecology is dynamic and resources and environmental problems are socially constructed, hence women's involvement with the environment can be explained not in terms of closeness to nature but in terms of unequal power relations, or lack of access to alternatives (Agarwal 1991; Leach 2003).

WED and ecofeminist perspectives also assume that women in different parts of the world experience the environment in the same way. Women experience the environment differently because variables such as geographic location, class, age, ethnicity, marital status and so on mediate this experience (Braidotti et al. 1994). Recognising differences in social relations among women clearly undermines any notion of groups formed through homogeneity of position and interest. The gender perspective forces acknowledgement of new questions about social hierarchies, and distributional issues that operate when women form groups for environmental purposes. There is thus the need to disaggregate women's relationship with the environment in terms of these variables.

Further, these perspectives play down and make invisible the activities of men in the environment. This is because they support the view that development agencies should identify women as allies and the prime movers of resource conservation projects. Such projects however have not always been successful. They have tended to give women responsibility for saving the environment without addressing whether they actually have the resources and capacity to do so. Women are constrained by burdens of housekeeping and raising family –housework and meal preparation. These activities tend to be consistent all year round and involve a tremendous amount of labour time. Making women responsible for conserving the environment such as working in tree nurseries only adds to their work burdens (see Flintan 2003b). When such projects succeed, they do so at the expense of women, appropriating their labour, and unremunerated in activities which prove not to meet their needs or whose benefits they do not control (Ruthven and David 1995; Leach 2003; Flintan 2003b).

Different social groups give different attributions to females and males and these are also linked to varying concepts of nature and culture. The nature-society distinction is commonly upheld by authors but is by no means universal. Women's reproductive roles thus do not make them closer to a universally conceived nature (Braidotti et al. 1994). Besides, humans have continually interfered in the landscape with their socio-economic activities and hence the environment cannot be equated with nature. Treating the environment as a category again hides the varying perceptions between geographic location, classes and science disciplines and different environmental perceptions lead to different environmental priorities and interpretations of degradation or improvement. In this direction, the problem of the environment should not be globalised but made context specific (Leach et al. 1995:3). Environmental perceptions, values and priorities strongly differ within rural communities and particularly between women and men. These perceptions are socially constructed and influence gendered struggles for control over resources and over how local environments are managed.

The above criticisms shift from roles to relationships and emphasize how relations of tenure and property, control over labour, resources, products and decisions shape people's environmental interests and opportunities (Leach 2003:7). In the light of the shortcomings of the WED and ecofeminist perspectives on

environmental issues, a new perspective of a gender analysis of environmental change variously called feminist environmentalism, feminist political ecology and gender, environment and development has emerged. Although these have slightly different emphasis, they all deal with the micro-political economy of gendered resource use and encompass particular contexts.

3.2.3 Gender, Environment and Development (GED)/Feminist Political Ecology

The GED perspective is based on an understanding of how gender issues affect development (Rocheleau et al. 1996; Population Reference Bureau 2001; Nightingale undated). It is important to understand the relationships women and men have with the environment if solution for a more sustainable use of the environment will be successful. The above perspectives examine the power relationships that shape the environment through the insights of gender analysis frameworks focusing on a number of issues that deal with intra household dynamics, resource access, agrarian property and power. First, conventions and hierarchies reinforce men's dominant position within the family and community and in state bodies such as forestry services. These influence the division of labour along lines of gender, age and status and dictate access and control of labour (Rocheleau et al. 1996:4). An examination of why a rice project failed in Gambia revealed that the issue of gender was not taken into account. Gambian women have traditionally specialised in wetland rice production but the project concentrated production in the hands of men and expected women to provide unpaid family labour. Women refused to give an input concentrating on their personal farms and the rice project failed (Carney 2004).

Second are the gendered environmental rights and responsibilities (property, resources, space and legal and customary rights) and differential access to resources for instance the right to land and trees. These involve differences between women's and men's interests even within the same household and how these are played out; differences among men and among women based on age, wealth/status, ethnic background and other factors as well as the way gender roles and relations change as a result of economic forces, migration for work and other social trends (Rocheleau et al. 1996; Population Reference Bureau 2001; Nightingale undated).

Insecure rights to land may force women into situations where they may compromise their knowledge of sustainable land management by prioritizing short term needs (Mackenzie 1995). Third and linked to the above is the recognition that property rights issues link with an analysis of institutions. Positioning in households, communities and other institutions involved in environmental decision-making is gendered (Jackson, 1995; Ruthven and David 1995). Fourth are the ways in which access to scientific and ecological knowledge is structured by gender. This is in recognition of the fact that women and men have different knowledge of natural resources and which could variously be brought to bear on natural resource management (Rocheleau et al. 1996; Bryant 1998; Dankelman and Davidson 1988; Population Reference Bureau 2001; Gururani 2002; Flintan 2003a; Nightingale, undated). Women, Gurarani (2002) argues, have special environmental knowledge about seed selection, soils, biodiversity, pesticides, forest species and so on which differ from men's knowledge. Such knowledge is subsistence oriented, contextual, communal, and passed on informally.

The specificity of women's environmental knowledge was further demonstrated at a seminar in Burkina Faso. Women referred to the environmental deterioration in their country and to all the consequences of eucalyptus plantations. They demonstrated profound expertise, concern and awareness of the local situation (Dankelman and Davidson 1988 citing Heskins 1979). Many other examples of this particular insight are available. In a Sierra Leone survey, women named thirty-one products that they gathered or made from local flora as against eight by men. In Mali and South Africa, women's use of traditional medicine to cure ailments makes them gather the necessary ingredients required to prepare and transform roots and leaves into medicine. Elderly women are renowned for their knowledge on natural resources (Flintan 2003a). This view of women's knowledge however has not been without criticisms. Women's knowledge of everyday practices of livelihood is usually generated jointly after negotiations and discussions with men and thus cannot be neatly categorised as women's or men's, an acknowledgement that knowledge is socially produced in geographically and historically precise ways although such knowledge may not be evenly shared. Men also benefit from agro-forestry, extension work, new training opportunities and other knowledge associated with science and such knowledge mediates how they relate to the environment (Nightingale undated).

Last but not least is the fact that a feminist political ecology perspective on environmental change also tackles the connections between global and local level policies, processes and practices (Rocheleau et al. 1996; Bryant 1998). In this direction, the emphasis has been on the value of local knowledge, gendered rights over space and access to social and political power, a questioning of perceived division between rural and urban spaces and production systems and women's political struggles. GEDs emphasis on social relations, access to resources and environmental sustainability is important for this thesis. It strengthens the context of discussions and arguments developed in later chapters on livelihood organisation. It also provides a context within which to examine narratives on environmental degradation and attempts at forest management that are discussed below.

3.3 The Case for Forest Management: Environmental Narratives and Discourses

The literature is replete with environmental narratives that influence policy towards environmental management particularly in developing countries (see Adger et al. 2000; Leach and Fairhead 2002; Carswell 2004; Carswell and Jones 2004a, 2004b; Leach and Mearns 1996). Such narratives are premised on notions of human interference in so called pristine environments and include those on deforestation and consequent loss of biodiversity and desertification. They serve to justify funding for the institutions that have responsibility for managing the environment and do not reflect the concerns of local groups (Leach and Mearns 1996; Cline-Cole 1996).

...external claims over resource management and control can have deleterious consequences for local livelihoods. They can marginalize or alienate people from natural resources over which they previously enjoyed access and control, perhaps directly undermining their ability to secure food or income...(It) has also had adverse ecological consequences.

(Leach and Mearns 1996:21)

Dominant narratives have reflected neo-malthusian and neo-marxist as well as a rebuttal of both positions. The neo-malthusian position on degradation of natural resources presents a pessimistic view of human-environment relations (Carswell 2004; Carswell and Jones 2004a, 2004b). Population grows at a geometric rate and outstrips the arithmetic rate of food supply. When the carrying

capacity of the earth is reached, food supply is outstripped and this leads to environmental degradation. Neo-malthusians thus use such factors as high population density, over cultivation of land, soil exhaustion and short fallow periods to explain environmental degradation. One perspective within this position views slash and burn farming technique as the main cause of forest destruction. This links environmental degradation, government and market failures and environmental security to the changes in forest cover (Adger et al. 2000:6). Within the forest savanna transition zone of Ghana, migrant farmer practices have been identified as the main cause of deforestation. This is because of the short tenancy agreement that they have and which results in insecure land rights (Afikorah-Danquah, not dated). Another perspective holds that increased fuelwood demand particularly from urban centres has caused deforestation (Adger et al. 2000: 6) but this is countered by studies that have identified drought, land clearance and incorporation into the world market to account for deforestation (Amanor 1994; Flintan 2003b; Carswell and Jones 2004b; Afikorah-Danquah not dated). Cline-Cole's (1997) study of fuelwood use in northern Nigeria suggests that while a significant proportion of fuelwood is collected from trees planted and nurtured on farms, collectors mainly exploit live branches and dead wood.

Neo-marxists present small farmers and land managers not as active agents of deforestation but as victims. This discourse sees the poor as reluctant to degrade the very resources on which their future depends and therefore they do not sacrifice long term concerns in favour of short-term gains (Wolvekamp 1999; Adger et al. 2000). For such advocates, the poor would only degrade the environment when they have no other choice. This position has been criticised for being populist. It places the blame for degradation squarely on the shoulders of wealthy logging companies and other trans-national interests whose activities destroy forestlands as well as displace indigenous peoples. The globalisation of economies and world market demand for wood and paper products and other raw materials, forest conservation, the technological capacity and capital resources of transnational companies all cause forest degradation. In addition, the promotion of domestic and cross-border traffic such as the construction of roads and highways, high speed railways, harbours and airports also degrade forests. The Chad-Cameroon Petroleum Development and Pipeline and the Trans-Amazonian highway are cited as opening up the last frontier forest areas to logging, cattle ranching, mining, industry and

poaching and exposing local populations to increased pollution (Wolvekamp 1999 citing Goldsmith 1997).

Another environmental perspective denies the view that small farmers are either the main protagonists of deforestation or are the hapless victims of external forces. Rather small farmers are the protectors and promoters of forest cover (Fairhead and Leach 1995, 1996, 1998, 2004). Forests have particular social and political histories that sharply contradict the deforestation discourses. The Kissidougou and Ziama regions in Guinea (West Africa) have presented classic cases of socio-political histories regenerating forest growth (Brocklesby and Bianca 1997; Adger et al. 2000; Leach et al 2001; Brown and Lapuyade 2001; Carswell 2004; Fairhead and Leach 2004). Again, Tiffen et al's (1994) study of the Machokos district of south-east Kenya shows a regeneration of forest and woodland with population increase and farming activities over a sixty year period (1930-1990).

An influential narrative on natural resource degradation has centred on Hardin's 'the tragedy of the commons' (Hardin 1968; Boyd 2001). Hardin argued that natural resources that have open access are degraded because a great part of the cost of degradation by individual users is passed on to other users while benefits accrue exclusively to individual users. Individuals would increase the utility of an open access resource in so far as they do not bear the full cost of degradation and in the absence of any social control. Humans are thus seen to be victims of an impulse which leads them to maximise benefits even in the face of declining resources and diminishing social controls. A distinction has however been made between common pool resource or open access problems and common property rights or regime problems. Common pool resources (open access) refer to resource systems where there is an absence of well defined property rights and in which access is often unregulated. Here, the resource is free and open to everyone and often encourages free-riding. Common pool resources include both natural and artificial resources in which first exclusion of beneficiaries through physical and institutional means is costly and second, exploitation by one user reduces their availability for others (Johnson 1997; Ostrom et al. 1999; Hobbey and Shields 2000; Jones and Carswell 2004a). The use of common pool resources creates dilemmas as indicated in the following passage:

When resource users interact without the benefit of rules limiting access and defining rights and duties,

substantial free-riding in two forms is likely: overuse without concern for the negative effects on others, and a lack of contributed resources for maintaining and improving the common pool resource itself

(Ostrom et al 1999: 279)

In common property regimes, resources are held by an identifiable group of interdependent users who are able to exclude outsiders and regulate use by its members. Here, rights of access to the resources involved are often recognised by customary law. Poverty environment linkages as seen in the above discourses have been conceptualised in cause-effect relationships. There is need to identify intervening variables such as market and institutional failures, migration, rights to resources, economic security, local endowments, mediating institutions and the agency of poor people in environmental degradation (Brocklesby and Bianca 1997; Carswell and Jones 2004a). Poor people have an unrecognised potential for adaptation and innovation by adopting protective mechanisms through collective action in an effort to reduce the impacts of demographic, economic and environmental change (Carswell and Jones 2004a) and have self organised to manage common pool resources, devising long term sustainable institutions for governing them (Ostrom et al. 1999:278). Thus there is recognition that there are local solutions to problems of sustainable resources, the success of such solutions depending to a large extent on the characteristics of the natural resources involved.

The assumptions, knowledge and understandings of narratives on natural resource degradation have often been uncertain and contested. One set of contestations have come from ethnoscience or indigenous knowledge (Leach and Fairhead 2002b; Gururani 2002; Adams et al. 2003; Zimmerer 2004). The ethnoscience of indigenous people points to their varied methods of exploration and detection and the lack of commensurability between their concepts and those employed by modern science. This point is emphasised by Leach and Fairhead (2002b) in their study of hunting and environmental policy in West Africa and the Caribbean in which state agencies and hunter groups used different methodologies to arrive at contesting causes of wildlife depletion. The point is also made in Zimmerer's (2004) account of narratives of soil erosion in Bolivia. He examines how international agencies and the state blame land users as having no awareness of the problem although the latter and their trade unions present three different perspectives of the causes of soil erosion: dishonouring of mother earth and society,

the effect of crazy rains and winds and a historical past of reinventing resource rights. The expertise and interests of local people are rarely recognised by national forest policies and management systems and even when acknowledged, implementation systems are flawed to the exclusion of indigenous knowledge.

Both western science narratives and indigenous perspectives on natural resource degradation have been socially constructed. Western science narratives represent the experiences of indigenous groups outside their specific historical and geographical contexts (Leach and Mearns 1996), being constructed within the contexts of research institutions, groups and states while indigenous knowledge integrates knowledge and beliefs with cosmology, local religion and questions about social order and relations of authority (Leach and Fairhead 2002b; Gururani 2002). In this direction, indigenous groups emphasise the autonomy of local traditions of knowledge and ways of life that are quite different from modernising states and development paths (Leach and Mearns 1996; Cline-Cole 1996; 1997; Leach and Fairhead 2002b; Gururani 2002). Such disputes and debates over discourses in local settings are interlocked with social differences of age, gender, ethnicity as well as struggles over control of resources and over socio-political authority. In addition, questions over the definition of natural vegetation i.e. whether the introduction of new crop and tree species within farming systems should be characterized as degradation, deforestation or development; and the problem of isolating human and environmental factors as causes of degradation and desertification have been posed (see Tiffen and Mortimore 2002). For Bush (1997:506), the environmental debate has failed to grasp the fact that nature itself creates different environments over time and that there is need for a clearer understanding of ways in which social relationships produce the environment i.e. the cultural, political and economic institutions that generate environmental crises.

3.4 Forest Management

Forest management involves the organisation and control of trees, woodlots, plantations and natural forests, and associated resources including benefits derived from them or from their productive, extractive or industrial enterprises (Messerschmidt 1999:9).

There is recognition that common property regimes are being threatened and eroded by state appropriation, market integration and population growth and that

resource users often create institutional arrangement and management regimes to allocate benefits equitably within policy circles (Jones and Carswell 2004a; Agrawal and Gibson 2004). In addition, authoritarian styles of centralised forest management may be inappropriate in meeting the objectives of current forest management. Government resource constraints dictate that centralised forest management is less effective, as forest departments have increasingly found their management objectives unreachable, or seriously compromised, unless they empower communities and stakeholders to participate in decision-making and obtain their inputs for specific plans and objectives (FAO 2003). Combined with recent emphasis on bottom-up development, a new approach in management of non-privately owned resources in which power is devolved from the state to local communities has emerged (Kotey et al. 1998; FAO 2003; Flintan 2003a).

3.4.1 Collective Forest Management

Collective management is a system in which responsibility for maintaining forests is vested in the rural community, communal or other group and the planning and implementation of the management practices are carried out through cooperative or collective efforts by the group members (Mol and Wiersum 1999:23). It is people centred if it is primarily concerned with improving the quality of life of rural people. Its aims in this regard may be the generation of income and employment opportunities, improving access to essential forest and tree products and services and increasing local participation in management of forest and tree resources as a means of increasing self reliance. It is forest centred if it is primarily concerned with improving the effective maintenance of forest resources. Systems of collective forest management have evolved through time and adapted to changes in the socio-economic, cultural and political environments. Such systems are the result of interrelated factors. These include population growth and immigration, incorporation of previously isolated areas into market economies, privatisation of farming systems, nationalisation of forest lands. They can also include the advent of state controlled institutions and a lack of attention to symbolic, cultural, political, historical factors and local forms of resource organisation (Mol and Wiersum 1999; Jones and Carswell 2004a).

Ostrom (1990) presents three models to explain collective action taken to govern natural resources- the tragedy of the commons, the prisoner's dilemma and

the logic of collective action. The first of these models has been discussed earlier. It presents the view that environmental degradation is expected whenever many individuals use a scarce resource in common. The prisoner's dilemma model is formalised out of the former and presents a non-cooperative game in which all players (the users of a common property resource) possess complete information about the effects of their actions on the common property resource but either know or do not know what other players intend to do depending on whether or not these other players actions are observable. According to this model, players in the game use a dominant strategy that presents the best option. But when all players use their dominant strategy, they produce an equilibrium that is the worst results for them and thus not a pareto-optimal outcome. This model therefore defeats logic in the sense that individually rational strategies in the use of common property resources lead to collectively irrational outcomes. The logic of collective action challenges grand optimism expressed in group theory that individuals with common interests would voluntarily act to try and further these interests. Thus it challenges the presumption that the possibility of a benefit for a group would be sufficient to generate collective action to achieve that benefit. Resource users in the group who cannot be excluded from benefiting from the collective good once the good is produced have little incentive to contribute voluntarily to the provision of that good. Within the models presented by Ostrom (1990) is the free rider problem. Whenever one person cannot be excluded from the benefits that others provide, each person is motivated not to contribute to the joint effort but to free-ride on the efforts of others. Hence if all common property users free-ride, the collective benefit will not be produced. Environmental policies that recognise state intervention and management of natural resources have been based on these three models.

Two policy options have emerged. First has been the use of coercion to force resource users to achieve control over ecological problems (Ostrom 1990). This policy option however assumes that the centralised authority has complete information on the carrying capacity of the common property resource, unambiguously assigns this capacity, monitors actions of resource users and unfailingly sanctions non-compliance. Another policy option has been the imposition of private rights whenever resources are owned in common (Ostrom 1990).

Studies in collective forest management generally define the conditions that favour collective action under common property regimes in terms of the organisation, sustainability and their adaptability (Jones and Carswell 2004a). Such studies however have been criticised for a number of reasons. In particular they ignore the influence of the external environment, focus on single use resources and assume economic rationality. They also draw attention away from the more important understanding of processes, unconsciously blur the rules, and are prescriptive and deterministic (Jones and Carswell 2004a:144).

A distinction is made between community management in which the whole community including groups that have been sanctioned by the community get involved in managing their forests and communal management in which distinct groups that form only some or part of a community get involved in management (Messerschmidt 1999:8). Such a distinction reflects who has access to the common forest resource and how forest products are distributed. Within community regimes, there is an assumption of first, equitable distribution of resources among all members of the group or community and second, relative access to all common resources. This assumption neglects the power structures and relations inherent in communities particularly along the axis of class and gender. Here, heads of households and lineage elders employ patron client relations to distribute land unequally among members while the chief and his councillors use community regulations and taboos to define access. Communal management regimes however assume relative equity within the sub-group and imply inequity within the community because outsiders are excluded. In this respect, access is reserved exclusively for the in-group which may be a kin, political or economic group.

One can identify some general features of collective forest management and these may be based on common property or vested in common institutions (Mol and Wiersum 1999:26). It may involve the controlled utilisation of forest or tree resources, the protection and maintenance of forest or tree resources or the purposeful propagation of valuable tree species. Collective forest management may also involve the use of regulations on how resources may be extracted, the use of minor products such as grasses, herbs, honey, birds and wildlife, the temporary use of the ground under trees and use of forests for grazing livestock. In addition, regulations may deal with the protection of special areas in the forest or species of trees, forestland zoning and the ownership and use rights for the planted trees. Apart

from such resource management activities, there is also need to make decisions about management practices, group behaviour, who to exclude and to put in place control mechanisms to ensure that any proposed activities are carried out as planned.

3.4.2 Collaborative /Participatory Forest Management

Collaborative forest management comes in various types. It could be joint forest management (JFM) as practiced in parts of India, community or village forestry as in Nepal, Laos and Burma, integrated social forestry in the Philippines (FAO 2003) and integrated conservation and development projects (ICDPs) /community-based natural resource management (CBNRM) in Africa and Asia (Ashley 2000; Nhantumbo et al. 2003; Flintan 2003a, 2003b). In Europe and North America, these various types come under the rubric of public participation in forestry (ILO 2002). In whatever form participation takes, it is aimed at resolving issues of forest tenure, including ownership and user-rights and common access issues (FAO 2003) and increasing public awareness of forests and forestry through active collaborative learning, mutual recognition and constructive co-operation among forest-related actors (ILO 2002). It is also aimed at maximising the total benefits of forests by offering opportunities to both society and the forest sector to mutually improve multiple use of forest products and services; to define jointly how costs and benefits of forests may be equitably shared; and enhance the social acceptance of sustainable forest management through better informed and more widely accepted forest management outcomes (ILO 2002). Solving environmental problems by conservation projects alone will not be sufficient in developing countries. This is because natural resource environmental problems are related to issues in development – livelihoods, poverty, gender organisation of labour and many others. There is need to tackle these related and causal problems if conservation projects are to succeed. ICDPs therefore have integrated conservation projects with health, population and capacity building projects. The Zambesi Basin Wetlands Project for instance included the installation of wells, growth monitoring and health education. In Tanzania, the Udzungwa Mountains National Park provided training in family planning, birth spacing, HIV/AIDS awareness and sanitation for local communities. The Korap National Park in Cameroon and the Gashaka Gumti National Park in Nigeria included training in leadership roles and

efforts to overcome heavy male biases of power structures (Flintan 2003a). The integration of health, population and capacity building projects into conservation projects addresses the pressure of high fertility on biodiversity, increases effective participation, management and a better understanding and acceptance of conservation messages.

If people's participation is sought, such participation should be defined in a much more fundamental sense than that commonly used in the environmental literature. Participation should move beyond the mere provision of labour and other inputs into projects initiated from outside the community to involve decisions being taken and plans being formulated at the local level (Vivian 1991:7).

The role of community has not been properly unpacked in natural resource conservation. There is a need to explore the conceptual origins of the community, the ways the term has been deployed in writings on resource use in an attempt to analyse those aspects of the term most important to advocates for community role in resource management (Agrawal and Gibson 2004). Three aspects of community are most important to those who advocate a positive role for communities in resource management: community as a small spatial unit, as a homogeneous social structure and as shared norms. The popularity of the view of community as a small spatial unit is traced to the fact that the renewable resources that communities use, manage and sometimes protect, are themselves usually located near territorially fixed homes and settlements. Thus if top-down programmes fail because governments cannot exert their authority from a distance, then the social formations that are located near the resource might work better (Agrawal and Gibson 2004: 157). However, some small territorially contained groups fail to manage resources well compared to transient groups and therefore there seems to be other important processes at work that are not captured by spatial location alone. It is possible that because of the broad geographical spread of some resources (such as forests and watersheds) it may be difficult for small groups with territorial attachments to manage these effectively. The second perception of community as a homogeneous social structure meshes well with beliefs about its spatial boundaries as they are seen to be groups endowed with relatively homogeneous households who possess common characteristics in relation to ethnicity, religion, caste or language. Although such perceived homogeneity is believed to facilitate regular interactions among group members, such groups are also stratified along multiple axes and thus present

multiple interests and actors in conflict situations. It is thus better to focus on institutions that shape the decision making process on natural resource management rather than on community (Agrawal and Gibson 2004).

When communities are perceived as common interests and shared norms because they grow out of shared characteristics, they promote conservation at two levels. First, shared norms may prohibit certain actions through the use of religious sanctions and taboos. In many communities, these impede members from cutting down or killing certain species of trees and animals respectively or harvesting certain resources at particular times of the year. Second, communal norms promote cooperative decision-making over the management and conservation of resources. Yet these same norms present problems in attempts at conservation if they promote exploitation of a resource. In Latin American countries, the land laws of the early colonial period have promoted a strong norm that land is only useful when cleared of trees and used for agriculture. Also in many parts of Africa, wildlife is considered a threat to crops and human lives, not a resource to be conserved (Naughton-Treves 1997; Agrawal and Gibson 2004 citing Marks 1984). The vision of community as the centrepiece of conservation and resource management although attractive and permits easy contestation of dominant narratives that favour state control and privatisation of resources and their management, ignores the critical interests and processes within communities, and between communities and other social actors which ultimately can undermine long term goals of increasing community role in natural resource management.

Community forestry practitioners have failed to recognise in the light of the above that there is conflict inherent in the concept of participation, a failure that has led to problems in the implementation of community forestry programmes (Guijt and Shah 1998; Skutsch 2000). This is because conflict management is considered an essential pre-requisite for any sustainable forest management and may also be aimed at achieving social justice and redistributive equity. Participation in forestry has been used to imply first an involvement of local labour in the physical activities necessary for a tree planting exercise which has already been planned. Second, participation implies involvement in defining local needs regarding trees and tree products. Third, it implies assisting in the selection of tree planting and management strategies to meet such needs, and fourth, empowerment and decision making in all aspects of the planning of the intervention (Skutsch 2000:190). At

whatever level of participation however, practitioners have failed to see any conflict in spite of the fact that the very word 'community' presupposes exclusion of some people or groups as much as it includes others. Conflict may be present at many levels, from intra-household to the international level. Yet such conflict may be categorised into two, those in which the actors are all internal to the local community, and those in which at least some of the actors are external. Within the first category of conflict, agencies who promote participatory community forestry employ the concept of community as homogeneous and thus fail to identify the varying needs, desires and opportunities of the community groups. And if they do, they assume that members within the different groups naturally want the same thing and ignore the possibility that benefits to one group might entail losses to another. Thus agencies do not perceive conflict between individuals or groups within the community concerned. In the second category of conflict, there is an unspoken assumption that the 'participants' were the residents of the community and ignores the fact that there are other interests present as with neighbouring communities, nomads and external power groups such as timber companies. The only conflict that agencies and governments notice here is historical, that between the community and forestry officials (Skutsch 2000). Participatory techniques then have failed to unearth local competition over meanings and values related to the forest, and have relied on inappropriate uniform notions of what kind of community can participate. Different political, social and ethnic conflicts exist over the future of forests that are little understood by external conservationists and the gap between local and outsider views create friction that lead to suspicion of the government and outsider activity (id21 2005a). Conservation efforts can thus be complex and conflict ridden and an imported concept of community participation is woefully unprepared to deal with such problems.

3.4.3 Indigenous/Traditional Forest Management

Renewable natural resources are often governed by complex norms, rules and regulations devised by user groups. Methods of governance are more explicit and more formalised in situations where resources are very scarce, such as in arid lands, although implicit rules also exist in situations of relative abundance. They are also more evident among the disadvantaged and rural dwellers than among the urban rich. This is because the rural communities have limited means of livelihood

other than the direct resource exploitation. These institutions determine how much and what aspects of the resource may be utilised by whom and for what purpose. The question has come up as to what an appropriate management regime is. As already noted, one feature of common pool resources (open access regimes) is one of difficulty in controlling access or excluding others. In this case joint use of the resource involves subtraction from the welfare of others. Within common property regimes, the productivity of the resource should be low as to prevent the creation of an economic surplus (needed to transform the resource into private property). Arguably then, it is the institutional context or set of social relations that defines the property regime or benefit stream to be derived from the resource.

Messerschmidt (1999) locates the potential to save and sustain the world's tree and forest resources in the traditions and actions of rural societies. For him,

There is need for more appropriate, socio-culturally sensitive local means, a combination of finding locally appropriate solutions, appreciating and using the rich indigenous knowledge of ecosystems that local people possess, by encouraging and empowering rural people to work harmoniously and collectively to manage resources or creating suitable incentives for their long term involvement.

(Messerschmidt 1999: 4)

Within Africa, forest management depends on owner rights to the resource. Thus herding groups, pastoralists and sedentary kinship groups have all claimed ownership rights to land and its resources in various ways. Forest management could be done by controlling time or season of harvesting resources, through taboos and religious sanctions (Vivian 1991; Messerschmidt 1999) and through the development, refinement and transmission of environmental knowledge (Vivian 1991:10). Which ever type is institutionalised, it involves the use of a number of strategies depending on the nature of the environment. The grazing patterns of pastoralists are based on sound environmental knowledge that prevents overgrazing. In Botswana, chiefs put a ban on the cutting of certain tree species from the period of land preparation to harvesting of crops in order to prevent hail from causing damage to crops and this is lifted during the slack period to enable tree cutting for house repairs etc. (Shepherd et al. 1999:102). It is also reported that in Senegal, women are given exclusive rights of access to minor forest produce from their

husband's fields in the rainy season but have to compete for access with all other villagers in the dry season (Shepherd et al. 1999: 96). There are again restrictions on days villagers can enter the forest. This is to allow the forest to recuperate. Religious sanctions are also employed in parts of Africa as community elders are believed to draw their authority from gods and the ancestors. Among the Kikuyu of Kenya, calamities in society are attributed to illicit felling of trees, while the Auan in Cote d'Ivoire believe that the threat of over-exploitation of the forest or cultivating on steep slopes will bring a female deity perceived to be dangerous into their midst. In Niger, the sultans of the Zinder once threatened to decapitate anyone who felled any banned tree specie as well as amputate the arm of anyone seen to have mutilated it. Open hunting or gathering seasons were created by placing religious taboos on infringements in some parts of Africa. In Botswana for example it is a taboo to cut female trees during the agricultural season. The Kayapo of the Amazon basin have an incredibly detailed knowledge of the plants, animals and soils of their environment as well as of the best means of managing these in order to compensate for soil deficiencies (Vivian 1991:10).

Management strategies employed by local communities throughout Africa, Asia and Latin America include swidden-fallow, agro-forestry, protection of water sources, use of sacred groves etc. (Rodriguez et al. 1999; Shepherd et al. 1999; Mol and Wiersum 1999). Swidden-fallow systems involve a preservation of undisturbed forest areas for protective purposes, a control over land allotments for forest clearing and agricultural use, control over forest exploitation and regulating and controlling grazing and protection to prevent forest fires (Rodriguez et al. 1999:31). The Amuesha Indians of central Peru practice this system in the form of agro-forestry. They combine annual crops, perennial tree crops and natural forest re-growth based on an intricate knowledge of soil fertility, type, natural vegetation and cropping potential. The authors also cite the mestizo Haustecs of Mexico who operate on communally owned lands, managing primary and secondary forests mixed with coffee and maize. Communities in mountain environments practice management systems that include the turf (northern Utta Pradesh, India), nistar (Madya Pradesh, India) and the tribal (Swat of Pakistan). These systems are directed at controlling the collection of wood products, fodder and forest grazing and involve rotational grazing, deferred grazing and collection of tree tops i.e. pollarding branches for stall feeding (Mol and Wiersum 1999). In Nepal, forest

management involves harvesting only selected products and species, harvesting according to the condition of the product, limiting the amount of product harvested and using watch groups and guards to police the forests.

3.4.4 Gender and Forest Management

Central to all forestry activities has been the issue of gender relations and the role of women. Citing an FAO 1983 report, Dankelman and Davidson (1988: 54) observe that although women in rural areas are directly dependent on forestry-related resources, many forestry projects are designed without mention of women and without any recognition of the impact the proposed activity will have on them. Women's reliance on the forest may be explained in terms of gender differences and their environmental relationships, variables that are noted to be embedded in cultural, social and historical contexts (Flintan 2003a).

Many Integrated Conservation and Development Projects (ICDPs) supported by NGOs and bilateral institutions in the short term focus on a restriction on resource use through protective resources such as the creation of a protected area and the establishment of a group of enforcers. These ICDPs have failed to recognise the different needs, preferences and priorities of women and men in communities and thus projects are biased towards men who are more able to articulate and promote issues that are relevant to them. Flintan (2003a) discusses a fuelwood planting project in Kenya that assumed that women will fulfill their traditional role of providing water for the seedlings. Women refused to put in extra hours to collect water and were not interested in the species planted. Ignoring women's concerns and preferences made them indifferent to the project's success and the seedlings died for lack of water. The second phase which incorporated women's interest of preferred species was a success. Another instance is given of a CARE-supported ICDP in Uganda which also failed because tree planting and species selection were presumed to be a predominantly male activity. As a result, commercial species were chosen over those providing subsistence benefits.

Another gender issue in ICDPs is the fact that they do not take into account women's participation and thus their benefits from projects into account. A USAID funded Conservation of Biodiverse Resource Areas (COBRA) project in Kenya during evaluation in 1995 showed that less than 15% of funds were distributed for projects that directly benefited women's incomes and employment. In Tanzania, a

Selous Conservation Project also failed to involve and benefit women because they could not raise a contribution of 50% of the cost of the project. In addition, husbands were drafted on patrol ten days a month and attended a forty-day training scheme leaving family responsibilities to their wives (Flintan 2003a:16). Women's participation is constrained in many ways. Among others is the competition for land, problems over tenure, lack of time after domestic chores, cultural taboos, lack of familiarity with forestry as well as institutional and organisational support (Dankelman and Davidson 1988; Flintan 2003a).

A lack of consideration and incorporation of gender differences and issues in ICDPs has resulted in a misunderstanding and mistrust between conservation authorities, development organisations and communities, but particularly amongst women, and increased gender inequalities (Flintan 2003b:8-9). There is therefore need to examine the specific problems in gaining or retaining access to land or using other tree products, examine specific time, financial and other factors that constrain women's participation, measures that ensure that women benefit from projects and the different social structures that allow women to participate as individuals or groups (Dankelman and Davidson 1988). Excluding women from a group's decision making bodies could lead to the framing of inappropriate rules and methods of forest protection and benefit sharing and could also create serious gender disparities in costs and benefits from community forestry groups and prove less efficient for forest protection and management. Thus while many community forestry groups have done quite well in restoring the environment, they have been less successful in bringing about women's participation in decision-making, or in ensuring gender equity in the sharing of costs and benefits from forest protection. As a result they have also failed to tap the full potential of the collective effort (id21 2005b).

Gendered concerns, interests and potential costs and benefits from natural resource conservation should ideally inform the participation of both men and women in natural resource management projects. Yet the various projects outlined above seem to evolve out of the WED perspective of political ecology in which women's concerns are paramount. Projects need to make the conceptual shift to GED so as to involve both genders utilizing both the ecological knowledge and labour time for their own benefit.

3.5 Conclusion

The use of natural resources among and between groups of people has generated conflicts and sometimes resulted in degradation of the resources. Political ecological perspectives have advanced different explanations of and ways of dealing with the resource conflicts and potential environmental degradation. Of particular importance to the present study is the GED perspective that places access, control and use of natural resources for development within the context of social relations of power between men and women. This helps to understand the dynamics of gender inequalities and how such inequalities impact upon the human-environment relations. Environmental narratives and forest management projects need to address the issue of power, gender inequality and resistance. This chapter thus sets the stage for a review of the study country specific political ecological issues in forestry and livelihoods. It also provides a platform for analysing and understanding gender and class environmental relations addressed in later chapters as well as community efforts at ensuring ecological sustainability.

CHAPTER FOUR

The Political Economy of Forestry in Ghana

4.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the politics of forestry in Ghana in the light of the British colonial and postcolonial forestry agendas. These have systematically eroded community rights to land and forests through policies of appropriation and alienation. This thesis investigates attempts by both the colonial British and post colonial administrations to legislate on land and forests to identify whether they are means for dispossessing indigenes of the basis of livelihood and to accumulate capital for the interest of social classes within the world system. Postcolonial forestry agendas have been set by colonial policies. Contemporary efforts at collaboration with communities seem to be merely rhetorical rather than real. In this chapter I review literature that deals with land alienation policies of both the British colonial and post independence administrations. In such literature attention is drawn towards the effect of these policies on particularly the agrarian livelihood activities of rural communities. However, little attention is given to the differential impact of such land policies on men and women and different groups of men and women who make up these communities. This is because they have been grouped as a homogenous community. Yet these community members have different interests and concerns and relations of power affect access to land differently. Hence both colonial and post colonial land policies affect poorer and weaker members of communities more than the less poor and more powerful. I provide a macro-political framework within which the whole study can be understood particularly as it situates rural livelihoods firmly within the workings of the capitalist system of production. First, the chapter introduces Ghana as the study country, examining the structure of the economy and demarcation of forest reserves.

4.2 The Study Country

The Republic of Ghana is located along the west coast of Africa, bordered on the north by Burkina Faso, on the east by Togo, on the south by the Gulf of Guinea and on the west by Cote d'Ivoire. Its southern coast extends between latitude $4\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}\text{N}$ at Cape Three Points and $6\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}\text{N}$ in the extreme east. Ghana thus virtually sits on the equator. From the coast, the country extends inland to about

11°N covering a distance of 672km from south to north (www.ghanahighcommission-canada.com).

Map 4.1 Position and Size of Ghana



Source: <http://www.theodore.com/maps>

4.2.1 The Economy

Ghana's economy is generally based on the production of a few agricultural and mineral products. The rate of growth of real gross domestic product (GDP),

estimated at 3.7% in 2000 has improved steadily to 5.8% in 2004. Real per capita GDP growth also improved marginally over the same period (ISSER 2004; GoG 2005). The growth is in spite of the fact that the achieved performance fell short of expected targets in the years running up to 2000. Between 2001 and 2004 however, actual real GDP growth rates either equaled or exceeded the targets. For instance in 2004, the target was 5.2% but the actual growth rate was 5.8% and this is seen as the most impressive performance of the economy since the 8.6% real growth rate recorded in 1984. The country's growth performance has been achieved in an environment of instability. The growth record was considerably uneven in the 1970s after a reasonably high rate in the 1950s and early 1960s but this only begun to stabilise by 1984. Years of negative growth in the country have been associated with changes in government accompanied by explosive policy changes or reversals. The significance of policy regimes to the growth performance has depended, to a large extent, on how those policies led to the infusion of new capital into the economy. The growth recorded in the early 1960s was achieved with policies of import-substitution. Growth over the past two decades (starting in the mid 1980s) has been associated with the liberal reform programme or Economic Recovery Programme (ERP), with support from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank. This policy has been succeeded by the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP), geared towards correcting a number of structural imbalances in order to engender a sustained and healthy economic growth; HIPC¹ and GPRSPs². The country's economy however, continues to revolve around cocoa, timber and mining. Tables 4.1 and 4.2 provide a brief summary of the economy of Ghana in recent years.

¹ This is an acronym for the Highly Indebted Poor Country Initiative.

² This is an acronym for Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers. It is a policy option used by the international financial institutions to determine debt financing and relief for countries.

Table 4.1 Performance of the Ghanaian Economy. Selected Economic Indicators 2002-2004

	2000 (%)	2001 (%)	2002 (%)	2003 (%)	2004 (%)
National Gross Domestic Product (GDP)					
Real GDP growth	3.7	4.2	4.5	5.2	5.8
Real per capita GDP growth	-	-	1.9	2.5	2.7
Sectoral Growth					
Agriculture	2.1	4.0	4.4	6.1	7.5
Industry	3.8	2.9	4.7	5.1	5.1
Services	5.4	5.1	4.7	4.7	4.7

Source: ISSER 2004; GoG 2005

Table 4.2 GDP by Sector at 1993 constant prices, 2000-2004 (% of Total)

Sector	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Agriculture of which	36	35.9	35.9	36.1	36.7
Crops and Livestock	24.3	24.5	24.7	24.7	24.6
Cocoa Production and Marketing	3.5	3.3	3.27	3.5	4.2
Forestry and Logging	3.5	3.6	3.58	3.6	3.6
Fishing	4.6	4.5	4.35	4.4	4.3
Industry of which	25.2	24.9	24.9	24.9	24.7
Mining and Quarrying	5.6	5.3	5.25	5.2	5.2
Manufacturing	9.2	9.1	9.15	9.1	9.0
Electricity and Water	2.8	2.89	2.56	2.5	2.5
Construction	7.9	7.9	7.96	8.0	8.1
Services of which	29.7	29.9	30	29.8	29.5
Transport, Storage and communication	4.8	4.8	4.87	4.9	4.9
Wholesale and Retail Trade, Restaurants and Hotels	6.8	7.0	6.96	7.0	6.9
Finance, Insurance, Real Estates and Businesses	4.3	4.4	4.33	4.3	4.3
Government Services	11.0	11.0	11.0	10.8	10.7
Community, Social and Personal Services	1.9	1.9	1.93	1.9	1.9
Producers of Private Non-Profit Services	0.9	0.9	0.89	0.9	0.9
Sub Total	90.9	90.7	90.8	90.8	90.9
Net Indirect taxes	9.2	9.3	9.27	9.1	9.1
GDP in Purchasers Value	100	100	100	100	100

Source: ISSER 2004; Aryeetey and Kanbur 2005

4.2.1.1 Agriculture and Related Activities

About 56% of Ghana's workforce is engaged in small-scale farming in staple food crops and cocoa. The agricultural sector in 2000 contributed 36% to overall GDP. In 2001, this sector grew by 4.0% then to 7.5% in 2004. Although crops and livestock contribute more than 75% of agricultural GDP, it is the cocoa sub-sector that is central to the economy both for its contribution to export performance (60%) and tax revenue, and for its generation of rural income and employment (Rothchild and Gyimah-Boadi 1986; GoG 2005; <http://www.ghana.co.uk>). Cocoa production and marketing decreased in 2002 to 3.27% of GDP from the previous year's figure of 3.3% but increased to 3.5% of GDP in 2003 and to 4.2% in 2004. Cocoa processing into butter, cake and liquor increased by 62% and account for 30% of total foreign revenue from processed and semi-processed products. Other agricultural products exported include coconuts and other palm products, sheanuts and coffee. The most important food products are cassava, maize, plantain, groundnuts and yams. Livestock including cattle, goats, sheep and chicken, are also raised and together with fish form important dietary staples. In spite of the progress made in crop farming, there has been little technological innovation whilst wide gender disparities abound in access to and control over land and inputs, including extension services. These do not provide adequate incentive for injecting capital in agriculture generally.

4.2.1.2 Timber

The Ghanaian economy is also based on timber production most of which come from areas outside forest reserves although production from reserves is increasing. In the year 2002 alone, the country produced about 22M cubic meters of round wood (<http://uk.encarta.msn.com>). Forestry in that year contributed to 3.585% of GDP and has since improved to 3.6% in the two consecutive years following.

4.2.1.3 Industry

Ghana's industrial base is relatively advanced when compared with other African countries. In 2003, this sector grew by 5.1%, an improvement of 0.3% over the 2002 growth rate. In spite of this improvement, this falls short of the projected 12% annual growth to raise industry's share of GDP to 37% by 2007 (ISSER 2004). Manufacturing is the main sub-sector contributing some 9.0% to GDP in 2004

(GoG 2005). Establishments are generally small-scaled although large scale ones exist. It is estimated that in 1996 the main items of this sub-sector included petroleum products (19%), food products (15%), textiles (13.7%), beverages (8.1%), tobacco (7.7%) and wood products (7.2%) (Adams 2002). Obstacles to growth in the manufacturing sub-sector persist. These include lack of access to credit, unreliable energy supply and weak management capacity. A decline in electricity generation of about 19.1% in 2002 had a broad impact on economic activity while sub-sectors suffer from dumping and pirated and smuggled products with the textile sub-sector most affected (ISSER 2004). The construction sub-sector also made significant strides between 2000 and 2004. This was the result of increased investments especially in the roads and real estate sectors of the economy where funding support from local financial markets, remittances, as well as government and donor sources were available.

4.2.1.4 Mining

The country's principal minerals include gold, diamonds, manganese ore and bauxite and these are produced and exported. This sub-sector has witnessed a resurgence of mining activity with the merger of Ashanti Goldfields and AngloGold. The past decade has witnessed the mining sub-sector attracting over 56% of total foreign direct investment into the country which is used for mine expansion and rehabilitation, mineral exploration and mines development mostly in the gold mining sector (ISSER 2004).

4.2.1.5 Services

The service sector stagnated between 2002 and 2004, growing at a rate of 4.7% in spite of the fact that this is the second biggest contributor to GDP. This sector is driven by the wholesale and retail trade as well as restaurants and hotels sub-sectors which together account for about 60% of the contribution of all services to total production in the economy. The social services sub-sector emphasise education and health issues. In 2003, an education policy sought to address rural-urban inequities, gender inequalities and an upgrading of thirty secondary schools in all ten regions with finance from the HIPC funds. In health, the thrust of policy is in the expansion of coverage and improvement in the quality of services and infrastructure with focus of attention in 2003 on the National Health Insurance

Scheme (NHIS). However sources of funding for the NHIS remain unclear as there has been opposition from some quarters on the proposed levy of 2.5% on expenditures and transactions and another 2.5% of workers' contribution to Social Security and National Insurance Trust (SSNIT) to fund the establishment of the scheme. Health interventions have focused on sexually transmitted diseases (STD's), malaria, guinea worm, tuberculosis, reproductive and child health, the expanded programme of immunization (EPI) and emergency care (ISSER 2004). The financial services sub-sector has failed to impact on the agricultural and manufacturing sectors.

4.2.2 Forest Reserves in Ghana

Ghana straddles two broad ecological zones: the moist tropical high forest in the south and the savannah woodlands in the north. The high forest zone contains wet and moist evergreen, moist and dry semi-deciduous and southern marginal forests. While the wet evergreen is floristically the most rich, the southern marginal is generally species poor. Together with the moist semi-deciduous forests, the moist evergreen forests are the most important for commercial timber species. The High forest zone covers all of the Western and parts of the Brong Ahafo, Ashanti, Central, Eastern and Volta regions. It is estimated that about 7% of the total land area of the country is primary closed forest with the rest degraded through a process of deforestation. This is however debatable as the nature and extent of pristine forest cover as well as deforestation rates are challenged (Fairhead and Leach 1996).

Kotey et al. (1998) and Donkor and Vlosky (2003) present a categorisation of forest reserves under the Forest Services Division (formerly Forestry Department) of the Forestry Commission. This is shown in table 4.3 below.

Table 4.3 Types of Forest Reserves under the Forest Services Division

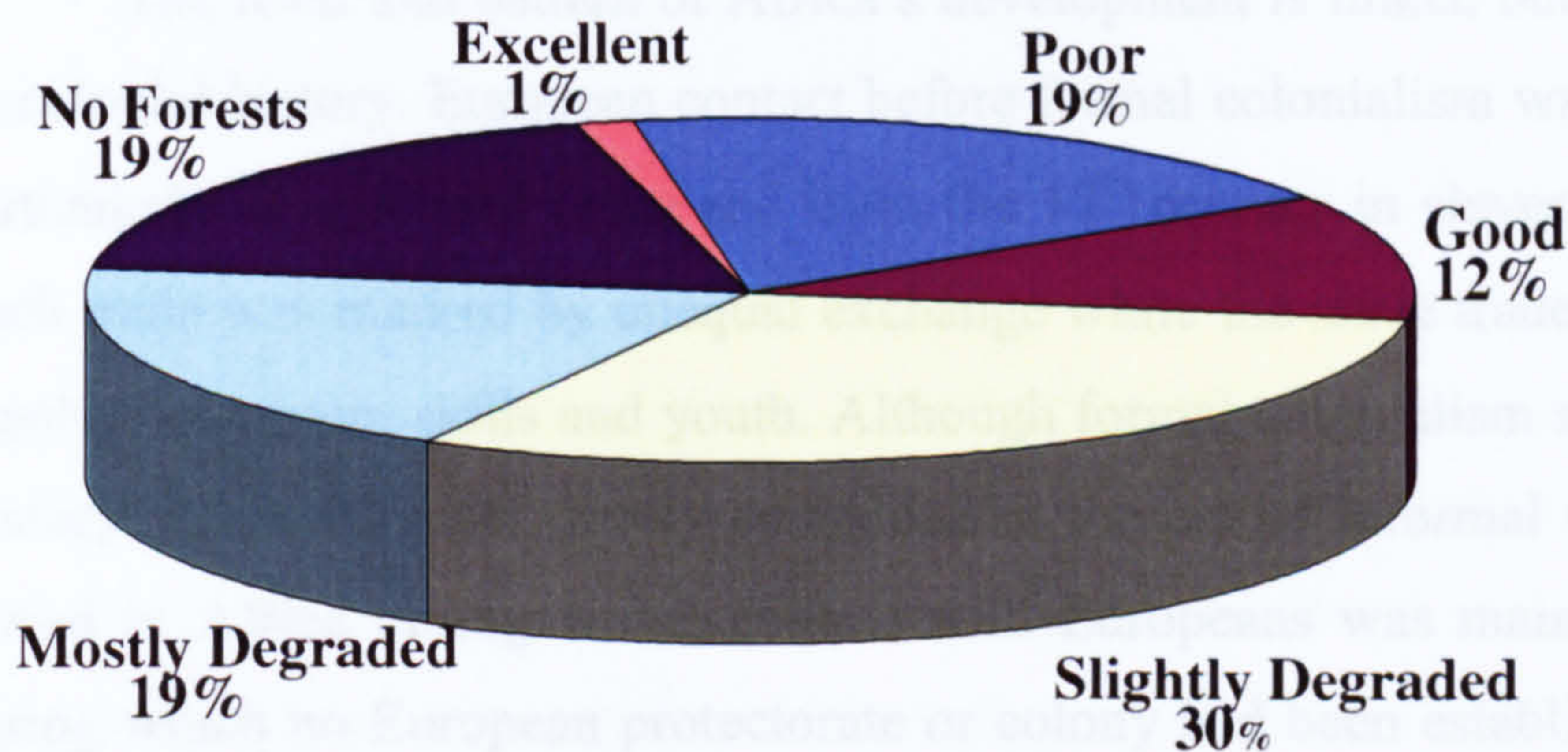
Category	% of Total Forest Reserves
Permanent Protection	22
Convalescence	7
Conversion	8
Non-inventoried Conversion	16
Timber Productive	47
Total	100

Source: Kotey et al. (1998); Donkor and Vlosky (2003)

These reserves were originally established to promote ecological stability, watershed and windbreaks, while seeking to guarantee the flow of goods and services for socio-economic development. Permanently protected reserves cover hill and swamp sanctuaries, shelter belts and special biological protected areas etc. where logging is permanently excluded. Convalescence reserves have reduced stocks but are considered capable of rehabilitation within one felling cycle. Conversion reserves require planting and it is proposed that the non-inventoried areas fall into this category. They are high risk areas with few residual natural trees. All the reserves are thus in various states or conditions. Only three reserves out of the current two hundred and fourteen, representing 1.4% of reserves is said to be in excellent state. Here, there are very few signs of human disturbance or fire damage. There is also good canopy and presence of virgin or late secondary forest throughout. Twenty five (11.68%) reserves are said to be in good shape with only about 10% heavily disturbed. Here, damage due to logging is light or restricted while fire damage is non-existent or at worst peripheral. Some reserves are said to be slightly degraded (65 representing 30.37% of the total). Here, such reserves are obviously degraded or disturbed. Although they are usually patchy, they still have good forest predominating. Fifty per cent of such reserves are slightly disturbed with a broken canopy while about 25% have serious scars with poor regeneration capacity. Forty one reserves (19.16%) are considered as mostly degraded. These have about 50% serious scars with heavily disrupted canopies. The forest may also be lightly burnt throughout. 'Bad' forest is thus predominant throughout such

reserves. A further 40 reserves (18.69%) is considered to be in very bad or poor state. Here, some reserves have less than 25% coherent canopies whilst in others more than half is seriously scared with poor or no forest regeneration. Some reserves in this category are almost all heavily burnt as well. Finally about 40 other reserves (18.69%) have no significant forests left. (See fig 4.1 below)

Figure 4.1 Conditions of Reserves under Forest Services Division



Apart from these reserves, one can also identify off reserve forest-farm mosaics in the country. These may be patches of old forest growth, secondary forests that have regenerated from agricultural lands, forests strips along most rivers and streams, isolated trees left standing in agricultural fields or tree plantations that cover a few hectares at a time in some farmland areas. Off reserve resources are not strictly under the management of the Forestry Department but the control of individuals and communities.

4.3 The Colonial History and Capitalist Expansion in Africa

A historical analysis of contemporary activities and events enables an exploration of the processes and issues that shape and determine the opportunities available to communities. It also makes it possible to explore the continuities and dislocations found in the pursuit of an activity or the occurrence of an event. A brief retrospective examination of Africa's colonial experiences allows a deeper

understanding and appreciation of the myriad of issues that come to bear on livelihoods, natural resource management and rural transformations. One such issue is the colonial land policy couched in various guises but aimed at appropriating land from rural people. That has been done in the name of development and conservation of the environment but which ensured a change in the mode of production and therefore the livelihoods of a lot of rural people. In simple terms, the forestry policy in conjunction with other administrative and political tools was designed to enhance the integration of rural communities into colonial capitalist production – mining, wage work and many others.

The level and pattern of Africa's development is linked but not reducible to its colonial history. European contact before formal colonialism was based on trade particularly in gold and ivory and from the 17th century in slaves (Tordoff 1984). Such trade was marked by unequal exchange while the slave trade decimated local supplies of labour, skills and youth. Although formal colonialism started in the 19th century, it has its roots deeply embedded in the era of informal colonialism. The period in Africa during which contact with Europeans was mainly for trade and during which no European protectorate or colony had been established is regarded as one of informal colonialism. Formal colonialism was established in 1885 after the partitioning and establishment of protectorates at the Berlin conference of 1884 (Crowder 1968). In the West Africa region the period from 1885 to 1919 witnessed European powers trying to establish themselves through conquest and pacification of indigenous Africans and to establish systems of administration. Thus the formal colonial rule started in 1919 and might be seen to culminate in 1939 before the Second World War. The years leading to 1960 became a transition to decolonisation (Crowder 1968; Howard 1978).

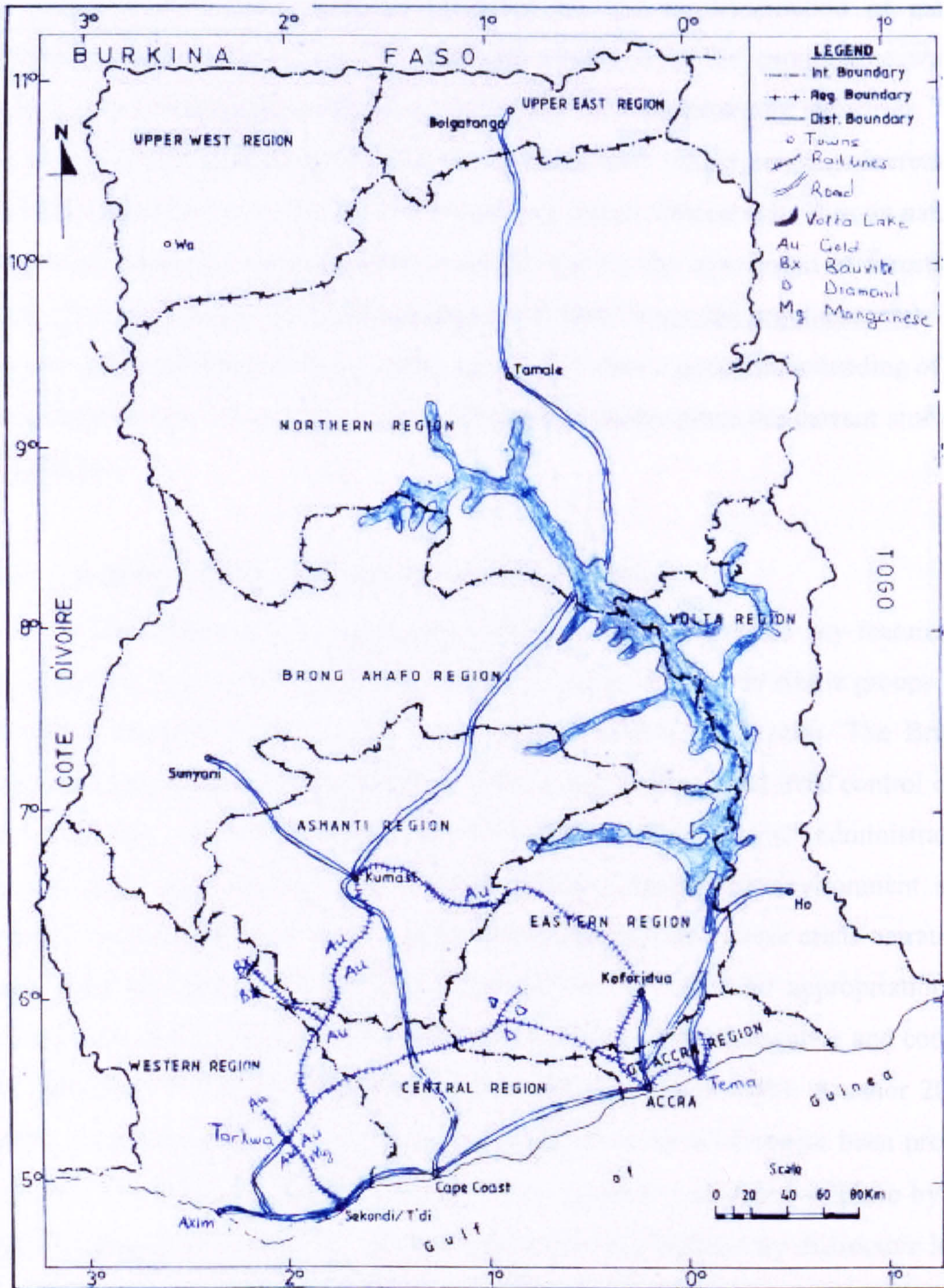
Questions have been raised about Europe's motives for acquiring territories and colonies in Africa (Tordoff 1984; Mamdani 1996; Thomson 2000) and debate continues as to motives of colonists. Were they on a civilising mission, for trade or acquired colonies for strategic considerations? The British for instance established colonies and protectorates in West Africa as a means of protecting their interests against French and German competition (Tordoff 1984). Whatever their interests, there is consensus among scholars that formal colonialism was used as an ideology and system of control and to develop an economic system that incorporated West Africa as subordinate to the interests of Europe (Taylor 1991; Thomson 2002). This

subordination has been described by Taylor (1991) to be reflected in the process of incorporation of Africa as the reorientation of traditional production systems towards the world market. Tordoff (1984) echoes similar sentiments when he declares the African colonies were established to prolong the life of moribund European capitalism or to help in its transformation. The European capitalist system incorporated Africa as it became increasingly the supplier of raw materials needed for industrialisation in addition to serving as a protected market for Europe's manufactured goods.

To aid the agenda of the capitalist economic system, a number of policies were embarked upon by the colonialists. First the political order of the colonies involved was overhauled using both direct and indirect rule depending on the structure of the colony and the administrative strength of the colonizer (Tordoff 1984; Taylor 1991). This involved a dismantling of traditional political structures and in their place various degrees of centralised systems were established. Other European powers had paternalistic, violent and more coercive strategies. A systematic policy of land alienation was employed in the form of graduated taxes and various forms of coercion undermined the subsistence capacity of traditional labour processes. Africans were then available for hire as wage labourers on settler farms, plantations and mining sites (Howard, 1978; Crisp 1984; Tordoff 1984; Taylor 1991; Mamdani 1996; Amanor 2003; Abdul-Korah 2006). In the Gold Coast (Ghana), British policy of increasing taxes ensured that people moved from cultivating the land into the mining areas of the south west to address the labour shortages that expatriate mining companies faced. Labour was also forced south from the Northern Territories (Crisp 1984). This policy suited capitalist production as it set in motion the process of creating proletariats as suitable labour force for capitalism. The colonial and imperial incorporation of Africa hence destroyed previous subsistence economies that had non-capitalist practices and restructured them to be market oriented (Howard, 1978; Taylor 1991). Colonial policy of demarcating forest areas as reserves also helped to alienate farmers and encourage uninterrupted exploitation of resources. The period between 1874 and 1939 for instance saw Ghana being ushered into formal forestry with the emergence of trade in timber and the introduction and rapid expansion of cocoa production. This period also witnessed the establishment of the Forestry Department and a string of forest reserves across the high forest zone (Kotey et al. 1998). Although reservation in

large measure protected watersheds and made cocoa production conducive, colonial off-reserve policy encouraged the exploitation of forests prior to its conversion into cocoa farms (Smith 1996; Kotey et al. 1998; Amanor 2003, 1999; deGrassi 2003). Third, the colonialist developed transport infrastructure that tended towards moving unprocessed raw materials from their production points to ports for export to Europe (Thomson 2000). Ghana's rail lines under colonial policy moved from the port of Takoradi into mining and cocoa areas of the forest zone and back with a branch terminating at the port of Tema. Very few lines of communication were built to enhance internal or regional trading links (see map 4.2).

Map 4.2 Early Transportation Routes in Gold Coast (Ghana)



Source: Adapted from Udo 1978: 59; Kyere 1998: 43.

Map 4.2 highlights the pattern of Africa's incorporation into the capitalist world economic system. This persisted into postcolonial times with cocoa, mining and timber being the major export products of Ghana. These activities have been accelerated particularly since the introduction of structural reforms under the

Economic Recovery Programme in the early 1980s. These reforms involved policy reforms of sectors with detailed schedules for the implementation of macro economic policy changes. In fact one key objective of the programme was a revitalization of agriculture, forestry, mining and the manufacturing industries. This led to a recovery in the exploitation of resources with timber earnings increasing from 5.9% in 1986 to 13.2% in 1990 (Anane not dated). Ghana still relies on natural forest for the supply of raw timber materials and on the conversion of forestland into cash crop farms and surface mining (FAO: <http://www.fao.org/document>). The various stages of Ghana's forest policy agenda provides a good understanding of the political economy of forestry in the country and it helps place the current study in perspective.

4.4 Land Rights, Alienation and Reservation

Prior to formal colonialism, the Gold Coast had developed key features of its economic structure. Transactions in agricultural land between ethnic groups had grown in response to the growth in the export market of oilpalm. The British colonial administration that established itself in this territory had little control over its economic base. From the late 19th century the colonial administration manufactured narratives of an impending calamity facing the environment as a result of inappropriate cultivation techniques of the African. These crisis narratives were used to justify not only British occupation but also the appropriation of uncultivated land as state or crown land as well as attempts to regulate and control the activities of African production (Smith 1996; de Grassi 2003; Amanor 2003, 2005). Such environmental discourses on degradation have of course been proved untenable elsewhere in the literature. The conservation system put in place by the British colonial administrators for the Gold Coast was defined by distinctive local conditions and indirect rule through native authorities and local autonomy. Between 1874 and 1927, the chiefs of the Gold Coast retained a degree of internal autonomy and this was strengthened by the Native Administrative Ordinance of 1927 (Native Administration Ordinance 1927). In some parts of the northern territories 'clan elders whose authority was primarily religious were attributed executive powers alien to their societies. The British in this case needed and found someone with traditional authority of some kind to act as intermediary between their inadequately staffed administrative service and the people' (Crowder 1968: 226). Even in

Ashanti which had a strong chieftaincy structure, the British appointed some Divisional chiefs for Kumasi in their attempt to introduce indirect rule. The invented traditions of the colonial era thus transferred power from communities to appointed chiefs. Chiefs had monopoly control over land and the process of land sales particularly in agricultural production. The shift in commodity relations from land purchase and hired labour to sharecropping relations in agricultural production benefited chiefs in terms of access to migrant labour and transformed them from land sellers into major cocoa landowners (Howard 1978; Amanor 1999). A number of land bills were introduced into the Gold Coast in an attempt to alienate land from the rural people.

An attempt in 1894 and 1897 to introduce two bills namely the Crown Lands Bill and the Public Lands Bill respectively, were rescinded. Chiefs, local intelligentsia and nationalists as well as certain British capitalist interests fiercely resisted the proposed legislation and sought clarification of the colonial land policy (Smith 1996; Amanor 1999; 2003). While the Crown Lands Bill wanted to vest waste land, forests and minerals in the British crown so that the latter could have rights to grant concessions to international capital on unoccupied land (Crown Lands Bill 1894), the Public Lands Bill gave the colonial government rights of administration over public land (Public Lands Bill 1897). Gold Coasters were given settler rights of occupation with chiefs recognised as having rights to the land and with powers to grant land to other Africans but not to Europeans. Members of families and stools still maintained usufruct rights to land but did not let chiefs have right to grant lands to the European capitalist investor.

In 1900 and 1910, the Concessions Ordinance and a Forest Bill respectively were promulgated. The Ordinance was an attempt to regulate security of title to concessions³ and the number of concessions to facilitate the collection of royalties. As such the colonial government did not show any keen interest in controlling the way in which forest resources were exploited in terms of the operations of timber firms. The Forest Bill (Forest Bill 1910) also sought to empower the colonial government to alienate land for the establishment of forest reserves through the compulsory acquisition of what was viewed by colonial authorities as waste and

³ This is a piece of forest land given to a logger (concessionaire) to extract timber over a period. Loggers go through a system of bidding to gain logging contracts with the Ministry with oversight responsibility for land, mineral resources and forestry. They are expected to pay royalties to the state on timber extracted from their concessions.

unoccupied land. It made provision for the establishment of forest reserves, their conservation and management and to regulate dealings in forest produce. The Bill placed restrictions on natives not to exercise their inherent rights of collecting forest produce in the reserves without permission from forestry officials and on land owners to prevent them from selling land also without permission. The Ordinance and Bill reopened old arguments about the right of government to legislate in land and its attempt to assume an authority which belonged to natives alone (Howard 1978; Agbosu 1983; Amanor 1999). The legislation was also opposed by the elites of the day who contended that there was no forest degradation to warrant the Bills. Local opposition to the Bill was perhaps due to either a desire to protect the vested economic interests of the native middle class and the traditional authorities; the inability to identify the dangers posed by the activities of private investors whose primary objectives were for profit maximisation, or the inability to appreciate the essential dichotomy between the long term objectives of the colonial government and the objectives of private European industrialists and entrepreneurs (Agbosu 1983:183-184). The colonial government responded and placed land under the authority of chiefs who were responsible for rural administration. This came into effect under the 1927 new Forests Ordinance (The Forests Ordinance 1927). The ordinance maintained the rights of ownership of chiefs over land and forest resources but transferred management and control to the state. It was an act that disempowered rural farmers but empowered chiefs to expropriate forest resources (Amanor 2005). The chiefs responded to first, pre-empt more restrictive government control, by constituting the majority of the forest reserves through by-laws under powers given them by Native Administration Ordinance promulgated in the same year (de Grassi 2003). The chiefs could also gain valuable revenue from the royalties which would be lost if local citizens took up the land for farming purposes (Amanor 1999).

The 1927 Forests Ordinance differed in significant ways from its predecessors for it emphasised the management of land and left ownership issues untouched. Drafters of this ordinance used arguments based on the destruction of forests and its effects on diminishing resources as well as negative impact on agricultural conditions of neighbouring land. Thus colonial administrators invoked the scale effects and public goods nature of forests in order to justify to their recalcitrant subjects, the administrations appropriation of land management (de

Grassi 2003). Prior to this period, the Forestry Department had been established in 1909 to encourage forest reservation under Native Authority in order to maintain a favourable climate for the cultivation of cocoa (Smith 1996) and to exercise the management and control of land and forests on behalf of the state. In 1939, there was renewed emphasis on timber harvesting in support of the war effort. In this direction, timber production rather than environmental protection dominated the colonial forestry agenda within the Gold Coast. Two types of forest reserves were therefore in existence during this period: the so-called ordinance reserves (managed directly by government) and byelaw reserves (created by chiefs and managed by local chiefs under the direction of Forestry Sector Agencies) (Sasu 2004). The management of byelaw reserves was fraught with difficulties with respect to protection against encroachers and illegal loggers. This was perhaps because it was difficult for community members to prevent their neighbours and relatives from harvesting resources from them. Between the 1940s and 1950s therefore all reserves created under byelaws were placed under Ordinance without consultations with local communities who owned the land and forests. The major shifts in forest management in Ghana have thus been from initial attempts at colonizing through collaboration with chiefs to dictatorial rather than democratic management.

The 1948 Forest Trees and Timber Ordinance sought to regulate logging and prohibit wasteful and uneconomic cutting and felling. It also created conditions for the concession system to be extended outside forest reserves on to farmlands (Amanor 2003). Concerns for the scale of operation outside the reserves in an attempt to open up areas for cocoa cultivation led to the enactment of a Forest Policy in the same year. The 1948 Forest Policy therefore sought to create a framework for salvage felling in which timber concessionaires moved on to new acquired farmland in the forest frontier areas to clear valuable timber trees before farmers were allowed to enter the land. The policy thus envisaged a controlled and progressive utilization without replacement of the remainder of the forest resources hitherto not dedicated to forestry. The salvage felling policies of this period changed the relationship between foresters, farmers and loggers as the former were seen by farmers to be working in the interest of loggers.

4.4.1 The Post Colonial State and Forestry

Post colonial land policies have arguably reflected and followed many of its predecessors. Successive postcolonial administrations, however, distributed land that had been alienated to party activists and friends including foreign companies to create elite land owners and a rural bourgeoisie (Ninson 1989; Amanor 1999). Post colonial governments eager to pursue nation building increasingly regarded timber and cocoa harvests as national economic resources to be extracted cheaply from rural areas to fund national development drives (Ninson 1989; Amanor 1999; Kasanga and Kotey 2001). State machinery in the years following independence in 1957 was therefore used to appropriate large tracts of land in the rural areas towards the nation's development effort. These went into capital intensive infrastructural developments such as the Volta Hydro-Electric Project, import substitution industries, the Tema harbour and universities and colleges; the establishment of state farms to feed not only the nation but the newly established industries; real estate development; and timber and mining. This led to an increased centralization of land and natural resource administration in the state. Kasanga and Kotey (2001:2) cite Ofori's (1973) observation that:

Large tracts of land countrywide were acquired for state farms and factories without compensation paid to farmers who were cultivating in the respective areas. Although protests were often made by farmers to the District Commissioner, political pressure was used to let farmers abandon the fight to regain their land. In a number of instances they were employed to work on the state farms as compensation.

There arose a new petty bourgeoisie that was interested in capitalist farming in the north of the country in the early to mid 1970s as a result of the then government's Operation Feed Yourself (OFY) policy. This was a strategy aimed at reducing the cost of imported food items by making Ghanaians self sufficient in food production, and improving the nation's balance of payment position. Appropriated public lands were given to indigenous Ghanaians to engage in large scale farming. Beneficiaries were mainly 'senior civil servants, politicians, top army and police officers, contractors, business executives and the land administrators' (Kasanga and Kotey 2001:23). It was also during this period that the state encouraged expatriate firms to invest their profits in farms. Although only a few firms responded to the call, it nevertheless led to the establishment of the Twifo Oil

Palm Plantation (TOPP), the Benso Oil Palm Plantation (BOPP), SCOA Farms, Ejura State Farms, Ghana Industrial Farms and many others (Ninson 1989). It was also during this period that large irrigation projects were established (e.g. Vea, Tono and Weija) to encourage vegetable and rice farming; projects that displaced a great number of peasant farmers. In most of these farm projects, compensation was not paid to farmers already settled on the lands expropriated and they were lucky if they found jobs in the projects as 'out grower' or 'contract farmers'⁴. In the state machinery's efforts at appropriating land for the development effort after independence, neither the community in which the land was situated nor the wider public was consulted in any way or offered an opportunity to express a position on the necessity or desirability of the proposed acquisition.

Indeed, usually the first time the owner of a land, or a person who has an interest in the land, becomes aware that his land has been compulsorily acquired is when he becomes aware of the publication of an executive instrument or when he sees some workmen enter onto the land pursuant to an executive instrument

(Kasanga and Kotey 2001:24, citing Kotey 1996).

Successive governments thus enacted a number of Acts and Policies to this effect and sometimes at the point of antagonising the chiefs who could be useful partners in development.

The government of the Convention People's Party (CPP) under Nkrumah made concerted efforts to eradicate the powers of chiefs to extend its own control over the countryside. Through a series of laws from 1958 to 1962, Nkrumah's state usurped from chiefs the power to collect all revenues and manage all lands. The Stool Lands Act was enacted by the CPP government in 1960. It followed the Ashanti Stool Land Act and the Akim Abuakwa (Stool Revenue) Act in 1958 that placed the administration of stool revenues in the hands of a receiver of stool lands revenue and to allow the president to declare any stool land vested in the office of the president when it appeared to be in the public interest (Amanor 1999). With the Ashanti and Akim Abuakwa Acts, the legal interest in land went to government whilst the beneficiary interest went to the community. In practice however, the

⁴ Contract farming is a way of binding the peasantry to commodity markets and agricultural authorities. It creates linkages that force peasants to produce specific crops in compliance with specific technical recommendations. Peasants must also sell to the project marketing authority at dictated prices (see Amanor, 1994). In this study, contract farming is used interchangeably with out-grower scheme.

government became the absolute landlord and controlled all the management powers including the collection and distribution of revenue to the exclusion of all others.

There were three important acts in 1962, the Administration of Lands Act, the Concessions Act and the State Lands Act. Whereas the Administration of Lands Act was more like the Stool Lands Act of 1960 in the sense that it vested all lands in the president, it differed in that the administration of stool revenue now came under the authority of central government which was empowered to determine the proportion of revenues that went to the chiefs (Administration of Lands Act, 1962). The Concessions Act vested in the office of the president to be held in trust for stools all rights in timber and minerals. This act effectively denied farmers rights to the economic benefit from trees on their land. It was used to promote the interests of the entrepreneurial class that had supported the CPP and who had been agitating for the indigenisation of the timber industry (Amanor 1999). In spite of this Act, in many areas, small scale extraction of timber on farmlands by pitsawyers and chainsaw operators who later came to replace them, continued until the 1990s. The State Lands Act also enabled government to acquire any land in the public interest and established the modalities for the process of compulsory acquisition (State Lands Act, 1962). In 1962 therefore, every effort was made by the then administration to appropriate land in the interest of the new state but at the cost of alienating the mass of rural people whose livelihoods directly depended on such lands. The state urged domestic processing of timber, regulated and nationalised the timber industry and prioritized cutting forests in order to establish large food plantations and generate income (de Grassi 2003:10). The Forest Protection Decree of 1974 and its subsequent amendment the Forest Protection Law of 1986 went a step further to curb all rights of access of local communities to the resources of the reserves as they ensured that reserves were subject to admitted rights and were to be managed for the benefit of such communities (Forest Protection Decree, 1974). Forest fringe communities thus could not engage in any activity within the reserves without prior written permission from the Forestry Department. They saw such regulation as a removal of their rights and benefits and an expropriation of their land and forests.

Centralised control over forest resources was thus established by the 1960s and subsequent political regimes utilized the centralised forestry apparatus to

exploit timber resources and forestland for private benefit. In spite of claims of economic and environmental public welfare, only narrow interests benefited from the post-independence centralised structure of forestry policy, legislation and management (de Grassi 2003:12). As a result of increasing centralisation of land and natural resource administration in the state, local community capacity was not built and this led to a lack of local capacity to manage lands and forest resources. This situation persists in the contemporary period with the state making belated attempts to involve local communities in the management of forestland and resources as spelt out in the current Forest and Wildlife Policy (1994). But co-management efforts have not yielded any positive results because of distrust of rural people of the state.

4.4.2 Restructuring Forestry under Structural Adjustment Policies

Favours to political clienteles led to a mismanagement of the forestry sector. This mismanagement resulted in low royalty payments, reductions in the felling cycles, non-payment of compensation to farmers for damage to crops and loss of revenue; a situation that continued until the economic collapse of the late 1970s and early 1980s (de Grassi 2003). Economic recession and the lack of capital for rehabilitation of equipment sent many national timber companies into collapse and this led to a decline of export earnings from 81% in 1971 to only 21% in 1982 (Amanor 1999:66 citing Friends of the Earth 1992). The Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC) administration (the government during the forestry and economic restructuring period) was faced with broad pressures and sector specific incentives to reform forestry industry and management. The government failed to decentralise forestry and seeking to capture a greater share of domestic resources for itself and the industry, rather centralised regulations and enforcement in the face of a repressed and fragmented opposition. In the 1980s and early 1990s, the regime was faced with domestic pressures for decentralisation and administrative reforms to deal with a shaky financial base, pressures that led to cuts in costs by shedding sectors through privatization or devolution of management responsibilities to District Assemblies (de Grassi 2003). International pressures also led to the signing of a Structural Adjustment Programme with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) that among other things identified the timber industry for rehabilitation. The

government had to carry out a national forestry programme through the Forest Resources Management Project (FRMP) with donor support. Major donor programmes with bilateral and multilateral agencies were arranged to rebuild capacity through credit for re-equipping the industry. Attention was also drawn towards building inventory systems for monitoring of forest resources, streamlining systems for allocating timber concessions to promote transparency and better revenue collection and encouraging community participation in forest management (Amanor 2003). Hence the main focus of the FRMP was institutional strengthening of forestry sector agencies, including infrastructure development, training, policy planning, monitoring and evaluation ability (Donkor and Vlosky 2003). The Forestry Department had to adapt to the fact that aid to the sector was increasingly conditioned upon deeper institutional and management restructuring rather than infusions of logistics. To meet aid conditionalities, the Forestry Department conducted management and regulation reviews and established a Rural Forestry Programme and a Collaborative Forestry Management Unit.

A major government programme that facilitated the rise in export of timber under the economic restructuring programme was the Ghana Investment Code of 1985. This provided general incentives, benefits and concessions to entrepreneurs and investors, and special packages for specific sectors such as manufacturing (Sarfo-Mensah 2005). The Code discouraged the sale of lumber on the domestic market and led to an increase in the operations of the informal sector to meet local demand for lumber and wood products. It did not also make any provisions for meeting the demand of wood products on the local market, a situation that invariably led to the proliferation of illegal logging to meet local demand (Kotey et al. 1998; Amanor 2003; de Grassi 2003; Sarfo-Mensah 2005).

Aid to the forestry sector expanded the harvesting of timber on farmlands and alienated rural farmers from the forestry sector. Prior to the concession system, farmers had rights to the trees on their farms. They could sell them to pitsawyers in return for a third of the sawn beams or their equivalent in value. Farmers in many areas were distressed by the increasing amounts of timber harvested from the farms by concessionaires who were under no obligation to compensate them. As such, some farmers deliberately destroyed timber trees and saplings that regenerated on their farms as an expression of anger and to prevent concessionaires entering and damaging their farms. Today, laws that prevent farmers from felling trees on their

farms have been enforced as the main source of timber has moved from forest reserves to farmlands, yet as is evident from the case study community, some farmers also occasionally sell their trees to illegal loggers.

A process of formal forestry policy review in the late 1980s culminated in the 1994 Forest and Wildlife Policy and Interim Measures to Control Illegal Felling in 1995. These were necessitated by recognition that the 1948 Policy was inadequate for dealing with the problems of a dwindling forest resource, inadequate revenue and weak institutions (deGrassi 2003; Amanor 2003; Donkor and Vlosky 2003) and waste of timber resources (Smith 1996) at the close of the 20th century. During this period low fines and a lack of legal sanctions encouraged illegal forest harvesting, a situation that was aggravated by an alienation of forest communities from policy formulation in spite of the fact that such communities were expected to help in protecting the forests. The 1994 Policy represents specific principles on rights of local access to basic natural resources, local democracy, participatory management and protection of forest and wildlife resources (GoG 1994). In this direction, the new policy has enshrined within it local rights of access to forest resources for domestic use, local involvement in decisions concerning the operations of concessionaires in their area, and co-management of reserves with the state. The new policy thus made a significant shift from the 1948 policy expectation of progressive utilization without replacement of unreserved forest resources to one of sustainable management of unreserved forests.

The emergence of collaborative forestry in this period was necessitated in part by world developments as well as due to recognition of the failure of the state and the importance of individuals and communities for forest management in the country. It was also a key programme of forest decentralisation promoted by the Forestry Commission under a DFID/World Bank- funded FRMP in which community empowerment and strengthening of civil society participation in forest management and decision making were key components (Sasu 2004). Specifically the interim measures on logging involved pre and post felling inspections with local representatives, log inspection forms and certificates of conveyance. These were constituted to control illegal logging and to bring sanity into timber operations as well as involve farmers and deal with compensation for crop damages (Smith 1996). The measures created a network of relations among illegal loggers, forestry officials, the police and task forces in which bribery and corruption were endemic.

Illegal loggers who had no conveyance certificates could bribe their way from the bush to the off-loading point with an official from the above named groups as their escort, a situation that was evident in the study community and surrounding areas. The measures ran into resistance from vested interests who argued that forest tenure laws could not be reformed as they are enshrined within the national constitution. Such resistance necessitated the introduction of a Social Responsibility Agreement (SRA) as compromise in which concessionaires agreed to provide communities with payments (set at 5% of stumpage value) for infrastructure projects, in return for the right to exploit the timber resources in their vicinity. This was an unsatisfactory solution for two reasons. First, the benefits of individual efforts at maintaining farm trees were redistributed to the community. Second, the chiefs frequently dominated the process and defined the appropriate forms that SRAs should take (Amanor 2003: 14). Thus communities and farmers who have maintained timber trees on their farms off-reserve were excluded from the financial benefits from timber with tragic implications for the local management of forest resources. Hence rather than create a framework for participatory management, the 1994 Forestry Policy further eroded farmer's rights as it centralised off-reserve forest management into the hands of the Forestry Department.

The Timber Resources Management Act came into effect in 1997. It gave the Minister responsible for lands and forestry powers to make regulations and policy. It also helped to formalise the rural people's loss of control over forest resources by stipulating that as soon as trees become lucrative, they are classed as timber and therefore fall under the ambit of centralised state regulation.

The attempts made within the restructuring process to involve local communities in the management of the reserves were aimed at re-establishing local communities as primary beneficiaries of forest management with absolute rights to benefit from the wise stewardship of their resource. It is for instance suggested that the policies and legislations of the restructuring period were formulated in consultation with local people (Smith 1996; Kotey et al. 1998; Sasu 2004) but this is a rhetorical claim since it is contested by my own study that such attempts failed to involve communities that lived at the forest edge who were directly affected by such policies. Stakeholder consultations involved some land holding stools that by all intents and purposes were far removed from the people they were representing (see Amanor 2003; de Grassi 2003). For de Grassi (2003), the instruments to this

effect are limited in principle and not effectively implemented in practice. It is clear that the SRA signed between concessionaires and communities is hijacked by chiefs and elites and even is limited to only 5% of timber revenues. Community members do not have a voice as to what they actually want for themselves in their various communities. Paramountcies dictate the content of the SRAs and even here most projects do not materialise because monies released do not find their way into where they are intended. Pre-felling inspections by law should involve local farmers yet they are biased towards superficial community representation through chiefs and appointed District Chief Executives⁵. Finally, Community Forest Committees (CFCs) are supposed to be in place and to perform the following functions: hold public meetings, promote stakeholder awareness and participation in the preparation of District Forest Management Plans, and ensure consultation and understanding of the SRAs and monitor their implementation. The structure, functions and resources of the CFCs remain unclear. That is because they are set up haphazardly and questions of transparency and accountability are unresolved. This was obvious in the study as forestry officials complained of resources to implement the CFCs and the lack of enthusiasm on the part of community members to participate. On the other hand, community members claimed that no remuneration was involved in the work of the committee members and they could not prevent their neighbours, friends and kinsmen from harvesting the resources from the reserve. Amanor (2005: 16) makes the problem with the CFCs clearer when he contends that community participatory forestry programmes of the forestry agencies 'only deal with villagers who accept their precepts and are willing to accept the economic and political importance of using forests as the government wants them to, and continue to reinforce the alienation of the majority of rural forest dwellers'. Hence, forestry officers only attempt to build relationships with villagers as a way of containing the exploitation of the forests and building up surveillance, in addition to policing forest communities and adopting repressive measures. Perhaps the real impetus to form CFCs then has been to meet aid conditionalities that require community monitored 'buffer zones' around Globally Significant Biodiversity Areas (de Grassi 2003: 22 citing Asare 1998). The existing forestry laws and policies do not provide a framework for equitable sharing of forest resources and the benefits that they

⁵ This is the political head of the ruling party at the district level. He operates in capacity as head of local government, combining political and administrative functions.

provide, nor do they provide a framework for rational or sustainable management of the resource. Rather such policies enable and justify the appropriation of the benefits of forestry by a narrow sector of society, the rich, powerful and politically well connected.

The seemingly passive reaction of local population to changing post independence national forest policies and administration appears to be partly a product of specific configurations of rural differentiation along class, gender and age axes, political co-optation and repression as well as national, regional and international migrations (de Grassi 2003:12). A number of cases support this assertion. First is the fact that although forest resource users are in the main agriculturalists, fora to voice their concerns are often production related organisations. The United Ghana Farmers Council emerged after the rural mobilisations of 1937 with claims of representing the ordinary farmer and yet failed to lobby for change in the forest policy because it was co-opted by the Nkrumah administration. Other producer associations that have since emerged on the scene such as the Ghana National Association of Farmers and Fishermen, Adventist Development Relief Association and Sasakawa Global 2000 have also either been used for political control or as short-term, donor dependent groupings to access input such as credit, seeds, or fertilizer. These organisations have had elitist executives who do not focus on cocoa or input prices or release of land from forest reserves for farming. Some post independence governments such as Acheampong's National Redemption Council (NRC) and later Supreme Military Council (SMC) and Rawlings' Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC) have also been dictatorial, controlled the media and clamped down on protests and dissent. In the 1980s, the incipient Rawlings regime created party bodies throughout the countryside – Committees for the Defense of the Revolution (CDRs) – to settle unemployed Ghanaians ejected from Nigeria, and to maintain social stability and political control. De Grassi (2003) also contends that the persistence of chieftaincy disputes may have played a role in diffracting common mobilization and that women's role in forestry under Mrs Rawlings may have served more as an attempt to extend political backing. He also fingers the proliferation of churches and teachings of predestination and forecasts of heavenly intervention into earthly woes as check on any rural mobilisation and protests.

Mixed within these forces that blocked organisation by rural resource users were discourses designed to elicit obedience to centralized state policies and management by rural people, as well as to gain consent by both rural and urban inhabitants to violent rural coercion should that rural self-discipline break down (de Grassi 2003: 24). These discourses have centred on narratives of agro-environmental change that have tended to blame deforestation on the shoulders of vilified self-interested farmers, indiscriminate chainsawyers and reckless bush burners.

4.5 Conclusion

It is clear that a complex political economy abounded in the deforestation and management of the high forest zone in Ghana. This is part of the dispossession and accumulation strategy of both historical and contemporary processes of incorporation into a capitalist world economy. Legislation on forests and forest resources therefore are many and do not as will be expected take into consideration the concerns and needs of the many rural people who depend on forest land and other resources for a livelihood. In this group the hardest hit are women, the poor and landless since they depend a lot more on non-timber forest products to maintain their subsistence levels. State policies have therefore expropriated forest resources through allocation of permits, licenses and concessions for commercial exploitation for a small class of timber companies who work in the interest of world capitalism. Forest edge-communities who own forestlands and resources and who over the years have tended and nurtured farm trees to maturity have been alienated and had all rights to such resources curtailed leaving them to eke out livelihoods on a daily basis. Access to land and security of tenure are key prerequisites for any successful programme to reduce poverty in the country as is addressing the issue of power which makes easy dispossession. Failure to provide for the protection of land rights, domestic use rights of forests and the prevention of abuse of traditional and institutional procedures place vulnerable groups in the society at most risk.

The country's current forestry agenda has antecedents in its colonial past and shaped by international pressures and policies. A need to control timber resources for development has led to policies geared towards appropriation of forest lands and alienation of forest fringe communities and farmers from their livelihood base. Although in principle current forestry policies have attempted to involve

forest land owning communities in evolving policies for the control and management of reserves, in practice poor implementation has not made this a reality. Attempts at involving these communities thus have been shallow and aimed at pleasing international agencies. Current forestry policies no doubt will have profound impacts on livelihoods of members of such communities and especially on the women who have cultural responsibilities for reproductive and productive roles. The extent of such impact remains to be seen.

CHAPTER FIVE

The Study Community

5.1 Introduction

The preceding chapter discussed colonial and post independence policies and programmes of reservation and logging. They led to an expropriation and consequent alienation of land and forest resources from rural communities. That was one dimension of the context within which rural livelihoods were organized: dwindling land for farming. An equally important context that needs to be identified and explored is the social organisation of the study community. The pre-colonial social setup of the community carried over into the contemporary era, presents another area in which livelihood organisation, trajectories and production relations may be identified and explained. This chapter provides a context within which field data can be analysed, interpreted and understood. It provides some of the processes, institutions and policies that will inform the organisation of rural livelihoods, mediate women's access to resources and influence their marginalisation in the process. Thus I attempt to show that the social organisation of a people provides a context within which to explain its economic organisation.

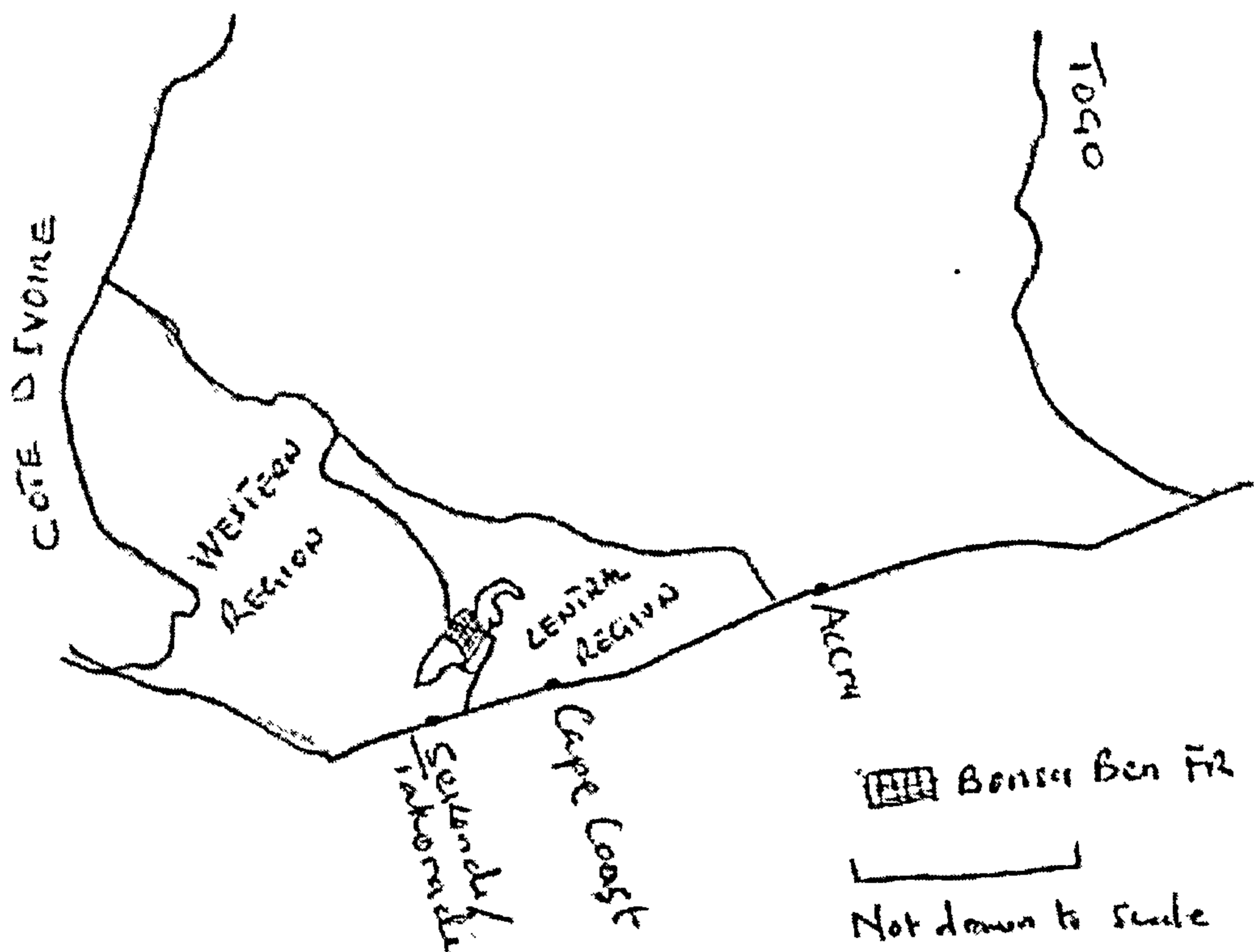
I begin with an introduction to the spatial setting of the study relative to the forest reserve, and the administrative district within which the study community is located. Management issues within the reserve centre on rights of access and annual allowable harvest levels for reserve fringe communities. Administrative district characteristics also highlight the level of infrastructural development and provide a vulnerability context of livelihoods. This is followed by a brief description of Akan¹ kinship system and inherent social relations, values, worldviews and land rights. I also discuss the polity of the community, stratification system and laws and how these impact on the livelihoods of the members. Although the information presented is not exhaustive, it is designed to help with an engagement of some of the issues that will be raised and discussed in later chapters.

¹ The Akans are linguistically related groups in Ghana and La Cote d'Ivoire who share a common culture.

5.2 Bonsa Ben Forest Reserve

The Bonsa Ben forest reserve lies between latitudes 5° 30' and 5° 50' North and longitudes 1° 35' and 1° 55' West. The reserve occupies a total area of 155.40 km² (15,540ha) and shares boundaries with the Minta, Ben East and Ben West reserves (see Map 5.1 below)

Map 5.1 Bonsa Ben Forest Reserve



Source: Extracted from forestry map of Ghana supplied by Dunkwa-On-Offin Forestry office. Original map prepared by Technical Officer Trainees in 1987.

The reserve lies within the tropical humid climate zone with wet seasons occurring in May and June (the major season) and September and October (the minor season). The dry season is from December to March and this is accompanied by little or no rain. Bonsa Ben lies within the moist evergreen forest type with the dominant tree association being *Celtis-Triplochiton* (GoG 2002a). The reserve was purposely demarcated for timber production. In spite of it being logged, it is in fairly good shape as very little degradation has occurred. Logging has not been heavy and only a few compartments have seen four or five series of logging. Even

in such areas secondary forest has replaced the 'original' forest and the rate of regeneration has been impressive (GoG 2002a). Forestry officials give it a 'conducive' score of 2 implying that all timber species are present, there is game, the canopy is intact and it has a good micro-climate.

In terms of forest administration, the reserve falls under the Dunkwa Forest District in the Central Region. Bansa Ben forest reserve is jointly owned by the Wassa Fiase (5,271 ha) and Twifo (10,269 ha) Traditional Councils². Not all land in the reserve is alienated by government; individuals and stools have freeholds although these are all managed by the state. The reserve was selected in 1935 and notices served to the respective native authorities concerned. Although it was demarcated the following year it was not until 1939 that Bansa Ben was duly constituted under section 32(2) of the Forest Ordinance (GoG 2002a).

Fringe communities are supposed to have communal rights to collect certain categories of NTFPs for domestic use as well as rights to access roads, footpaths and continuation of farming activities in admitted farms³. Communities also have commercial harvesting rights for some categories of NTFPs so long as they obtain harvesting permits from the Dunkwa-On-Offin Forest Services Division which has oversight responsibility for the reserve (GoG 2002a). A new management plan has been proposed by the Forest Services Division for the reserve with the goal of maximizing the level of income to the land owners while adhering to the principles of sustainable management of the resource. The beneficiary objectives of the new plan states *inter alia*:

One of the management objectives for the reserve will be to ensure that the forest dependent communities are able to obtain their domestic requirements from the forest in terms of wood, poles, fuel and NTFPs. Furthermore, the resource should be managed to obtain maximum returns for the land owning communities whilst adhering to the needs for sustainable forest management. Those communities with customary rights to the forest

² Akan settlements are hierarchically structured into states or traditional areas. Chiefs of weaker settlements owe allegiance to more powerful chiefs. The most powerful chief of an Akan state is the head of the state or 'omanhene' and he/she administers the state with the help of other ranked chiefs (divisional chiefs). A traditional council thus consists of the 'omanhene' and his divisional chiefs who sit in council to deliberate the affairs of the state. For more on Akan state formation, see McCaskie, 1995 and Wilks, 1993; 1975.

³ These are fairly large farms that were in existence before the creation of the forest reserve. Data on the number of admitted farms in the forest reserve could not be supplied by the District Forest Services Division.

will have free access for the collection of wood and NTFPs required for their domestic needs.

(GoG 2002a:17)

Five zones have been created namely: NTFP production area, Hill Sanctuaries, Cultural areas, Provenance Protection areas and Timber Production areas to aid effective management. Hill sanctuaries are being managed to protect steep slopes, ensure maintenance of watersheds and give protection to undefined species of both flora and fauna. Here, NTFPs may be collected provided it does not entail the felling of trees or the construction of tracks for their extraction. Provenance areas have high populations of key economic species and are being managed as gene banks for exploited species. Here too NTFPs may be collected but are restricted to the collection of leaves, dead wood and snails (GoG 2002a). Cultural sites may be both national archaeological sites and those relating to local traditions and are being managed for the benefit of local communities and the nation. Here, the collection of NTFPs is not allowed unless it is sanctioned by the Community Forest Committees. (Note that these committees do not exist in most communities and where they exist, they are there in name only). Thus communities may only have restricted rights to collected resources such as thatching grass, mushrooms, medicinal plants and herbs. Within the three zones described above, no logging is expected to take place for any reason. The timber production areas have healthy forests that are being managed for sustainable timber production. They do not fall into a protection zone or an NTFP designation area. Here again communities have restricted rights to collect specified resources.

It is evident from the above that communities have restricted rights to NTFPs even for domestic use while permits have to be obtained for commercial use. The access rights provided for fringe communities in this management plan is not in harmony with the beneficiary objective of providing 'free access for the collection of wood and NTFPs required for their domestic needs'. It is also ironic that Act 624 promulgated by parliament which deals with forest protection stipulates in section one, subsection 1g and h that:

Any person who in a Forest Reserve without the written consent of the competent forest authority ...hunts, shoots, fishes, poisons water or sets traps or snares; subjects any forest produce to any manufacturing process or collects, conveys or removes any forest produce... commits an offence

and is liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding 500 penalty units or to imprisonment not exceeding 2 years or both...

(GoG 2002b:1)

These are perhaps conflicting positions that legislators must seek to clarify. Forest communities cannot be given access to non-timber forest resources in one document and make it a punishable offence to collect the same resources in another. Whilst making it an offence to harvest anything from the reserves, communities have been allowed utilization levels beyond which they must obtain permits. Currently products utilized by rural households have been set at the following levels on an annual basis within the Bonga Ben Management Plan:

Table 5.1 Annual Allowable Household NTFPs Harvesting Levels

ITEM	QUANTITY
Pestles	4 per year
Canes	1 head load per year
Bamboo	No restriction in amount
Thatching Grass	No restriction in amount
Sponges	2 sticks
Poles	No restriction but not to be sold to outsiders
Mushrooms	No restriction
Chew sticks	1 pole per year
Medicinal plants	No restriction for local consumption
Mortars	No restriction for local consumption

Source: GoG 2002a; Management Plan for Bonga Ben Forest Reserve

Given that community members have indeed restricted rights of access to the reserve, they have no idea about the harvesting levels allowed or zones from which they cannot take NTFPs. They indicated they were not supposed to enter the

reserve and any infringement that is observed may be sanctioned. This assertion was backed by an official who emphasised that ‘nobody could take even a leaf from the reserve without permission’. This statement may well be in line with the provisions of Act 624 cited above. In spite of this, community members ‘steal to enter the reserve because of hardship’. It is important to observe that the Forest Services Division that has oversight responsibility to check that these quantity limits are kept have no structure in place to monitor which households are taking what and in what quantities from the reserve. This is because restructuring within the forestry sector has reduced significantly the number of forest guards that live in the various communities. Within the study community there were only two resident guards whose duties were to clear specified boundary areas of the reserve, protect, police and monitor it. The guards indicated that they are in charge of a 48km² stretch of the reserve and that it was very difficult to do any effective work. This is in spite of the fact that a technical officer in charge of the reserve and officials of the FSD pay occasional visits to communities and to inspect the reserve. Whether there are restrictions on rights and quantities to be harvested or not, the very demarcation of a reserve has impacted on the livelihoods of communities as land that could have been used for farming has been alienated from them. Before the demarcation of the reserve in the mid 1930s, fringe communities with customary rights of access had uninhibited access to land and forest resources. The reserve currently has some farms within it referred to by forestry officials as ‘admitted farms’.

5.3 Mpohor-Wassa East District (MWED)

The MWED is one of the thirteen administrative districts in the Western Region of Ghana (see Map 5.2). It has a total area of 2,073 square kilometres and population of 122,846 (<http://ghanadistricts.com>). The district is largely rural with a rural population comprising 87% of the total. It falls directly within the moist evergreen vegetation zone in southern Ghana and thus possesses a large forest plantation rich in timber. The district is also home to the river Pra that serves as a source of potable water to much of the south eastern part of the region.

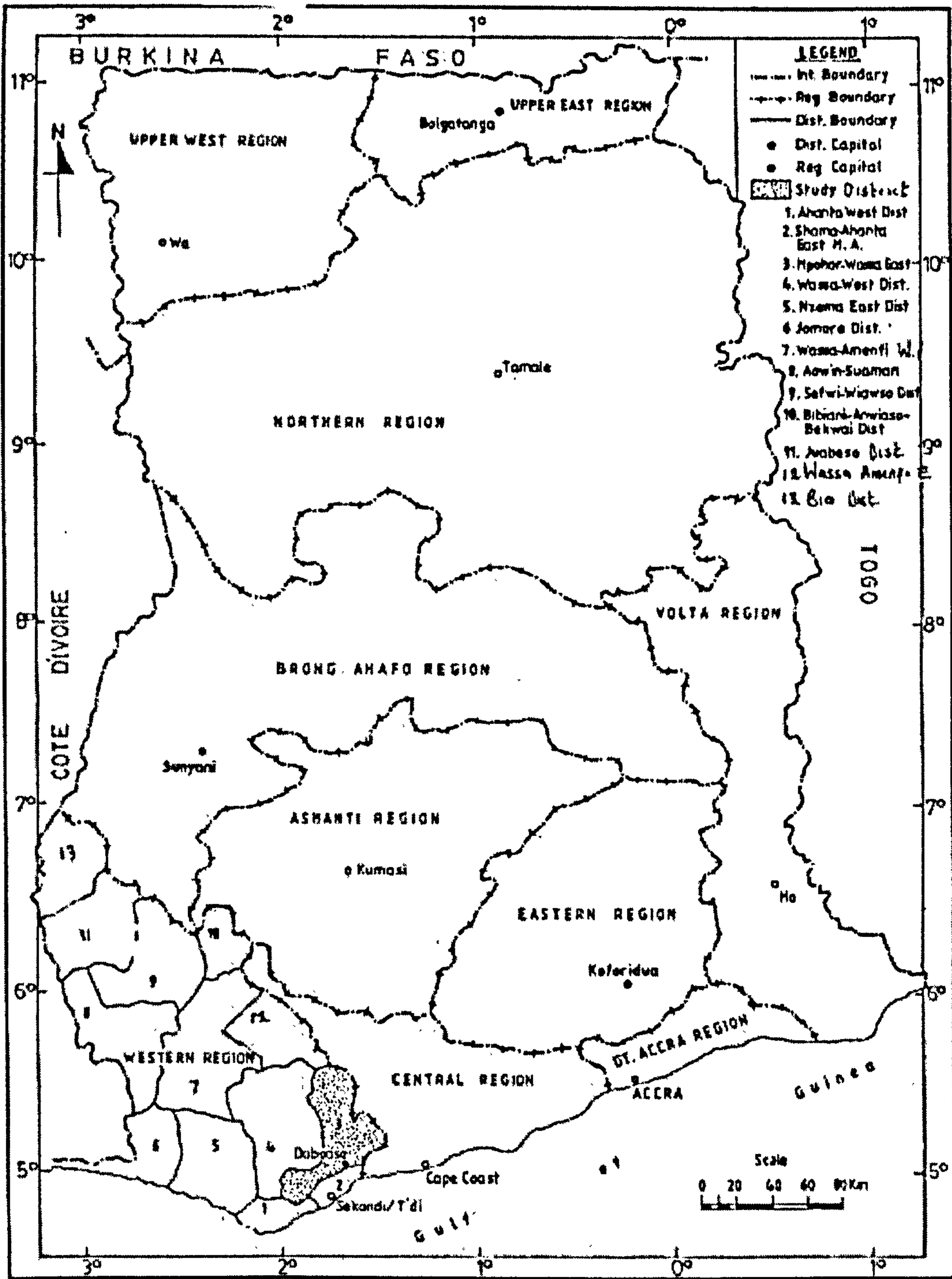
About 8.1% of the labour work force in the district is unemployed. Agriculture however is the popular occupation for the work force (71.5%) (<http://ghanadistricts.com>). The climate is suitable for the cultivation of cash crops

such as rubber, cocoa and oil palm and major food staples such as cassava, plantain, cocoyam and vegetables. Farmers in the district are also diversifying into mushroom cultivation or into the rearing of snails and grasscutters⁴ (*Thryonomys swinderianus*) as well as non traditional export crops such as black pepper and pineapples. Other crops that have a potential as non traditional export crops include citrus, cashew and banana. The cocoa production sector is dominated by small and medium sized plantations that are undertaken mostly by settler farmers while oil palm is cultivated on varied scales by Benso Oil Palm Plantation (BOPP), Norpalm Ghana Ltd, Ayiem Oil Mills and West Africa Oil Palm Plantation (WAOPP). Livestock production is limited in the district because of lack of improved breed, inbreeding and lack of proper feeding and shelter. In addition, there is no substantive veterinary officer in the district.

In addition to the already named companies, other industrial concerns in the district include Subri Industrial Plantation Limited (SIPL), Golden Stars (Wassa Mines), Wiriko Asubonteng Oil Mills and Westford Gold Limited. Together these industries contribute substantially to the internally generated revenue of the district in terms of property rates, licences and the business operating fees paid. Nevertheless, royalties accruing from stool lands have consistently since 2002 been the highest contributor to the internally generated funds of the district (2002 - 13.38%; 2003 – 7.22%; 2005 – 16.76%) (<http://ghanadistricts.com>). External source of funds for the district has been mainly in the form of grants and aid from the District Assembly Common Fund (DACF), donor assistance and funds from NGOs. This source provides over 79% of the total revenue accruing to the district for development purposes. It is a district with a strong decentralized local assembly whose members work to promote the relative peace that the district is currently enjoying.

⁴ The grasscutter (cane rat) is a wild rodent that is hunted in West Africa for its meat. It is desirable for domestication because of its excellent taste and comparatively higher nutritional value and meat yield. Aggressive hunting of the rodent has resulted not only in a reduction in its population but also destruction to forests and farmland. Breeding of the rodent in captivity presents problems for farmers as the male tends to cannibalise the young infants. Research institutions who have examined breeding habits of the grasscutter have suggested a separation of the male and female during late pregnancy or on delivery (see Addo et al; 2003).

Map 5.2 The Study District: Mpohor Wassa East



Source: Adapted from Cartography Unit, Department of Geography and Tourism, University of Cape Coast

The District does not measure up to expectation when it comes to educational, health and road infrastructure. In terms of education, the MWED has 81 pre-school facilities, 53 Junior Secondary Schools and two Senior Secondary

Schools. About 87.7% of children of school going age are actually in school and only 67.6% of the population is literate. In terms of health, the district has 12 health institutions and is yet to get a District Hospital. Whereas the doctor-patient ratio is 1:28,000, the nurse-patient ratio is 1:2,467 (<http://ghanadistricts.com>). MWED also lacks physical structures, equipment and personnel for education and health institutions.

The district has poor road network and conditions and this makes some settlements inaccessible during the rainy season. Only about 7km of the total road network is tarred and this is the access road that leads to the capital from the main Cape Coast – Takoradi trunk road. Two major railway lines are present in the district. One is the Takoradi-Kumasi line that passes through Manso and Angu in the east and the other is the non-functioning Takoradi-Accra line that passes through New Subri and Atieku in the north.

In terms of telecommunication, only 31% of the district's population has access to telephone services. There are private communication centres with mobile phone facilities that utilise the Areeba and TIGO⁵ services. Postal services are inadequate with the district capital – Daboase- having the only post office in the district.

Although farming is the major preoccupation of the district, farmland is said to be scarce as mining and logging are taking place on land that could have been used for crop production. Like other parts of the country, rain that falls in two seasons has become mere showers in recent years. There has also been much variation in the frequency and sequency of the rainy season. The FAO for example observed that since the 1960s there has been slight downward trend in rainfall amounts and a tendency toward runs of dry years with 1972, 1977, 1984 and 1992 being particularly dry years for the West African forest belt as a whole (www.fao.org). In addition whereas rainfall amounts within the evergreen forest belt have been recorded to average 1900 mm per annum (Akyea et al. 1995; GoG 2002a) between 1990 and 1999, two meteorological stations within the Bonsa Ben reserve recorded an average of 1393 over the same period (GoG 2002a). The district is also vulnerable in terms of the presence of the black fly that causes *onchocerciasis* or river blindness. Known amongst the locals as *nkontia*, the flies

⁵ Areeba and TIGO are two of the several mobile phone operating companies in the country.

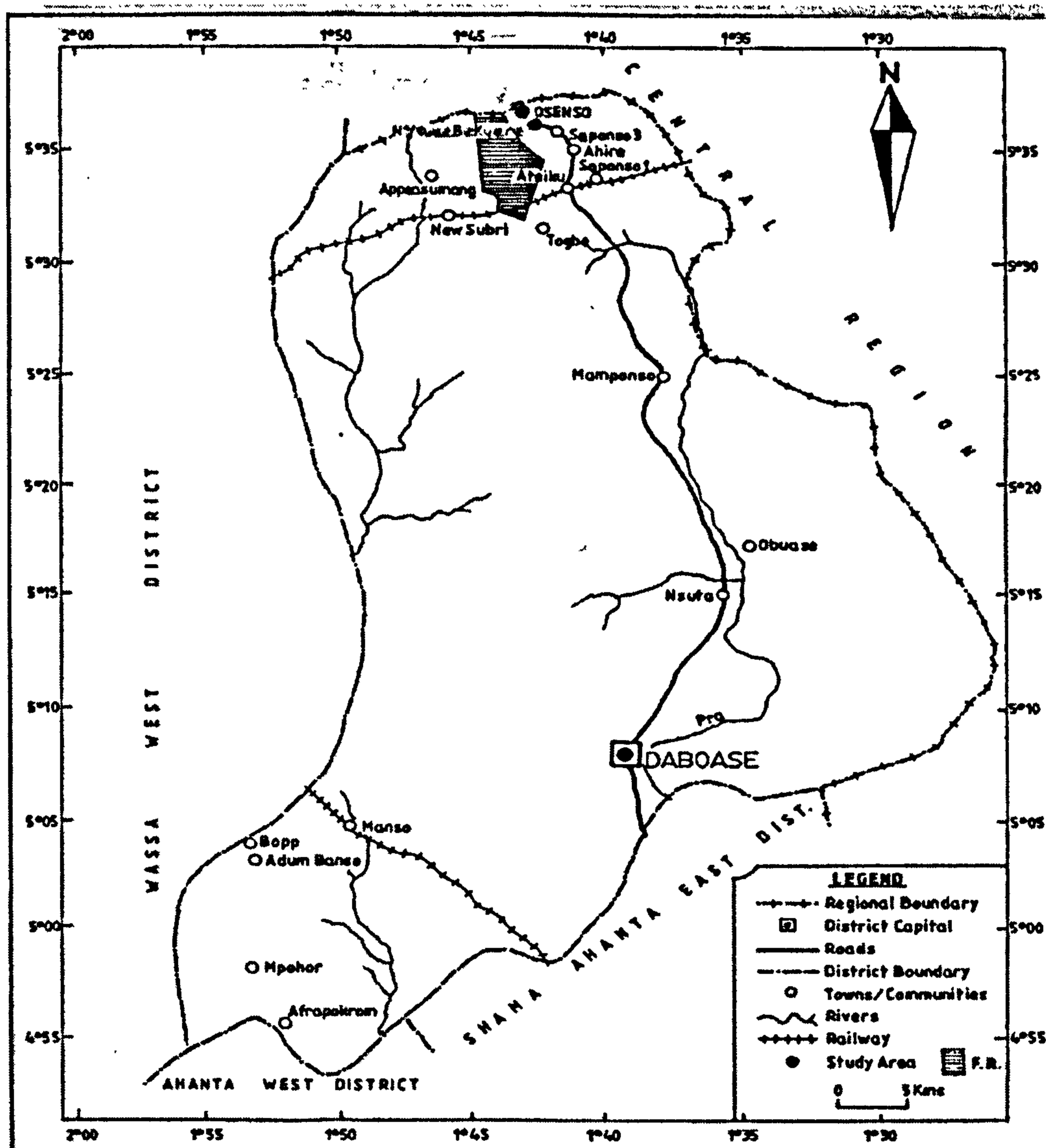
can be found along the river Pra. Attempts to eradicate them through mass spraying of most affected areas have not been successful and this has prevented civil and public servants from taking up posts in the district for fear of catching the disease. The incidence of blindness is also a drain on farming activities as a number of able bodied men and women are incapacitated and cannot engage with farming.

The study district thus presents a number of vulnerabilities for the livelihood activities of the people. Rainfall is reduced and variable and together with the incidence of pests this contributes to low agricultural production and productivity. Mining and logging also present land shortage problems for the district and with increasing population indicate pressure on the arable land present. Human resource capacity is poor (education and health); there is low level industrial activity, poor road network, poor access to telecommunication networks and inadequate electricity supply. In addition, the district has irregular flow of grants, weak institutional capacity and non-functioning sub-structures. The study community itself has a problem with insects that tend to eat away the leaves of crops particularly vegetables. This combines with the above vulnerabilities common to the district as a whole to make earning of livelihoods precarious for the study community.

5.4 Osenso : The Study Community

The Osenso community is strategically located at the fringe of the Bonsa Ben forest reserve. It is about a mile and a half away from the reserve and can be found on the eastern boundary of the Western region and precisely in the Mpohor Wassa East district of the region (see Map 5.3). The settlement thus shares its physical environment with other settlements located on the western border of the Twifo- Heman- Lower Denkyira (THLD) district of the Central region. Osenso is some 26km travel from Twifo Praso the capital of THLD district and some 80 km from Daboase its district capital. The settlement's closeness to Twifo Praso and other Central region settlements gives it an advantage as it interacts with settlements in both regions for its benefit.

Map 5.3 Map of Mpohor Wassa East District Showing Study Area



Source: Cartographic Unit, Department of Geography and Tourism, University of Cape Coast 2005

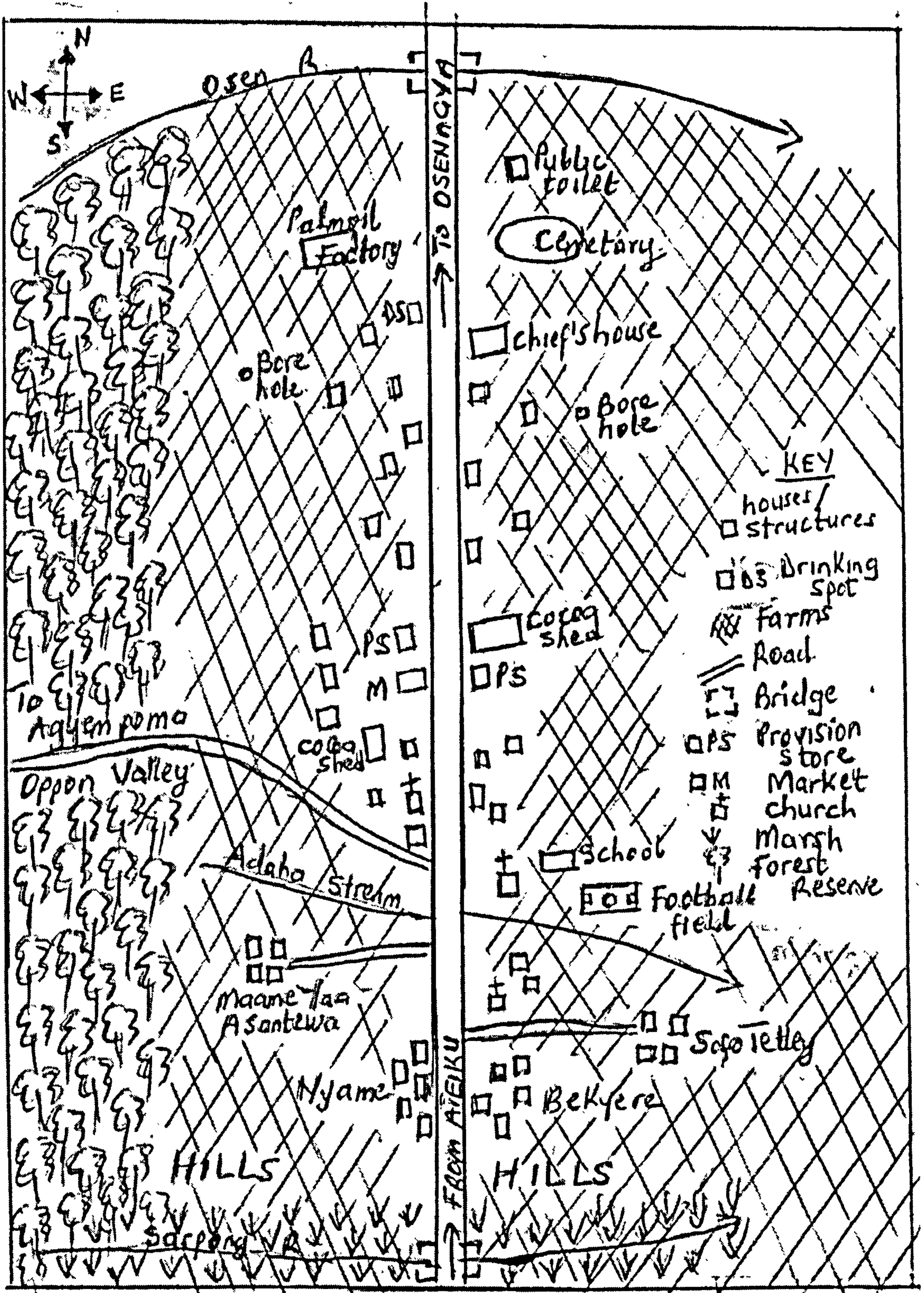
Osenso is a small forest community which consists of a main settlement, three hamlets and scattered cottages. The current estimate of its total population is 534⁶, an increase of 118 over the 2000 population estimate of 416. The sex distribution of the population is also estimated at 264 males and 270 females. The average household size is 6. In this case a household was defined as all those who share a common residence and catering arrangement. Thus within any domestic or

⁶ This figure was extrapolated from census figures supplied by the Statistical Services Department in Takoradi, the capital of the Western Region in 2005.

family unit a number of such households were found. The three hamlets and scattered cottages house a fairly large migrant and settler component of the community. For the purposes of this study, the main settlement, one of the hamlets and some cottages were purposefully selected for study because of their nearness to the reserve and their interaction with it. The two other hamlets and rest of the cottages were said to have nothing to do with the reserve because of the distance away from it. The target population used is thus estimated at 427 (made up of 216 females and 211 males).

The community compared favourably with neighbouring settlements in terms of infrastructural development. The only road that leads to the main settlement from Twifo Praso has had the section nearer it recently widened and levelled though not tarred. It has within the last four years also had access to four bore holes from which potable water can be drawn. The community also boasts a nursery, primary and Junior Secondary School (JSS) all housed in a recently purpose built cement block structure, two chemical stores, oil palm processing mill, corn grinding mill and a makeshift local market. It however has no postal facility, electricity, bank or health centre. The nearest rural bank and health centre are at Ateiku some 10km away in the MWED of the Western Region. Map 5.4 shows community members' perception of the spatial layout of their community. It shows land use patterns and community-reserve interface in addition to some key structures and depicts awareness of the environment.

Map 5.4 The Study Community



Source: Field Drawing by Discussion Group Members, 2005

The indigenous members of Osenso community have kept an oral record of their history. Elders relate that there was a war in Ashanti in the 18th century that

caused population displacement and migration. This is probably one of the interstate wars embarked upon by the Ashantis in their quest to expand beyond the frontiers of their kingdom through annexation of surrounding weaker states. Two brothers, Kwadwo Arhin and Kwabena Gyamfi, together with their sister Akua Bra from the Agona clan (*ebusua*) of Asante Adekuame in the now Amansie West District of Ashanti region, migrated to Wassaland in search of a place to settle. They arrived with a retinue of slaves and approached the Mamponso Divisional chief of the Wassa Fiase stool⁷ to request such a place. The visitors were warmly welcomed and settled in their present location and in return to observe the Wassa laws and traditions and to recognize the Mamponso divisional stool as their landlord. Settling the visitors in their present location has strategic importance. The Wassa Fiase ethnic group had a long history of dispute with their Twifo neighbours over land. The Mamponso stool at that time reckoned that settling the visitors on the edge of their land close to the Twifos would diffuse any tensions as the new settlers spoke the same dialect as the Twifo people. Thus the settlers were charged with maintaining the boundary with the neighbouring Twifos using the Osen stream as boundary. This gesture did not wholly resolve the land disputes as they have continued albeit to a lesser degree today. The Mamponso stool did not grant land to the settlers on tenancy basis. As such the new arrivals and their descendants do not pay any land rents. The present study settlement has thus been in existence for over two centuries. Archival sources to support the oral history could not be found and neither could any documented research on the community.

There was no forest reserve at the time that the first migrants were settled and they had access to a large tract of land to carry out farming activities. The creation of the reserve took away a large part of community land. Oral tradition has it that initially the reserve was demarcated very close to the settlement. One day, a British colonial administrator (presumably a forester) arrived in the company of a native administrator to inspect the reserve. The native administrator, seeing that the community had very little farmland impressed upon his boss to re-demarcate the boundary in order to release more farm land to the community. This request was granted. Since settling in their present location, community elders have operated an open door policy to welcome other migrants particularly from the Central, Eastern

⁷ This literally signifies the office of a chief. Within the context used however, stool signifies a state or traditional area

and other parts of Western region into their midst. While some migrants have been offered lineage land, others have acquired land from the Divisional stool at Mamponso. These migrants have settled in the cottages and hamlets that together with the original settler settlement make up the Osenso community. This assertion was confirmed in initial interactions with the migrants.

5.5 Social Organization of the Community

5.5.1 Kinship and Social Relations

The indigenes of the community and most of the migrants like their Wassa landlords are Akans. The generic term Akan embraces a large number of linguistically related groups who share a common culture in Ghana and even beyond in la Cote D'Ivoire. All Akan communities thrive on certain normative values expected to be promoted through reciprocal kin and social relations to achieve social order. The practice of these values may or may not be real. Every Akan is linked bilaterally through his father and mother with a number of relatives. The two sets of relationships with both one's maternal and paternal kinsmen constitute the kinship system. In African societies, one or other of the two sets of relations is emphasized above the other. This is to give status to the individual, allow for succession to office and the transmission of property through inheritance (Busia 1967). These will be discussed at some length below. Such emphasis is given institutional expression by tracing descent in a single line either through the mother (matrilineal)⁸ or father (patrilineal). The Ashanti people present an ideal type Akan group in terms of state formation and social organisation.

Akan settlements have multitier segments consisting of matrilineal clans, maximal matri lineages (*ebusua*) and minor lineage segments (domestic units or families). The origin of clans is attributed to mythical female ancestors in an unending chain of descent lines. Clans assume little importance in the lives of their members beyond creating a context for friendship among fellow clan members from distant localities. The clan lacks any head and exercises no control over user rights in land. It has no territoriality and its members are dispersed. Sexual relations and

⁸ Matrilineal descent groups trace descent and therefore status and inheritance through females in the group. The patrilineal descent system is reckoned through the male line. Both are however patriarchal in structure and organisation.

marriage between members of the same clan is prohibited as incestuous. There are eight Akan clans in total (some writers have identified seven) and each person belongs to one of them. All Akan clans are symbolically represented by totems of animals which are thought to have been of help to clan members and contributed to their survival in the past. As such animals used as totems are revered by all clan members and clan members are forbidden to eat them (Rattray 1929; Meyerowitz 1949; Wilks 1975, 1993).

The next level is the maximal matrilineage (*ebusua*). These assume the form of localized groups that make up nucleated settlements established on the basis of common matrilineal descent from a known female ancestor traced back through ten to twelve generations. Maximal matrilineages or *ebusua* have appointed heads (*ebusuapanyin*). Succession to such position is not automatic as qualities of tact, leadership, intelligence and knowledge of affairs determine choice (Okali 1983). The *ebusuapanyin* succeeds to obligations and duties rather than to tangible assets and rights. Thus he (in rare cases she) watches over the interests of the lineage. He (she) is tasked with acting for his/her blood relatives as intermediary between the kindred group and departed ancestors, administers all family property, he (she) is the custodian of family traditions and arbitrator in family quarrels (Rattray 1929). The *ebusuapanyin*, however, is sometimes assisted by two groups of people; a female counterpart (an *obaapanyin*) who has special responsibility for the lineage's women and also acts as an advisor and the official authority on family history (Schwimmer 2003); and some elders (*ebusua mpanyimfo*). The maximal matrilineage constitutes a fundamental corporate group with religious, political, social and economic functions. One's identification with the maximal matrilineage gives meaning to one's existence. Kin relations and obligations are the basis of all social relations within a community.

Maximal matrilineages are subdivided into minor lineages that are ranked according to lines of seniority within the genealogical record. These are traced through to the fourth or fifth generations. Rattray (1929) presents a slightly different picture of a typical family. His composition includes a head who lives with his wife or wives and unmarried children of both sexes, married sons and their wives and children (i.e his grand children), his mother and younger brothers and unmarried sisters, the sons and daughters of his married sisters as well as pawns, slaves and descendants of household slaves. It must be noted that the wives and children of

both the man and his sons belong to other maximal matrilineages as marriage among Akans is clan exogamous and so are not part of his *ebusua*. In pre-industrial Akan society, married women stayed with their consanguinal families (minor lineage) together with their children and did not form part of the domestic unit of husbands who also belonged to a different lineage. The collective described by Rattray may be a variant of the domestic unit but cannot be termed a family in the sense of a minor lineage.

Rattray (1929) and Wilks (1993) give different accounts for clan formation among the Akans. On the one hand, Rattray explains that the Akan minor lineage segment or family have amalgamated into the clans. He presents an evolutionary process of tribes. According to him,

Various family groups, in the course of time, came under the head of one particular family, to whom, in all important matters, appeals were made. This process of amalgamation went on in independent localities, and in this manner numerous Territorial Divisions grew up under different heads, independent and often rivals of each other. The lesser of these again tended to be merged into the greater.....The family had expanded into the Clan, the Clan into the tribe.

(Rattray 1929: 63)

On the other hand, Wilks (1993) argues that clans are a specific form of social organisation that was necessitated by the agriculture in a forest region. It was necessary for the Akan maximal matrilineages that had migrated into the forest region of Ghana to clear large areas for cultivation and the clan functioned to facilitate the assimilation of strangers such as slaves. This perhaps will explain why it is difficult to trace the lines of descent of the clan and thus why it functions mainly for social purposes. Wilks argues that:

For the forest Akan, the further thesis suggests itself that the level of social organization represented by the matrilineage was commensurate with the level of the control and management of labour in the era of the great clearances and that the level of social organization represented by the lineage was commensurate with the level of control and management of labor in the succeeding periods of regular food crop production.

(Wilks 1993: 81)

This position is supported by McCaskie (1995) in his observation that the use of slave labour in the clearing of forests to establish a subsistence base led to state accumulation of wealth in Ashanti as well as the structural formation of social order. Further, McCaskie argues that the assimilation of the slave labour and the practice of marriage exogamy were used by the Ashanti state as techniques of social engineering to promote cohesive efficiency and the aggrandisement of the group (McCaskie 1995:75).

5.5.1.1 Functions of the Maximal Matrilineage

The *ebusua* is the hub around which traditional social organisation revolves. It performs four major functions; socialisation, religious, economic and acts as a vehicle for the inheritance and succession to office or status.

As a socialising agency, the *ebusua* gives moral and ethical instruction to its young. It transmits societal values through proverbs, songs, stories, rituals and initiations associated with rites of passage. Thus the *ebusua* gives an identity to its young as the latter's actions reflect the moral and ethical values of the group. The training of boys initially rests on fathers who are not members of the child's *ebusua*. The father warns him to avoid sexual offences, to be careful to guard his tongue and to respect other people's property. He is also instructed in the matter of taboos (Rattray 1929: 14). The training of girls however is the responsibility of mothers. Mothers teach their daughters how to maintain personal hygiene, cook, to respect men and to do farm work. Girls are also informed when they reach puberty about the change in their bodies. In spite of the position and role of fathers as genitors, they have very few rights where their children are concerned. All rights, obligations and legal responsibilities concerning children are exercised fully by their maternal uncle as head of their domestic unit, family or minor lineage.

The Akan *ebusua* also functions to revere, honour and propitiate the spirits of dead members through the performance of rituals. This is because, Akans believe in an immortal soul. Adult men purchase stools, considered an exclusive possession and an extension of their personality. When they die these stools are placed in a stool room in the family house (*ebusua fie*). Every six weeks a special ceremony is held, the stools are removed and offered sacrifices of liquore, domestic animals and other foods to propitiate the ancestral spirits and to ask for blessings for the welfare

of all living family members (Schwimmer 2003). The observance of these rituals is the responsibility of the *ebusuapanyin* and his council of elders. To the outsider, it is seen as worship hence the use of the term 'ancestor worship'.

The economic function of the *ebusua* centers on land ownership. Land is ordinarily the property of the maximal matrilineage. Family land is thought of as belonging to the ancestors or local deities and is held in trust for them. As a result, such lands are administered by lineage elders, worked by members of the kinship group, and inherited only by members of that group. The actual distribution of farm plots for agricultural use is assigned to minor lineage segments or the domestic units which are responsible for its individual tenure and daily management. Whatever proceeds accruing from the land can be retained by the individual concerned. With the advent of cash crops however, sections of the land may be leased to others for seasonal agricultural production, but the land is still retained by the *ebusua*. It is argued by Berry (1993: 104) that access to land even among the land holding group was not equal as the exercise of land rights often led to negotiation, conflict and the intervention of local authorities. For outsiders, such access depended on negotiating membership in the group or acknowledging the authority of its leaders.

The Akan *ebusua* finally functions to ensure inheritance and succession among its members. A man's self acquired property which is not disposed of by testamentary disposition, is inherited by his uterine brothers according to seniority, his uterine sister's son, sister's daughter's son or mother's sister's son in that order. It is usual however to transfer such property to a sister's son (Hill 1963; Okali 1983; Schwimmer 2003). A woman's property is handed over to the deceased's mother who may waive her right in favour of her other daughters in order of seniority, sister's daughter and grand daughters (Okali 1983; Schwimmer 2003) and is awarded to men only if there are no female heirs. Within the traditional system of inheritance, there is no such thing as a direct transfer of family property to wives and children. Even though a wife may have laboured to help her husband to acquire and maintain property such as a house or a farm, it is legally the sole possession of the husband. Wives and children however have a right to maintenance while the man is alive and even after his death. This responsibility falls upon the heir usually through marrying the widow. Thus upon the death intestate of a person, his self acquired property becomes family property. Heirs have a responsibility to keep family property separate from their own self acquired property and to use whatever

is realised from the use of such properties for the general good of the lineage or to grant usufructuary rights to immediate kinsmen. The nature of inheritance and succession among the Akans has necessitated that spouses do not have joint property.

5.5.2 Akan Community Values

Akan communities emphasise communal values of sharing, mutual aid, caring for one another, interdependence, unity based on shared interests, feelings and aspirations; reciprocal obligations and social harmony (Gyekye 1998). These values guide and strengthen the type of social relations, attitudes and behaviour that ought to exist between community members. They are expressed in various forms including maxims, folklore (tales and songs), and works of art. Members of a community are expected to show concern for the well-being of one another, do what they can to advance the common good, and generally to participate in community life. Within communities, individuality, personal will and identity are also expected to be respected for the community cannot develop without the talents and initiative of its individual members. Balancing the claims of community and individuality means that members must pay necessary attention to their own needs, interests and goals as well as consider the needs and welfare of other members in their thought and action. The case data revealed that these values were not upheld within the community. It was explained that economic hardships had caused most members to be self centred.

5.5.3 Community Worldviews

Community members, like all Akans and other cultures in Africa have an indigenous and traditional knowledge of the world enshrined in their belief systems and religion. Indigenous knowledge comprises unique local knowledge and learning systems that exist in and developed by groups of people who are indigenous to a specific geographical area. Such knowledge is shared by the group and disseminated and preserved through oral traditions, demonstrations in practice as well as incorporation in cultural artefacts, traditions and ceremonies. Community worldviews are closely inter-related with community way of life and has become inseparable from day to day actions. Hence they inform the way the whole society is organized in terms of polity, economy and social action.

Like other African societies, assumptions, prepositions and interpretations are made concerning the universe – God, man, society and nature. There is a firm belief in the existence of God as the supreme deity or being who is all around us and yet far away from us. Akan maxims, folklore and works of art portray God as the almighty and omnipresent, the creator of the universe. God however is not the direct object of worship. It is believed that objects of nature such as trees, rivers and rocks etc. are inhabited by spirit beings or gods who were created by God and who act as intermediaries between God and humans. Thus Akans direct their worship of God to the physical habitats of the gods, their intermediaries who make themselves known voluntarily and who could neither be manufactured nor bought. These gods are consulted through chosen mouth pieces of priests and priestesses (*Akomfo*) on ‘baffling occurrences, obscurities of meaning or in moments of biological, psychological or existential impasse’ (McCaskie 1995:117). Human beings are believed and seen to be totally dependent upon God who is good and merciful and whose care for humans is complete and unending. Akan folklore tells about the withdrawal of God from the midst of people into the heavens because of the stubbornness of an old woman and mankind’s futile attempts to try and reach God. This folklore demonstrates the frailness of humans and fragility of culture and represents the ‘felt limitations of existence and of brittleness in the edifice of human moral order’ (McCaskie 1995:105). God is believed to be one that abhors evil and who gives the offender his due reward. God the spirit and creator is seen to be the source of all power and energy; the vital force that animates and energizes all created things viewed as part of the universe and aspects of the same reality (Busia 1967).

There is also belief in an earth deity. This earth deity is considered to have two aspects. *Asaase Afua* is recognised as the goddess of fertility and procreation of everything that grows on the earth and of everything contained in it. Her sacred day is Friday, her sacred number is eight and is symbolised by the goat (Meyerowitz 1949). *Asaase Yaa* represents the barren soil of the earth. She is often referred to as ‘Old Mother Earth’ and ‘The creator of the underworld’. Her sacred day is Thursday. In recent years these aspects of the earth, fertility and barrenness have been combined in only one deity. Depending on which Akan state one resides, *Asaase Yaa* or *Asaase Afua* has been chosen to represent both deities and Thursday or Friday chosen as the day of worship during which libation and rituals are

performed for her and prayers made to seek her aid in farming activities. Rest days have been instituted for this earth deity in all Akan communities during which the soil may not be tilled. Such rest days differ from one community to another and are recognised as *Dabone* days. On these days it is believed that the deities change into serpents and pursue all those who dare to disturb the soil (Meryerowitz 1949; Busi a 1967). Such a worldview gives rise to an indigenous traditional religion that defines moral duties of members of the community, enforces them and provides religious sanctions for them. Indigenous religion thus controls conduct and gives support to laws, customs and accepted norms of conduct.

Akans also believe in predestination or fate (McCaskie 1995). They relate folklore about the destiny of the human races in which both the black and white races had to choose between a box and paper offered by God. The black race, who was given the opportunity to choose first, took the box while the white race had to contend with the paper. When the box was opened, it was found to contain pieces of metals representing mineral wealth while the piece of paper had knowledge written on it. This folklore explains why the black race has natural wealth and yet cannot utilise it to their advantage and why the white race has utilised knowledge (technology) to advance. There is also belief in individuals being predestined to a specific life on earth.

Another aspect of community worldview deals with the immortality of the human soul (Busia 1967; Gyekye 1998). According to the Akans, a man has two spiritual gifts from God at birth, his personality or ego and his life force, believed to be a small bit of God that lives in every person's body. While the personality is believed to perish with death, the other returns to God and gives an account of one's life on earth. This is the soul. The belief in an immortal soul has led to the belief that the ancestors dwell in a world of spirits from where they constantly communicate with the world of humans. Their new status as spirit beings gives them great powers and places them in a position to guide, help and bestow honours on their earthly descendants. The ancestors are believed to take a keen interest in the moral life of the human society and serve as custodians of the traditional moral value system because they helped to create it themselves. There is also belief that the ancestors have power to punish members of the community who do not conform to the moral value system, or fail to fulfil moral obligations to their relatives. Apart from the immortal soul, some Akans also believe that a man's semen has a soul or

spirit (*ntoro*) of its own and this is passed on after death or is reincarnated in a child of the father's elementary family. Thus the husband and father is regarded by some Akans as a god (*obosom*) in whom the *ntoro* spirit dwells (Meyerowitz 1949; McCaskie 1995). It is through the worship of his *ntoro* and the observation of associated taboos that the 'house was made secure' and 'the personal happiness and well-being of all its inhabitants attained' (Meyerowitz 1949:16). *Ntoro* thus is predominantly a religious and domestic affair that gives authority and status in the elementary household to the father.

There is a worldview on morality enshrined in the community value system or code. The moral code is derived from the experiences of people living together in trying to evolve a common and harmonious social life. It is based on a people's understanding of the nature of human society, human relations, human goals and the meaning of human life. Traditional religion in this direction plays some role in the moral lives of people. Within the context of a community, something is morally valuable if it promotes social welfare and enhances the well-being of every individual member of society. Selfishness is abhorred, while mutual aid and interdependence are encouraged and cherished. The value of community members becoming responsible people both for themselves and for other members of the community is inculcated in children in the process of socialisation. Akan communities also place emphasis on good character traits. Hence individuals must possess moral virtues such as kindness, fairness, humility, gratitude, self control, and moderation. They must also be generous, content, hospitable, trustworthy, truthful, honest and persevering. This is in addition to having respect for people, being chaste and faithful in marriage. Moral instruction is imparted by a kinship group to its young through socialisation.

The values of sharing, hospitality, generosity and mutual aid above are gradually being eroded in the study community. A number of factors may be responsible for this trend. First has been the general economic hardship that people face on a daily basis. The stress and difficulty of trying to embark on a sustainable livelihood in the face of limited resources has tended to promote individuality over community with people failing to strike that delicate balance between the two. Community sharing, mutual aid and interdependence have declined as individuals have become more individualistic. Second is the fact that the kinship family group no longer performs its socialising functions effectively. This is because families are

tending to be more nuclear in composition (also perhaps in response to the change in the economic base of the community) with spouses increasingly failing to agree on child socialisation and discipline.

The result is a decay of the moral fibre of the community; a breakdown that shows in increased teenage pregnancies, commission of petty thefts, a disregard for old age and authority and high incidence of prostitution to cite a few. Field observation unearthed that there were a number of teenage mothers. An elder also emphasised this observation and the incidence of prostitution although he couched the latter mildly as a high turnover in amorous relationships whilst a group discussion also emphasised the point.

There are a few teenage girls who have got pregnant because they refused good counsel. Although there are no professional prostitutes here, there is what one would call serial flirts around. These are the women who change men one after the other.

Source: Elder, case study interview, 2005

In the past, adolescent females were initiated in a rite of passage called bragoro. They were expected to go through that rite before they get pregnant. The idea is that prospective husbands seek brides from the initiates. Today that initiation rite is lost and this has accounted for the teenage pregnancies we have on our hands. The teenage girls engage in prostitution and the boys face temptations. There is no fear on the part of adolescent youth that they might be sanctioned should they engage in any amorous relationships before the rites of passage.

Source: Participant, male discussion group, 2005

Clearly if teenage girls engage in prostitution, they must have male counterparts who may or may not be older. Why male participation in sex before the performance of the female rite of passage was termed a temptation and not a breakdown of moral on their part could be a way of pushing the guilt to the females and not both parties.

The commission of petty thefts was also cited by a number of respondents. Only two elders cited this, the rest observing that there was nothing of the sort in the community. The major items that were stolen were farm produce particularly cassava and plantains but the two elders indicated that whenever a case of stealing

came to their attention, it was amicably resolved by community leaders which included themselves. In spite of the evidence of breakdown in cultural values it may be conjectured by some that the so called breakdown in social order linked to a transition to modernity is imaginary.

There is also the proliferation of Christian churches and teachings that have sought to brand indigenous religion and mores fetish to the extent that these no longer guide members to ensure order. Such an observation is drawn from sentiments gleaned from a female discussion group:

Awukudae⁹ and Fofie¹⁰ were days when the elders went to the stream for purification rites. Today, no such thing happens. Christianity has come to get rid of all such things.

Source: Participant, female discussion group, 2005

In the past, girls had a ritual of *bragoro*, a puberty rite of passage into adulthood upon menstruation....There were also taboos for menstruating women... Churches came and people became Christians. It is believed that since that time women refused to observe the taboo and *bragoro* is slowly dying out.

Source: Elder, one-on-one interview, 2005

5.5.4 Political Structure of Community

People who live in communities need to devise some way of settling claims and disputes among themselves. Within Akan communities, such need for social order is provided by the system of kinship. The lineage thus becomes the basic political unit. The lineage head chosen by the members represents it on what becomes the governing council who look after the affairs of the community as a whole. In every Akan community, there is a royal lineage from which the chief is chosen. This royal lineage more often is the founding lineage of the settlement in question. At any point in time, there are a number of eligible chief candidates from the royal lineage or lineages in instances where there is more than one founding

⁹ This is a sacred Wednesday in which rituals are performed to deities and lineage stools are purified. It is calculated based on a six week traditional calendar. The interval between two *awukudaes* may differ from one *awukudae* to another. See McCaskie (1995) for more information.

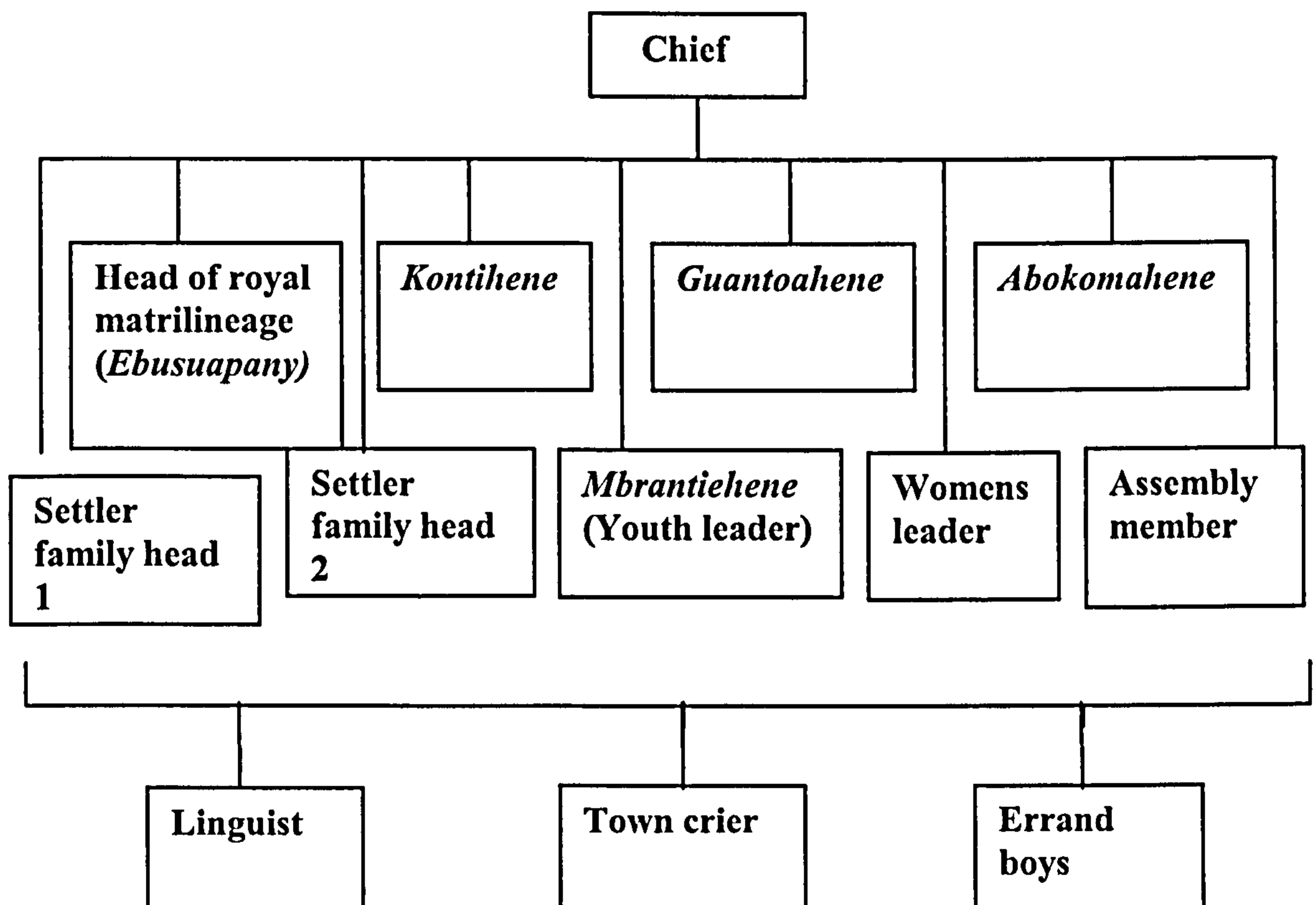
¹⁰ This is also a sacred Friday calculated in much the same way as *awukudae* and used for rituals and purification of stools. See McCaskie (1995) for more information.

lineage. A chief is elected by king makers, those to whom custom has assigned the right to make chiefs, and initiated into office. An Akan chief's office has various duties and activities, rights and obligations attached to it. He becomes a judge, commander-in-chief, a legislator, an executive and administrator rolled into one (Busia 1967). The chief performs these duties with the help of a council of heads of lineages that he has to consult consistently. Though the traditional chief by virtue of his position wields much power, he can not act arbitrarily without consultation and approval by his council who act as a check on the chief's decisions and activities. Within the political structure then is a decentralised system in which each lineage manages its own affairs with minimum interference from the chief. Council members have the power to destool¹¹ the chief if he oversteps his bounds. On the other hand, if a councillor tries to become too powerful, the chief can also destool him. In each case, there are constitutional procedures to protect the individuals concerned, and to check arbitrariness and vindictiveness. Generally, chiefs rule by the will or consent of the people, balancing delicately between authority on the one side and obligation on the other.

In the study community, the original founding lineage from the Agona clan in Ashanti over the centuries had grown into a matrilineage with minor lineage segments. In addition, a long period of migration of settler families has added to the number of minor lineage component of the community. The chief thus rules in concert with a council that has co-opted heads of some settler lineages, a youth leader, a community representative on the local government (Assembly member), and a leader of a women's group. Out of the nine council members therefore only four are heads of indigenous royal minor lineages. In addition, the political structure includes the chief's spokesperson or linguist (*okyeame*) and town crier or gonggong beater (*dawurboni*) as other office holders. Present in the chiefs court are also a number of people who ran errands for the office holders.

¹¹ Relieve a chief from holding and acting in that capacity. The process of destoolment is accompanied by the performance of rituals.

Fig 5.1 Political Structure of Community.



Source: Case study data, 2005

Apart from holding deliberations on a number of issues concerning community welfare, the institution of laws and settling of disputes, each councillor also has specific duties to perform. The chief himself has both political and religious functions to perform. His stool which is the symbol of his office is considered sacred and represents community solidarity and continuity. He acts as a link between the living and the ancestors. He performs sacrifices not only to the gods but royal ancestors as well during festivals and special days set aside for the purification of royal stools eg. *Adimfie*¹² stool purification rites. Thus the chief officiates in public religious rites that give expression to community values. Plate 5.1 shows the chief of the community.

¹² Also known as *Adim*, this falls on every third Friday of the month in Wassaland. All people residing on Wassaland are banned from going to the farm before 12 noon and thereafter can only carry home what has already been harvested and left on farms. No farm work is expected to be done on the sacred day and trespassers are heavily sanctioned with fines and performance of rituals. *Adim* is a sacred day for the purification of Wassaland stools.

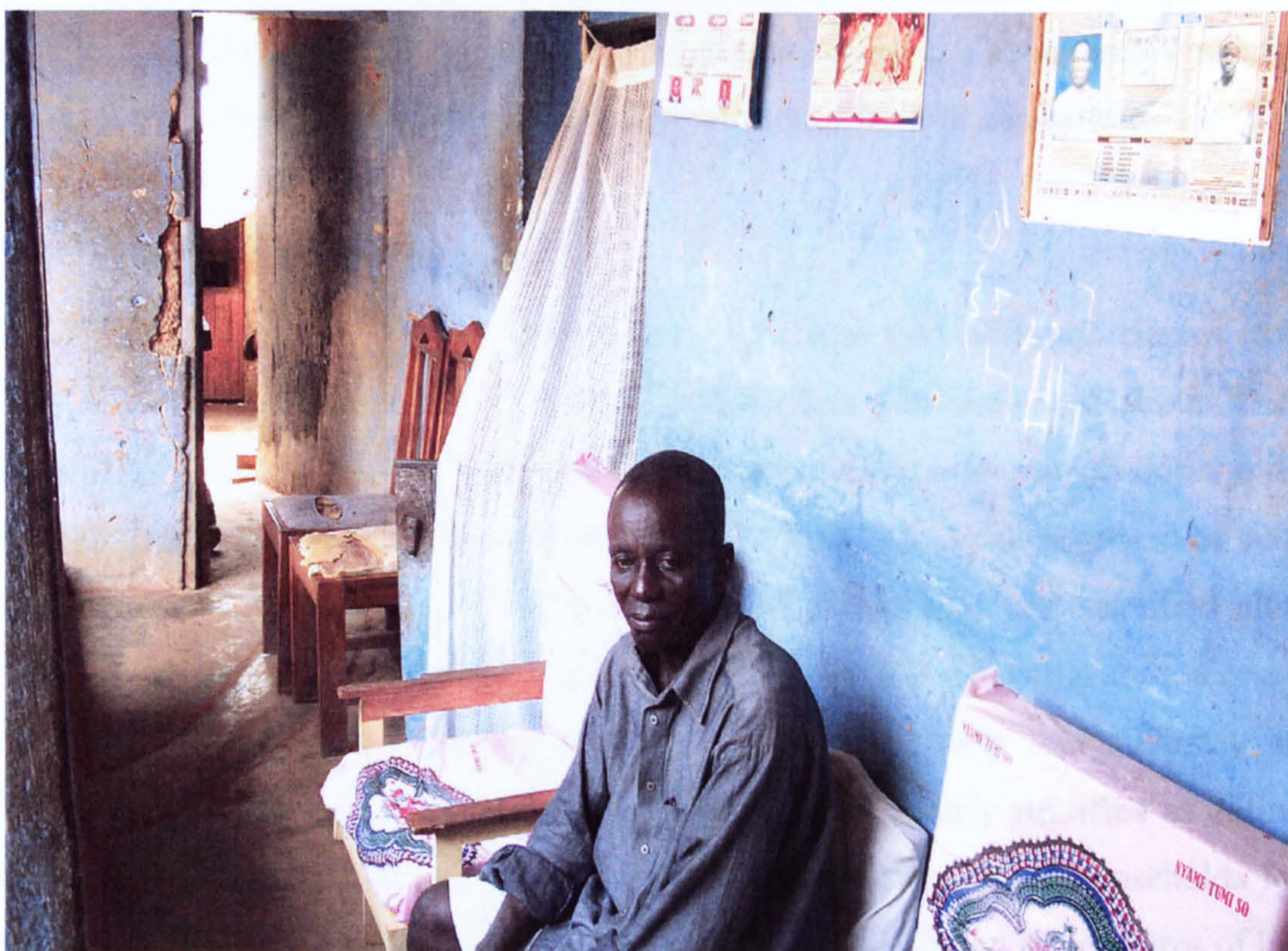


Plate 5.1 Nana Opoku Tuahene, Chief of the Osenso Community

The *Kontihene* works in a caretaker capacity. He administers the community when the stool becomes vacant through long travel, destoolment, abdication or death of the substantive chief. He thus acts in this capacity until another chief is enstooled. The *Guantoahene* intervenes on behalf of members when they are in trouble. If a community member is in trouble over an issue with a neighbour, in the community or even outside it, he or she can inform this councillor who will deal with the situation to restore peace and sanity. The *Mbrantiehene* represents the youth in the community and is in charge of mobilising them for community work, listening to their problems and views and passing them on to the council. He thus serves as link between the youth and the council. It is significant to note that there is only one female on the council and her role is more like that of the youth leader, to get information to the women and get them ready for communal work when needed. She appears not to be an active member of the council as she could not participate in our deliberations even though an invitation had been extended to her. There is also the assembly member who is elected to represent the community at the level of local government. He organises community meetings to collate concerns and communicates such to the District Assembly for action. He also educates the

community on Assembly policies and programmes and must send proposals for development projects to be undertaken in the community. The assembly member works with a committee of elected men and women – the unit committee.

5.5.5 Social Differentiation

Class divisions are not sharp within the community although classes exist. This is because there are very few large farm owners who use wage labour. These labourers were paid more than the national minimum wage of one US dollar a day (as at time of data collection). They therefore did not see themselves as being exploited. The community however is visibly differentiated and stratified along lines of age and seniority, power and authority, gender and migrant status, access to land and capital but blurred for wealth. In terms of power and authority and therefore community administration, the community is clearly stratified as defined by the political structure. Women, the youth and poorer peasant households lose out in community administration because they do not command large shares of land and capital and are not assertive and vocal. During community meetings, all were encouraged to contribute yet women claimed that their opinions were not considered. Community issues therefore are discussed informally among women and with their spouses in the evenings in the markets, at funerals, church and during communal work. It is within these settings that women voice out their frustrations and criticise community leaders and elders for commissions and omissions of acts that impact negatively on the community generally but on women in particular. Old age and seniority is respected and elders in this category are viewed as the repositories of custom and tradition and community history. These have a special place within the community and are consulted as and when the need arises. Generally, ones gender as a woman and status as a late migrant puts him/her on the lower rungs of the social ladder. This makes the two groups of people vulnerable. It is particularly bad if one is an unmarried female migrant.

Another line of stratification is that along access to land and capital. Invariably, members with such access are the leaders, heads of lineages and early migrant farmers. These are already found in the stratum of power and authority. Political power may then be seen as a vehicle to accessing livelihood resources in the community. In spite of this differences along income and wealth lines were however not very sharp in the community. There were no great differences in

lifestyle discernible in terms of nutrition, clothing or possessions. Although a few people owned bicycles, radio and television sets, the latter could not be used because of a lack of electricity in the area. Migrant farmers in particular tended to transfer back to their communities of origin monies accruing from sale of cash crops to put up houses or invest in other businesses. This is because they believed that someday their families would have to go back home. In spite of this seemingly blending of fortunes, farm sizes, type of inputs and number acquired and the nature of the non-farm livelihood activity embarked upon by members were pointers to a differentiated community. These findings confirm those of Hill (1963) and Beckman (1976) in their studies of migrants and rural class formation in the country. In the early phase of the establishment of cocoa farms, migrant activities such as buying large tracts of land altered land rights and the labour processes in rural areas. Private and semi private property rights to land were introduced as land was bought and sold. Farm labourers were also hired to establish new farms or as share croppers on mature farms. Monies realised from the sale of cocoa were channelled into other businesses such as transport and money lending. These businesses, together with their private property rights differentiated migrants from the poor and landless who only sold their labour to make a living.

It appears however that social differentiation should be inevitable in a rural community that is being incorporated into a capitalist production system. It appears in the process of rural wealth creation some groups take advantage of wealth creation and leave others behind in the process of modernization. This mechanism of differentiation however is accompanied by dispossession of small holder farmers and accumulation by large farmers in a site of immense contestation (Bush 2007: 83). Within the context of the community however, very few large holders exist yet relations of production tend to disadvantage some groups of people.

5.5.6 Community Laws and Livelihoods

The chief in council works with a number of community laws sourced from Akan traditional norms, mores and the special environmental circumstances of the community. Norms are the acceptable ways of behaving in any community although they tend not to attract any sanctions if they are not adhered to. They may be referred to as custom. Folkways encompass customs, institutions and other socially created usages. They include conventions, forms of etiquette and the myriad modes

of behaviour men have evolved and continue to evolve to regulate behaviour. Folkways represent the living character of a community and operate both consciously and unconsciously over members. They thus both compel behaviour and forbid it. When folkways forbid behaviour, they are called mores or taboos. They become an omnipresent influence toward conformity, determining much of individual behaviour and identifying the individual with the group. Hence folkways generally determine the moral character of a community. The community's mores deal with a number of issues. These include the commission of incest, murder (both physical and spiritual), desecration of sacred groves and ancestral burial sites and teenage girls becoming pregnant before *bragoro* rites are performed. They also deal with farming on sacred days and women fetching the *Osen* and *Awora pe nipa* streams on Tuesdays and also when they are in their menstrual periods.

One of the rites of passage to usher young girls into adulthood as already noted is the performance of *bragoro* upon first menstruation. This rite communicates to the whole community that the initiates had come of age and invites prospective husbands to come forward immediately after the rites had been performed publicly. Young girls who become pregnant before the rites have been performed are seen as a disgrace to society and are sanctioned. Premarital sex then is abhorred in the society although children who are not publicly owned and acknowledged by their fathers are welcomed into the world with joy. The *bragoro* rites of passage have died out of the community due to the teachings of Christianity. Traditionally, women in their menstrual periods are considered to be unclean. Recalling what happened in her day, an elderly woman in her nineties recalled that such women were not allowed to visit the chief's house lest they pollute the gods. They were also not permitted to live at home nor cook for their husbands. A special hut was built in the village in which all such women could stay until their periods were over. If they needed water, they could not go to the streams directly for fear of polluting it and offending the gods but had to send a boy child to fetch it. Flouting all these mores and taboos attract sanctions in the form of a fine that includes alcoholic drinks, sheep¹³ and in some cases money, the amount of which depends on the nature of the crime committed. Rituals are performed in which libation is poured and sheep slaughtered to appease the gods and ancestors. Such rituals are

¹³ A sheep is a symbol of peace, innocence and spiritual coolness in Akan culture. It is slaughtered and the blood used to appease the ancestors and gods of the land in the event that a crime is committed on the land.

thought to prevent any calamity from befalling the community – unexplained deaths, hunger, madness and many others. Asked what will happen if a woman flouted the taboo without being officially caught, she replied:

If you do not know of the taboo, you will be spared but if you knowingly flout it, you may continue to bleed indefinitely. The bleeding will only stop after the pacification rites have been performed

Source: Respondent, case study data, 2005

A community elder expressed his opinion on this taboo by indicating that it was instituted when a past elder brought a god into the village. This god abhorred unclean things and hence the taboo on menstruating women. It was no wonder to him that the presence of Christianity helped the people to refuse to observe the taboo. Another community taboo is that of keeping dogs. Although no explanation was given for this, it was suggested that it could be a dislike of one of the gods that the community kept in the days of the ancestors. Although such gods are no longer kept because of the advent of Christianity, the taboo is still in place.

There are four other community laws that together with the taboos on menstruating women and farming on resting days have direct and significant impact on community livelihoods. First is the ban on livestock keeping. The explanation for the livestock ban is that when they are reared free range as was the case in the community, they create two main problems. They stray into people's farms to eat up food crops. Farm owners who are not too happy with livestock invading their farms inflict cutlass wounds on them in an attempt to drive them away and this leads to a lot of friction, tension and conflict between members, a problem that elders had been called upon to settle on a daily basis. It was also realised that livestock droppings litter the communal areas of the settlement for which no individual takes responsibility for cleaning. Community members who use mutton, pork or goat meat for operating chopbars¹⁴ have to slaughter the animals outside the community and transport their carcasses to prepare their meals. In spite of this ban poultry is raised in the community. This is permitted perhaps because the birds are raised in an enclosure.

¹⁴ These are popular traditional eating places that are operated mainly by women. Although they may be perceived as zero star rated restaurants based on the location and service rendered, chop bars are rated highly for serving authentic local dishes at relatively moderate prices and are the preferred choice for most public and informal sector workers.

A second law relates to access to game. Anyone who traps or hunts big game has an obligation to send part of the meat to the chief and elders. Although no reason was given for the basis of this law, it appears that the landowners expect to be acknowledged whenever any valuable resource is found on their land just as the Mamponso overlord expects them to inform him if gold or any such valuable item is found on his soil. This law on game appears not to have gone down well with a section of the youth in the community. There seemed to be an undercurrent of defiance and hostility against the political hierarchy who were portrayed as greedy and insensitive. This is evident in a personal communication with some youth in the community. One young man specifically had a complaint to make. His complaint highlights a mounting inter-generational tension as well as one between community laws and survival. According to him,

Madam, I am being cheated in this village by the chief and his elders. I want to go to the FM station to tell them my story but I want your opinion on the issue first since you come from town.

Over a year ago, I chanced upon a partly decomposed deer in the reserve. I carried the carcass home and ate with my family and friends. The elders summoned me to explain why I did not inform them of my find first before using it. I explained that I did not know I had to inform them, as it was a decomposed carcass. I begged for my mistake and presented a bottle of drink and ₦50,000 as pacification. This was refused and I was fined ₦1m for the carcass, ₦600,000, a sheep and drinks for failing to notify the elders. Together with my elderly family member who accompanied me, we begged for forgiveness and I explained that I could not raise the monies involved or the sheep. I had little children to look after. Our pleas were ignored and I was given time to pay up. Time elapsed and I could not pay the fine. I was reported to the police who put me in cells for two days before they released me. Then I was summoned again and told that I had been relieved of my position as a member of one of the village committees, I was also told never to get involved in any community activity. I have since ignored this sanction and continue to pay my levy and further engage in communal work. I wonder whether I will be banned from exercising my right as a voter when the time comes. I have again begged for forgiveness and the elders have reduced the fine to ₦600,000 for the deer and ₦300,000 plus drinks and sheep for the elders. Honestly I cannot pay the fine. I have very little land to farm on and so get practically little from it. I rely on the forest to do some business to

maintain my family. The elders are refusing to reason up and are pestering me. I am very miserable now. Should I go ahead and inform the radio station or what?

Source: Gyasi, personal communication 2005

There has been a proliferation of FM radio stations in the country following the return to democratic rule in the early 1990's. Most of these stations have programmes that tend to engage with the listening public in the form of phone-in sessions. It was Gyasi's intention to narrate his dilemma to one such programme organised by a radio station in his district so that a panel and the general listening public would dispassionately discuss it and offer him advice. He also intended that through this the public would have insight of the sufferings of the common villager in that part of the district. A group of young men who were present argued that the complainant had been economical with the truth. He had actually shot a live deer after three days of hunting in the reserve and had failed to respect custom. Another group indicated that the elders had tried to reap where they had not sown, that life was difficult for everyone. As farming was no longer lucrative and the only alternative was to rely on the forest reserve for sustenance, this particular law should no longer be tenable under their present circumstances. The above complaint also reveals the wanton use of power to cow people into submission within the community. Community leaders want to be obeyed to the letter and would not stop at anything to ensure that this is done including using the services of the police and ban from communal activities. Fines paid by infringing the law go into the community treasury for servicing the stool. Fines for grave offences such as incest are expected to be sent to the Wassa overlord, the Mamponso Divisional chief and this serves as notice that a crime has been committed in his land.

Thirdly, there is a ban on wake keeping¹⁵ and the screening of video shows during school term times. The ban however does not affect operations during school holidays. This ban has the support of the District Assembly as it has instituted a bye-law in support of this. The intention is to prevent school children from loitering around after 9pm so as to encourage learning and an improvement of educational results of the district at the basic level examinations. This ban however means that community members who have diversified their income sources through hiring out

¹⁵ In most Ghanaian societies and cultures, dead bodies are laid in state overnight before burial so family and friends can pay their last respects to the departed. The wake is also a time that final burial rites are performed to enable a smooth transition of the dead to the world of the ancestors.

sound systems for funerals and or operating video entertainment joints have lost a substantial portion of income accruing from these two businesses.

It is obvious from the above that community laws play a significant role in community access to livelihoods, promoting or curtailing access to resources as the case may be. It is of interest that the ban on livestock rearing acts as a two edged sword. On the one hand it prevents people from diversifying their agricultural livelihoods from crop farming to livestock rearing or using livestock rearing as one of the diverse activities in agriculture generally. On the other hand the ban promotes the successful business of crop farming as it protects farms from being destroyed by such livestock. However, for those without arable land and who would have taken livestock rearing as a livelihood activity, they have been negatively affected by the ban.

It is observed that the mature state of the Ashantis (Akan) was 'significantly detached from the social order, superimposed upon it, and increasingly interventionist in relation to it (McCaskie 1995:82) and used both coercion and consent to regulate social order.

The state signified objective inequities, and employed the (mainly jural) mechanisms of coercive power. But its personnel regularly implemented subjective inequities, relying on assured status to clothe individual action and illegitimate pretension alike in the nimbus of coercive power that surrounded the state itself...In any social transaction where coercion was invoked, threatened or used, it clearly implied the inequalities that stemmed from inclusion in or exclusion from the state.

McCaskie 1995: 85

The above account of the state appears to be replicated in the community in terms of use of participation during community meetings (consent) and laws and fines to coerce residents (coercion).

5.6 Land Ownership and Use among the Akans

Land ownership in Ghana can be categorised into customary lands (about 78%), state lands (about 20%), and vested land (about 2%). It is clear that land is predominantly owned on communal basis by the customary sector. Tenurial arrangements are thus usually driven by customary practices where the right to use

or dispose of use-rights over land rest neither in the exercise of force nor on evidence guaranteed by government statute but rather on the fact that they are recognised as legitimate by the community (Fobih 2004 citing Bower 1993). Land ownership may occur in any one or a combination of forms. First is discovery and long uninterrupted settlement; second is conquest through war and subsequent settlement; third is by gift from another land owning group or traditional overlord and fourth, through purchase from another land owning group. Customary lands are managed by a custodian (a chief or head of family) in conjunction with principal elders of the community or lineage (depending on the status of the custodian). Much of Akan land has been put under cocoa cultivation. Cocoa cultivation historically spread from the Eastern region westwards from the 1940's reaching the western frontier of the Western region in the 1950's and continued till the 1980's. Prior to its spread from the region, farmers had migrated within the region in search of suitable land. Early migrants were allowed to clear large holdings of 'primary' forests for cultivation while indigenes were content to draw some revenue from selling or leasing their land to them (Hill 1963; Beckman 1976; Hart 1982).

Hill (1963) in a study of migrant cocoa farmers of southern Ghana, observed that early migrants among the Akwapim, Akim, Shai and Krobos either formed 'companies' to purchase large tracts of farm land which was further divided among company members in proportion to what they paid towards the cost of the land or purchased for the lineage (family land). With the latter acquisition the land was not further divided to become individual acquired property but upon the death of the original purchasers who belonged to one family or had an interest in the venture for various reasons, members of the lineage had usufruct rights to its usage. By this process of land acquisition, a lot of community chiefs sold out large tracts of lands to the migrants. Farmers who acquired land outside their areas of origin were obliged to perform the *guaha* ceremony, a customary act of conveyance necessary for the validation of the sales (Hill 1963). This is akin to the *aseda* (thanks giving) ceremony that is currently performed by tenant farmers. It involved the presentation of alcoholic drinks and a token amount of money determined by the chief or landowner. The *guaha* ceremony has great significance. It is used to placate the spirits temporarily residing on the land so they are obliged to vacate as a result of the transfer of ownership. It also informs the permanent

spirits of the place (recognised as streams, hills, big rocks and big trees) and to ask them to prosper the newcomer. *Guaha* again provides evidence for future reference as children and adults participate in the ceremony as witnesses, as well as publicity and land identification as individuals working adjoining lands are also invited to avoid future disputes (Hill 1963). Monies so collected by chiefs were and still are expected to go towards maintaining the stool in terms of the day to day administration of the state, the organisation of rituals and festivals, state protocol, litigation costs and many others. Whether these are used for the intended purposes will be up to posterity to judge.

The Akan make a clear distinction between the land and its use. Members of land owning groups prior to cash and tree crop farming, had unimpeded access to land in the past and remained in control of any portion of the group land that they were able to cultivate. Individuals even as citizens only had unpaid cultivation rights of usufruct as well as the right of transmitting his individual rights either as gift, will or inheritance to others. Okali (1983) observes that it is the same usufructuary rights that are extended to migrant farmers when reference is made to the purchase of cultivation rights or land. The payment of rent serves to acknowledge and therefore ratify the landholders continued jurisdiction over the land and its occupants (Berry 1993:111). Land sales have led to conflict over boundaries between certain stools and lineages and therefore multiple claimants to the same piece of land to the extent that some migrant or tenant farmers pay rent twice to contesting claimants.

5.7 Conclusion

This chapter has discussed aspects of both formal and informal institutions that are expected to shape livelihood relations of community members. It has considered aspects of the social organisation, polity, laws, traditional land rights and vulnerabilities presented by the peculiarities of the administrative district. In discussing these institutions, an insight has been given of the tensions that have been created within the community. The first identified has been tension between community members and forestry officials over rights of access to the reserve. Second is tension between community and culture and/or customary law made apparent by economic crisis and the need for survival. This is evidenced as inter-generational conflict. The discussion has also brought to the fore the rhetoric of

Akan reciprocity and the challenges that this concept face in practice. These are themes that are followed in the chapters that follow. In particular what processes hinder the practice of reciprocity in the community and how tensions are resolved if indeed they are. Whether they do so and how this is done is investigated in the following chapters. Chapter six starts with the examination of livelihood organisation and activities and ends with how community members ensure environmental sustainability for continued livelihood activities.

CHAPTER SIX

Gender, Livelihood Organisation and Environmental Awareness

6.1 Introduction

This chapter deals with three main issues. First it examines the dynamics of the social and gender issues in the acquisition of sustainable rural livelihoods in the case study area. I do so by examining social relations of gender, class and age and how these affect livelihood organisation in the community. Gender as a concept refers to a 'system of roles and relationships between women and men that are determined not by biology but by the social, political and economic context' (UN 1995:11). Social, economic and political institutions assign to males and females ways of being and interacting, gender scripts that are learned and acted out according to culture. Gender roles so determined are however not time bound. Gender relations are the social relations between men as a sex and women as a sex. They are 'simultaneously relations of cooperation, connection, and mutual support, and of conflict, separation and competition, of difference and inequality' (March et al. 1999:18). Such relations create and reproduce systemic differences in men's and women's position in a given society and define the way in which responsibilities and claims are allocated as well as the way in which they are valued. Women are in a hierarchical relationship of power with men and tend to be disadvantaged by this relationship (Reeves and Baden 2000). The relationships are present in gendered practices such as the division of labour and resources and gendered ideologies that dictate acceptable behaviour for men and women. The chapter also explores the processes and dynamics of cooperation and conflict over livelihoods within communities. It does so by problematising the sociological concept of community that generally appears to be one without conflict (Maciver 1917; Tonnies 1955). My discussion of the research community highlights instances of conflict and in doing so I stress the importance of seeing conflict as a normal occurrence.

Second the chapter examines the relations between community members on one hand, and district assembly policies; and forestry agents and loggers on the other hand. This highlights instances of conflict and how community members resist loggers, forestry agents and district assembly rents and market tolls. In examining community relations with 'outsiders', I stress the differential impact of

these relations on gender. Thus the chapter discusses and examines relational issues both within the community and between community and outsiders.

Third, the chapter also argues that community members are not ignorant about their environment. They perceive their environment through their culture, beliefs and worldviews as well as through their livelihood activities. The chapter starts with gendering as a social process and follows this with a working definition of the concepts of community, household and power. This is followed with the division of labour within households and the economy and how livelihoods have been organised. Some issues that create vulnerable environments within which farming particularly is achieved are presented and discussed. The chapter ends with a discussion of community environmental perceptions and awareness and resource management.

6.2 Can there be an African Concept of Gender?

The gender concept has been considered inappropriate within the African context particularly in connection with women's status-roles as wives and mothers in conjugal relations modelled after the Western nuclear family (Ogundipe-Leslie 1994; Oyewumi 2002; Sudarkasa 2005). The Ghanaian family is essentially a lineage and status-roles within it depend on age and seniority and not gender. As such elderly women are placed in positions of power and decision making within the family above junior men. It is also known that within the extended family in Ghana, the position of wife refers not only to the conjugal relationship but also to the in-law relation where all members of the husband's lineage both male and female see the in-marrying woman as their wife. As such the status of women should not only be assessed in relation to conjugal roles of wife and co-wife to the exclusion of their consanguinal roles (Ogundipe-Leslie 1994; Sudarkasa 2005). The Ghanaian woman thus assumes multiple identities within society; as a wife in her husband's house and among his family but as a husband and thus a patriarch to in-marrying wives of her family.

The flaw in analysing African families with the Western concept of gender has been attributed to the fact that western scholars analyze all types of family organisation from the perspective of the nuclear family and its conjugally based core. The African family however extends beyond the conjugal family into a lineage

based on kin relationships. This is not to suggest that the concept cannot be adapted within the context of the present study. Even within the African lineage young women and girls are discriminated against males of comparable ages in terms of access to communal property such as land, education and skills training, food and house chores to mention a few (see GoG 2001). It appears then that whilst a woman is not past her reproductive age to be considered a senior, she is still disadvantaged within the lineage. Also individuals in Africa are known to have interactions not only within the lineage but also within the conjugal family within which procreation and primary responsibilities for socialization rest. In so far as social interactions exist between the sexes in every facet of social organisation, a gender analysis can determine the nature of the social relations. For these reasons the concept of gender readily applies particularly to contemporary societies in Africa.

The status of women in agricultural societies in relationship to men has been reiterated by Meillassoux (1981) in his discussion of production and reproduction. He observed that although women in agricultural societies retain an area of autonomy associated with their role as mothers, it is only after menopause that they are accorded any status in communities.

The social role of women begins at puberty with their potential reproductive capacities. Institutionally, however, this quality is denied to them for men alone are able to reproduce social ties: filiation only operates through men. Pubescent women are therefore controlled and subordinated, and directed into alliances which are defined by their community's obligations...Once married and therefore potentially fecund, a woman's situation is subordinated to the rules which govern the placing of her children. In contrast, after menopause, and even more so as a grandmother, she is freed from these constraints and socially she comes into her own, gaining an authority that was denied her as a wife and mother...It is when women lose their physiological capacity of reproduction that they are bound to gain a social capacity of reproduction.

Meillassoux 1981: 76

A major force that has redefined the position of women in Africa generally over the past centuries has been that of colonialism (Afonja, 1990; Snyder and Tadesse 1995, 1997; Rai 2002; Sudarkasa 2005; Adomako-Ampofo and Boateng 2005). It is for instance suggested that pre-colonial African societies appeared to be

egalitarian in structure and women participated in the political process of governance as well as in both production and distribution of goods and services. In West Africa in particular, elderly women held formal leadership roles in matrilineages and were influential in decision-making in patrilineages. They were queen mothers¹ and leaders of military groups. The public domain was not conceptualised as the world of men but as one in which both genders were recognised as having important roles to play (Snyder and Tadesse 1995; Sudarkasa 2005). In the economic sphere, women were producers and traders, their efforts complementing those of men. The division of labour between the sexes and along gender lines is seen to promote reciprocity of effort and no differential values were attached to the labour of women and men. Even in the management and disposal of incomes, the activities of African women and men were separate but coordinated with each taking care of different aspects of the household budget (Sudarkasa 2005). The advocates for pre-industrial egalitarianism in Africa suggest that although all women did not have equality with men, there was a balance of economic responsibility that prevailed. Hence in pre-colonial African societies, both genders had their separate spheres of operation which were non-hierarchical in relative terms and sometimes overlapped although within each sphere were hierarchies that provided domestic and public activities.

The beginning of hierarchical power relations in African societies may be traced to pre-colonial trade with Europe and export commodity production in colonial times, activities that increased male control over critical resources (Afonja 1990). Thus the trans-Atlantic slave trade which occurred between 1441-1807 (Iliffe 1995), and trade in ivory and gold helped men to acquire material gains and entrepreneurial skills, resources which later helped them to take advantage of the cash crops and other lucrative businesses in colonial times. Proceeds from the new trade were not distributed with egalitarian principles but controlled by men and disbursed towards other ventures such as into cocoa production, commercial property and trade in urban centres (Hill 1963; Beckman 1976; Afonja 1990). A few women were directly involved in the emerging trans-Atlantic trade but majority of them got involved at the retail level and in most cases they acted on behalf of men.

¹ The highest ranked females of royal families who are responsible for nominating a would be chief in consultation with king makers. They are also consulted on a range of issues concerning the Akan state.

Colonial policies however reinforced the social differentiation that had emerged following the new trade. Colonialism introduced Victorian values with rigid gender ideologies while at the same time it removed certain traditional structures which allowed women considerable autonomy thus excluding women from decision-making and power structures (Adomako Ampofo and Boateng 1995; Snyder and Tadesse 1995, 1997; Rai 2002). Colonial officials visualised women in terms of a Victorian image of a lady instead of observing their actual functions. From this perspective women's responsibilities were envisioned largely in terms of nurturing and conserving humanity while men engaged in economic and political activities. Hence colonial gender stereotypes exacerbated inequality between the sexes because agricultural training and credit were provided for the male farmers (Whitehead and Bloom 1992; Snyder and Tadesse 1995, 1997; Rai 2002). A consequence of Ghana's incorporation into the global capitalist economy meant that African men migrated to the mines, plantations and towns and left women to tend to the farms and look after dependent children and adults. The institutionalization of land tenure and usage systems deprived women control over land resources although they were tending the farms. Hence the refashioning of property relations and land management did not only alter the relation between the peasant and the landholder but also the position of women within the family and in agrarian societies.

This is not to suggest that colonialism and mercantile capitalism have been solely responsible for the hierarchical gender relations in the country. Ghanaians have not remained passive within the process. They have engineered their own ideologies and practices to support the new social relations that emerged with interaction with the Europeans. Both male and female have repositioned themselves in all spheres of society to deal with the new pressures and in the process have renegotiated new gender positions. Women seem to have done less well than men in these positions. The next section outlines some of the discriminatory practices used by Ghanaian Akan societies to entrench the ideology of male superiority and female inferiority.

6.3 Construction of Community Power Relations

Gender roles and relationships in Ghana are socially defined and shaped by traditions and beliefs, the mass media, educational texts and government

legislations. Within the customary setting, gender becomes an organising principle of society. There is general belief in an ideology of male supremacy in society and whether in a patrilineal or matrilineal kinship descent system this ideology is backed by a culture that discriminates and marginalises women on this basis. Deriving from the male supremacy ideology are conceptions of male and female attributes (Rattray 1929, 1982; Amoah 1990). For instance femaleness denotes an ability to reproduce, obedience and submissiveness, weakness, modesty, emotionality and dependence. On the other hand, maleness denotes strength, virility, leadership, authority and power, intelligence and wisdom as well as the ability to offer protection and sustenance. Sanctions are provided within the society for those who deviate from the society's expectation for men and women in the form of punishment, ridicule and gossip. In Akan communities, derogatory terms such as *banyin-basia* (man-woman) and *babasia-kokonin* (woman-man) are used to describe individuals who fall out of line to compel them back into socially 'legitimate' categories. Among the Akans, maxims shed light on how femaleness is conceived; some portray women as greedy and ungrateful beings who must be feared (Amoah 1990). Generally however, such maxims form the basis of societal expectations of women as well as entrench stereotypes about women and men. A few Akan maxims taken from Rattray (1982) and Annobil (1955) will help to illustrate this point.

If you buy a woman, pay a high price for her for she has a whole community in her stomach. This suggests that women may be obtained as properties and thus the owner can do whatever he likes with her, In addition this maxim extols the reproductive virtues of women.

A woman rears but does not sell. This maxim refers to the fact that it is only men who give away young women in marriage so that no matter how well a woman has single handedly raised up a daughter, she cannot give her away in marriage without a man in support.

Even if a woman buys a gun, it leans against a man's hut. It is men who are associated with bravery.

If the gun lets out its bullets, it is the man who receives them on his chest. It is the man who faces difficult situations.

The hen also knows that it is dawn but it allows the cock to announce it. It is considered unnatural for the hen to crow much the same way as it is unnatural for

women to perform certain functions even if they have requisite knowledge and skill to perform the task.

Maxims thus are used to endorse both feminine and masculine inclinations as well as reinforce gender positions in society.

Within rural communities and among non literate social groups the different structural unequal relations between men and women have been entrenched. Discriminatory practices include puberty and widowhood rites, blaming due to infertility within marriage, nutritional taboos, female genital mutilation and female *trokosi* slaves. In traditional Akan society, puberty rites are enforced for girls upon first menstruation. This communicates to society that the girl in question has come of age and invites eligible husbands to come forward. One positive aspect of this rite is the period of confinement during which initiates are taught issues in sex education and marital duties and expectations as well as housekeeping by elderly women. This period prepares initiates for their future roles as wives and mothers. Girls who do not go through such puberty rites before getting pregnant break a taboo and must go through another rite to cleanse them and the community from the wrath of the gods of the land. No such rites are performed for boys who reach puberty.

Another area of discrimination is where there is a case of infertility among married couples. Within the society, once a man is virile, he is considered fertile and no man would agree that he cannot father a child so long as he is sexually active. Incidences of infertility are almost always blamed on wives and this sometimes leads to the break up of marriages. One aspect of the socialisation and counselling females receive on marital issues deal with serving of meals at table. The choice parts of meat are expected to be served to one's husband. Each ethnic group has parts of meat it considers choice and hence must be served to husbands. There are also some prohibitions on pregnant women as to what they can or cannot eat. Among the Akans for instance, a pregnant woman cannot eat boiled eggs lest her unborn baby's head grows too big and makes birth difficult. She cannot also eat snails, another good and common source of protein lest the baby dribbles with saliva upon birth. In the area of the performance of widowhood rites, these are enforced for women and not men. A widow is expected by custom and tradition within Akan society to stay away from sex and marriage for at least one year. Before her deceased husband is buried, she must go through rituals which include

staying with the corpse until burial, wearing stringed items around the waist and not openly eating. Such restrictions on diets, movements, personal appearance and relations with other people lead to situations of psychological stress and deprivations for the widow (Amoah 1990). It is suggested by respondents that this ritual is necessary to prevent the deceased husband from spiritually having sexual intercourse with the wife. It may however be interpreted as a suppression of female sexuality particularly since there is no corresponding male counterpart to what widows go through. Widowers are free to remarry within months after their wives are buried and there is no societal sanction for those who do not observe the grieving period of one year. In other parts of the country, females during puberty or before marriage must go through circumcision with its attendant health hazards or as children be sent to shrines to serve as slaves to atone for the sins of family members.

The worldview of masculine and feminine identities, an ideology of inferiority and superiority inherent in the creation of the identities and gender division of labour within both the private and public spheres are inculcated in the child during the period of socialisation. These are reinforced by institutions such as the media, schools and legislation. The media (radio and television in particular) through advertising, drama and other programmes tend to send cues to women and men on identities and roles. All too often women are key in advertising household utensils, cleaning agents, children's medicines and new food products whilst men advertise alcoholic beverages, cigarettes and cars. These roles portray women as operating in the domestic sphere and men as *machismo* (strong sporty, masculine characteristics). In the local drama presented in the various Ghanaian languages on Ghana television, women play housewives and traders while men work in the offices, are big time business people, lawyers and doctors. Men are portrayed as domineering in the household and women who play assertive household roles eventually find themselves acknowledging that they had erred in one form or the other and thus accept male headship. Women are also presented in the media as people who would stoop so low to get paid. This is seen in the yearly Miss Ghana and its sister beauty contests where young women contestants are paraded near naked in front of an audience, answer questions and do recitals and so on in an effort to win handsome prizes such as a car, a house, a year's stipend and an opportunity to represent the country at the Miss World contest. Where male contests

are held, it has to do with strength and physique. The lower tier of the educational system is also important in shaping the gender identity of school children. Although, the present curriculum has tried to do away with texts that tend to stereotype women as housewives and men as office workers, doctors and engineers, these stereotyped division of labour has existed in lower primary books for so long a time as to have made an impact on people's worldviews.

There is legislation that tends to discriminate against women and gender insensitive attitude of implementing agencies and officials. Such legislation has been in existence since colonial times while others have been legislated since independence. This is in spite of the fact that to date, all the four constitutions of the state have reiterated that no citizen should be discriminated against on any grounds (including gender, ethnicity and religion). Available data indicate that the participation of men and women in public life in institutions and decision making processes is highly uneven. Ghana's policy makers by and large are men. In the fourth session of the Fourth Republic (2004-2008) less than 30 of the 238 parliamentarians are women (www.ghanaweb.com). In 1993 (the first session of the Fourth Republic), only 16 out of the 200 parliamentarians were women. Generally however, it is estimated that men represent 91% of parliamentarians compared with 9% of women (www.wildaf.ao.org). The District Assemblies have a similar under representation of women. Between 1988 and 1994 less than 8% of the 6446 local legislators were women (Boadu 2001). ABANTU an NGO reports that although participation of women in local government increased from 3% in 1994 to 5% in 1998 and to 7% in 2002, women's participation continues to be extremely low (www.wildaf.ao.org). Women are also missing in the top hierarchy of the civil service, government administration and other legislative bodies. For instance, only one of the sixteen chief directors appointed to the civil service in 1994 was a woman. Women were also estimated to represent about 11% of the judiciary between 1982 and 1994, 13% of government administrators and 5% as legislators on public bodies in 1984 (Boadu 2001). The above figures might explain why it seems in deliberation of policy, women's perspectives are not brought to bear on the issues or if they are considered at all they eventually become marginalised. Policies on property rights, inheritance and agriculture have been largely skewed in favour of men until 1975 when attempts were made to redress the situation.

Official attempts by the state to redress gender imbalances have come from two major policies. First was the national machinery for women in the form of the National Council for Women and Development (NCWD) in 1975 that was established after the first world conference on women in which a decade for women was declared. The council for women was tasked with researching on women and development and to help use findings to shape state policy so as to reduce women's marginalisation and discrimination. Since 1975 but particularly after the Beijing conference in 1995, a number of gender sensitive non-governmental organisations such as the Federation for International Women Lawyers (FIDA, Ghana) and Women in Law and Development in Africa (WILDAF) have emerged to create awareness of women's issues as they affect the development of the country and to offer education and sensitisation to policy makers, women and the public generally on the way forward. The NCWD has since 2001 been integrated as the research department of a newly established Ministry on Women and Children's Affairs (MOWAC). A second major policy on addressing gender inequalities has been the introduction of an Intestate Succession Law (ISL) by the Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC). PNDC Law 111 attempted to address inheritance issues and to give widows and children a share in the properties of their deceased husband and father. This is in recognition of the contribution and support given to the deceased in the drive towards accumulation of the property and to signal to extended families that properties acquired during marriage is recognised by law as jointly acquired and should not be regarded as solely for the man. Since the Beijing conference on women, attempts have been made by civil society organisations to shift negative perceptions about women and the girl child. Such efforts have permeated media programmes, school texts and curricula and development policies. There has been a gradual shift in societal perceptions about the position of women but it is not enough as some sections of the public still uphold custom and tradition on the position of women.

This section has outlined how gender identities have been constructed and relations exacerbated in traditional and contemporary Ghanaian society. This situation is however being redressed by state policy and some civil society organisations in recent years. In spite of such efforts, there are still some processes within the organisation of livelihoods that have been instrumental in the marginalisation of women within the country generally but in the study community

in particular. In the next sections, I use a gender analysis of the organisation of households and livelihoods in terms of a division of labour and access to resources in an effort to explore key processes that have been instrumental specifically in the discrimination and exploitation of women in the study community.

6.4 Definition of Concepts

6.4.1 Community

The term community has been used in a lot of ways in recent times. It 'has become an open textured concept for which an exhaustive specification of conditions for its use cannot be made' (Taylor 1982:26). Community has been used to describe settlements and ethnic groups, academic and business communities, the community of believers in the church, the European Economic Community (EEC), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and many others such groupings. Three core things are usually used to define what a community is – size, locality and a presence of community sentiments. A community occupies a definite territorial area which provides a strong bond of solidarity for the members. This bond is weakened to some extent by the presence of communication facilities and modes. Social relations between members of a community are direct and many sided. They are direct to the extent that such relations are not mediated by representatives, leaders, bureaucrats, state institutions, codes, abstractions or reifications (Maciver 1917). The mediation of community relations by the above makes a group less of a community than one in which relations are direct. In the same way a group of individuals whose relations are many sided is more of a community than one in which relations are specialised and narrowly confined to an area. To this extent, the EEC, ECOWAS and others do not qualify as true communities. Community relations are also reciprocal in nature (Maciver 1917; Tonnies 1955). In this direction, there is mutual aid and interdependence, some form of cooperation, sharing and friendship in the organisation of work and society. Within communities is also a common sharing of beliefs and values channelled through lines of communication that tend to decline as one approaches the boundary of the community. Such beliefs may involve a veneration of the ancestors, common supplication to the gods and spirits and a common faith. A community is also small in terms of population size and stable. When size increases, relations may be diluted

and there is less community. This view of community has been criticised as naïve as it deals only with a harmonious and equitable collective (Guijt and Shah 1998). The concept is also seen to be presented as an abstract generic category that is gender blind or neutral, implicitly male-biased and premised on a notion of a male actor and men's needs and interests (Kabeer 1994).

Wherever individuals or groups interact, they either seek to cooperate or disagree. Cooperation and conflict then become phases of the same process of interaction (Agrawal and Gibson 2004). Individuals themselves are males and females who have their own interests, concerns and needs and therefore try to implement their own agendas in their effort towards achieving a collective goal. Conflict in social relations thus may be over similar interests such as socio-economic resources. Within the context of this study, conflict will include all activities in which community members contend against one another, or other agents to achieve any objective. Such contention may be direct in which individuals or groups frustrate, impede, restrain, injure or destroy one another in an effort to attain their goal. It may also be indirect in which case individuals do not actually impede the efforts of one another but all the same seek to attain their ends in ways that obstruct the attainments of the same ends by other individuals. There appears to be an imbalance in how a community is presented as a sociological concept. This is because the treatment is tilted more in favour of shared interests and values and therefore unity, cohesiveness and interdependence. Thus communities are presented as having organic solidarity as against mechanical solidarity in large population groups of society where conflict is present and obvious. This is done at the expense of the presence of inequalities, oppressive social hierarchies and discrimination that also characterise community dynamics (Guijt and Shah 1998). This chapter is premised on the fact that communities are neither homogeneous in composition and concerns, nor necessarily harmonious in their relations. As such it presents conflict within the act of cooperation in the social organisation of the study community. It therefore takes a political economy stance on livelihoods organisation within the community.

6.4.2 Household

The household may be viewed as a production, consumption and biological reproduction group that command both physical and human resources to secure

livelihoods and reproduce its members. There may be kin relations present as individuals here are drawn from both immediate and external families. Spouses in households keep separate income and expenditure streams as they have kin responsibilities and obligations to discharge. Social relations within households and between them affect members' access to, control over and use of livelihood resources. Within the above context then Ghanaian households do not consist mainly of father as head, patriarch and breadwinner with wife and children.

6.4.3 Social Power

There has been a conceptualisation of social power in two main senses in the literature. The first has been to see power in terms of the use of human agency to intervene in an event to alter or transform its course. This is the 'power to' concept of social power (Giddens 1976; Stewart 2001). The second conceptualisation of social power has been in terms of 'power over' in which a dependency on the social agency of others promotes the pursuit of domination and compliance (Parsons 1967; Giddens 1976; Foucault 1980; Stewart 2001). In this latter conceptualisation of social power are a number of variants. Parsons (1967) for instance treats power as legitimised within the social system. In this direction he sees it as the capacity of a social system to mobilise resources to realise its collective goals. For him, A's power over B is his right to make decisions that override those of B where A represents a decision making unit within a social system. Foucault (1980) also presents two forms of domination: sovereign and disciplinary power. Whereas sovereign power may direct, mobilise, coerce or repress those who are subject to it, and punishes if coercion fails, Disciplinary power is productive as it inculcates the required action by making it desirable.

Social power as used in this study will be both power in the sense of empowerment and domination. This is because the structures of the community and state seen as a social system use power both to enable community members gain access to livelihoods as well as constrain access to livelihoods. Whether 'power to' or 'power over' is employed will depend upon the type of institution or structure and the collective goal it hopes to achieve.

6.5 Community Livelihood Activities and Strategies

The environment has been presented not just as the outside or physical world but as one which is also intimately related to life of any organism. This presents an organism's environment as its complete habitat in the most complete sense of the word, and this environment differs from organism to organism. It comprises both natural resources and the natural environment of non-consumptive value yet may be valued only for its intrinsic worth e.g. National Parks (Jones and Carswell 2004c). This study considers the concept of environment within the context of the interplay between culture and nature (Fairhead and Leach 1995, 1996, 1998; Barrow 2002; Leach and Fairhead 2002; Fairhead and Leach 2004) and suggests that within this socially transformed nature, people organise their livelihoods by depending on renewable resources of forests and associated resources that include land, wild food, medicinal plants and wildlife.

6.5.1 Livelihood Organisation

The rural economy is primarily agricultural with some trading, small scale production and food processing, collection and processing of NTFPs and services. Thus the livelihood options open to the community are in line with agricultural intensification and a diversification of income sources. There is some amount of migration particularly among the youth to work in surrounding urban centres such as Twifo Praso, Dunkwa-on-Offin and Cape Coast but this is not on a large scale. These migrants work as labourers, drivers and artisans and do not earn good money. Remittances to the community are therefore low and infrequent. Women, the poor and landless rely on NTFPs because they are unable to diversify their livelihood base to any great extent. This observation of the nature of the rural economy is in line with literature on livelihood activities within the sustainable livelihood framework in which rural livelihood strategies hinge on agricultural intensification or extensification, other income sources outside agriculture and remittances from migration (see Scoones 1998; Ellis 1998; Ellis and Biggs 2001). However, the contribution of migration in this instance is not much. Migration however will become the strategy choice for an increasing number of the youth in the community in the face of diminishing land sizes and inaccessibility to financial capital to get established in other non-farm livelihoods. An informal interaction with a few young men in the community brought this forcefully to the fore as one of them emphasised

‘if the government does not give us part of the forest to farm, we will always flock to the cities’.

6.5.1.1 Organisation of Farm Work

The community generally produces food crops both for domestic consumption and for the markets in urban centres. This is not a case of producing for subsistence while the leftover is sold. Cassava (*Manihot utilissima*) cocoyam (*Colocasia esculenta*), plantain (*Musa paradisiaca*), maize (*Zea mays*) and rice are popular staples grown in the area. Vegetables such as garden eggs, tomatoes and pepper are also cultivated both for domestic use and the market. Particularly for women, sales from such food crops and vegetables form a substantial part of household and personal income. The introduction of migrant tenant farmers into the community has brought in its wake a diversification of crops into cash crops such as cocoa, oil palm, cane sugar and pineapples. These have ready markets and have proved to be an important source of income for both men and women who have so diversified. While cocoa is sold to a purchasing clerk in the community who buys on behalf of a cocoa buying company, palm fruits on the cob are sold to the Twifo Oil Palm Plantation (TOPP) and other such companies as well as individuals who process them into red oil. These are bought at farm gate prices and thus are cheaper than what is sold on the open market. Pineapples are sold to middlemen who sell them in urban centres, while cane sugar is sold to people who process them into local gin called *akpeteshie*.

The farming system employed by the community is general to what pertains in southern Ghana. Land is carefully prepared before the onset of the rains. If it is primary forest, some trees are felled and a few left standing to provide shade to crops. Cleared bush is left to dry and burnt. Burning provides potash as nutrient for the soil but it also destroys soil structure by killing soil organisms whose activities help to aerate the soil. Farmers farm on small sized multiple farms at the same time. There is usually a household and an individual farm. Where single or widowed women have farms they may have just one farm in which inter cropping is practiced. Married women may have their own farms in which food crops are grown and also help their husbands on cocoa or oil palm farms. In this case women’s farms are gifts from husbands or parents. They may also be obtained from lineage land or rented on share cropping basis. The pieces of land that have been cleared are

cropped while other areas are left fallow. While cash crop farms tend to be more permanent food crop farms are farmed for about five or six years, abandoned to fallow and a new patch is cleared for cultivation. Fallowing allows secondary growth to emerge and this prevents soil erosion and helps soil to regain its fertility. Again, the habitat is renewed for the various plant and animal species and this offers an environment within which community members can collect various NTFPs as well as wood products for domestic use. Fallowing in this instance has been reduced from six to about three years on the average as a result of increasing pressure for more farmland. Farming will resume on fallow land as other cropped lands are put under fallow. The system in which farmers rotate farms in between fallow periods has been termed shifting cultivation. In the traditional rural economy therefore, subsistence farming predominated as the mode of production, based on the use of basic implements such as the axe, cutlass, bill hook for clearing land and the hoe for weeding as well as large inputs of labour. The core crops grown were high yielding bulk foodstuffs and domestic animals – sheep, fowls, goats and pigs, hunting and gathering – game, snails, mushrooms and fish from fresh waters were used to supplement and meet nutritional requirements (McCaskie 1995). The typical farm consisted of both the cultivated and uncultivated fallow and crops were cultivated in rotation.

Cash crop farms in the community are usually intercropped with food crops such as cocoyam and cassava. This is because it takes at least three years in the case of cocoa and five years in the case of oil palm to fruit. It was explained that not only do food crops maintain vegetation cover on the soil and provide some shade for the young seedlings but intercropping is also a strategy to make maximum use of land and ensure that the same labour inputs are used for both cash and food crops. Intercropping also produces a variety of crops both for domestic use and the market. Farm sizes on the average are small for women compared to the sizes of men's farms. Generally, most women's farms ranged from half to two poles² while their husbands worked between two and five poles of land. While some widows have almost nothing left by way of inheritance, a few early migrants who are now widowed have taken over the tenancy of their late husbands and therefore work fairly large pieces of land. Some other women also indicated they worked large tracts of land inherited from parents.

² This is a local unit of measurement which is equivalent to one acre of land.

Effia, a twenty six year old married farmer inherited ten poles of land from her parents. Ekua works on seven poles scattered over five plots and Fosuaa who is twenty five years inherited 25 poles and has even rented some out.

Source: Case study data, 2005

In terms of farm sizes therefore there is inequality between men and women as well as among women themselves. Plate 6.1 shows a cocoa farm of a female migrant.



Plate 6.1 Mature cocoa farm of a female migrant farmer at Osenso

Farming technology and inputs have not changed much in the community. In spite of declining soil fertility and the incidence of pests that feed on the leaves of vegetables and other food crops and thus prevent bounty harvests, there is little application of fertilizer or pesticides. Neither is there any application of weedicides to control weeds that grow faster than can be weeded at scheduled intervals. This was a general trend but some men could afford fertilizers at least for the cocoa farms. Women also used seedlings from their own nurseries or bought them from the open market in Twifo Praso. Seedlings for oil palm however were obtained from

the TOPP nurseries in Twifo Praso. The main farm implements used by both men and women were the cutlass and hoe and these were bought on the open market. In recent times the government has made it a policy to spray cocoa farms free of charge once a year to help curb the incidence of pests and diseases and hence boost cocoa production of the country. Farmers however need to continue spraying one or two times more during the year for this to be effective. It emerged that most farmers did not do this in spite of the fact that sales of spraying machines and chemicals were held in the community by a marketing company. Only a few men had the resource to buy both spraying machine and chemical. The majority either bought the chemical and hired the machine or borrowed from friends. Majority of women who had their own cocoa farms could not continue with the spraying because they had no money. There is no farmer organisation through which the sales of seedlings and implements could be channelled at subsidised prices in the community. Farming is labour intensive and it is mostly household labour that is used. However, groups of farmers sometimes pool their labour to work in turns on their farms. This is the *nnoboa* system. *Nnoboa* ensures that friends can reduce labour costs and at the same time weed vast areas in very little time or control bush burning activity during land preparation. It also provides labour for harvesting crops particularly cocoa, pineapples, rice and cane sugar. With respect to cocoa, the *nnoboa* groups do not only harvest but also help to crack open the pods and get the beans ready for fermentation. When the group comes together for this purpose, it is the responsibility of the host farmer to provide food and water. The farmer is also obliged to provide his/her labour free of charge when other members of the *nnoboa* group require this. *Nnoboa* groups are however not permanent structures within the farming system of the community. They are formed as and when the situation demands it and they are particularly associated with men although sometimes women also form such groups. Most households have a lot of dependent children who cannot help with farm work.

Organising farm work had brought minor conflicts that had ended up with community leaders resolving them. Although this did not have any potential of destabilising social order, it was nevertheless present. Most conflict was over farmland. At the start of the farming season some people may weed beyond their boundaries into the farms of others. This is particularly so if a fallow land is to be cleared. Conflict therefore was over the exact position of the farm boundaries. In

rare cases conflict was over ownership of farm land. Descendants of two families could argue over a parcel of land if one party was not well informed about the circumstances within which their ancestor came to possess a particular parcel of land. This is particularly the case if land was transferred between the two people years ago. It may be that farmer A believed that his farmland was too big for him to cultivate alone and had approached farmer B with a portion of land. The latter may have cultivated the land for considerable length of time before his death. Conflict starts when the descendants of farmer A try to regain control of the land given to farmer B. Another source of conflict was that between share croppers and their farm owners. Here conflict was mainly over whether share croppers had declared incomes from cash crop farms appropriately. Conflict may also arise over theft of farm produce. This however was played down as a non serious crime but which elders had to resolve anyway.

6.5.1.2 Gender and Household/Farm Organisation

Two life histories of elderly women from different generations, an indigene and a settler, are presented below to reflect the gender division of labour both in household organisation and in economic activities. The cases also indicate changes in the nature of livelihoods pursued as well as help to identify the new relations of production and women's marginalisation.

Life History 1

Akua Yabra is a widow with 2 grown up children who are at Agyenpoma. [Akua's age is estimated to be 76 years based on information given about time of birth]. She is a direct descendant of Gyamfi one of the founding fathers of the community. As a child she helped with house chores, sweeping, washing pots and pans and many others and then cooking when she was much older. She relates that her elders only farmed cassava, plantain, cocoyam and not cocoa for cocoa farming is a recent phenomenon. As a child, she helped with farming but as a young woman supplemented farming with trading in food crops and fish which was bought from Sekondi.

As an adult, she lived with her husband in the village and helped him first to farm food crops such as plantain and cassava and later cocoa. She did the weeding and planting whilst he cleared the land but they had help from grown up children later on. In her view a woman cannot do the same amount of work on the farm as a man would and so did what she could to help her husband. She had to take her young children to farm on each occasion because there was no one to leave them with at home. Akua inherited the farms after her husband's death. Unfortunately the food crop farms have collapsed. She has however expanded the cocoa farm and given it up to a tenant farmer on *abunu* terms as she is too old to do any farming.

Her ancestors trained them to obey the Tuesday non-farm and Adim taboos. These did not worry her as she resorted to petty commodity trading on those two days. According to Akua they had to obey another taboo as women regarding entering of the village stream whenever they menstruated but this is now obsolete given the fact that the community has access to borehole water. A ban on livestock rearing is however still in place.

She relates that timber concessionaires and illegal loggers provided the planks for constructing their buildings but with the law against illegal logging in place community members now purchase the timber planks. For her, the good old days in which they enjoyed improved well being had gone forever, replaced by intense hardship everywhere.

Source: Case study data, 2005

Life History 2

Mary is a 70 years old migrant divorcee who looks after six grandchildren. She arrived from the Eastern region with her now divorced husband together with her father and other relatives some forty years ago. Her parents were farmers and as a child she sold foodcrops from their farms as well as cooked food. She relates that as a married woman she was responsible for house work each day before leaving to work on her husband's farm. On the farm they freely harvested and collected non-timber forest products for domestic use but laments that they are scarce these days. In the latter years of her marriage, Mary was given a piece of land by her husband to work on. She planted cocoa on this but it was taken away from her upon divorce.

Mary now cultivates cocoa on a plot of land given to her by her father after her divorce and tends another already planted with plantain also given by her father. She supplements the income from her two farms with petty commodity trading, making and selling pottery and trading in processed fish.

She relates that in her early settler days, timber concessionaires felled logs in the community. The situation has however changed as today the indigenes themselves now do illegal felling of the logs.

Source: Case study data, 2005

The cases highlight the domestic social reproduction and economic roles in the community. A third role that is not revealed by the life histories but that emerges from the political structure and community activities is the fact that women also join the rank and file of people who are used for communal work and who render social services. They are thus community workers who have no part to play in the general management of their community. Women are trained right from early childhood to learn the ropes of motherhood and associated housekeeping duties. They are taught to do house cleaning, laundry, fetching fuel wood for lighting house fires, water and cooking. They also learn to babysit younger siblings and generally manage the household when there is no elderly person at home and to help out with such chores whenever there is a need. Boys however by custom have no housekeeping obligations and are not trained as such (see section 5.5.1.1). Within households generally but specifically those of the community, women tend to do most household chores and spend a lot of time and energy doing them, a situation that is not surprising given the female child's traditional socialization within families. This

trend has also been observed in studies of the girl child (Abane 2004) and women in Ghana generally (Boadu 2002). Abane's study highlights the gender gap in education in Shama Kedzi a coastal village in Ghana. A daily activity profile of the sexes reveals among other things that girls spend more hours than boys on housework and this affects school attendance and performance. Boadu's study on the gender gap in a number of sectors estimates that rural women in their reproductive ages (15-65 years) spend 15 hours more a week on domestic work than their male counterparts.

Within the community women do most domestic chores in addition to care and nurture of the young. Men concerned themselves with drying of cocoa beans on platforms at home, weaving the thatch on which the beans were dried and building and repairing houses. They are also responsible for the general care and maintenance of household members and the provision of house keeping money. Within the community therefore, the traditional division of labour hinges on the Akan conception of femaleness and maleness; men conceived to be strong are expected to maintain and protect their households and offer security and comfort while women who are conceived to be weak are allocated housekeeping chores (Amoah 1990). There was general consensus that the role of both spouses was gradually changing in line with the harsh economic realities of the day. Women have tended to increase their contribution of support in cash or in kind to the welfare of the household. They have increasingly met household expenditures such as supplementing housekeeping money or contributing towards school fees, books and uniforms, expenditures traditionally made by men as household heads.

Some men too have taken on board chores that were hitherto seen as female preserve. These include sending sick children to the health centre and help with pounding of *fufu*³. The support that spouses offer one another in the division of labour at home indicates that the customary division by gender within the community is gradually giving way to change occasioned by the reality of earning a livelihood and a recognition of the burden that the gender division of labour imposes upon women. The situation is different for single women and widows who run their households single handedly on a daily basis and seek help from family and friends or hire labour to do more taxing chores like building or repairs of old settlement

³ This is a staple meal of the Akan people. It consists of pounded cooked cassava, plantain or cocoyam into a smooth and sticky consistency. It is usually eaten with soup.

structures. In both households unmarried young men who still stay with family have taken on general sweeping, weeding and sometimes help with fetching water from the boreholes in recent years. Thus there seems to be a lot more cooperation, mutual aid and interdependence in the household in spite of the fact that house work is still seen to be divided along gender lines and had brought tensions in the past. A participant during a male focus discussion voiced out the following:

We help out at home just that some work is female specific and others are male specific. If the woman is sick, all her work may be undertaken by the man. We do our best for them. In fact we help out better than our counterparts in the towns.

Source: Participant, focus discussion 2005.

Community members are aware of the social transformation that is taking place both within the gender division of labour and with the introduction of a cash economy. And have interpreted the change differently.

Although women and men in the community operate in different spheres and engage in different activities within the traditional gender division of labour, they are interdependent within the household. Whenever needed, men offered mutual support. It appears that some women want more than occasional support from men. They see their domestic roles as over burdening them and therefore recommended that men do more to help out in the household. Such co-operation is needed if households are to survive in rural communities. Evidence from respondents during indepth interviews regarding support with domestic chores indicates conflicting opinions among women and thus a change of the customary division of labour between men and women.

Even though gender roles are ascribed, I recommend that men also help in the household chores to relieve women from overworking themselves.

(Gladys)

I recommend changes. Women get tired a lot by washing, cooking and going to the farm with men to do the same work and return to the house for them only to wait for their food on the table. Sometimes we carry cassava, firewood and babies at our back while the men walk home freely. Men should also help in the kitchen and carry the babies around. There must be changes to help ourselves.

(Esther)

The women get tired from doing the household chores, because they go to farm with men and come home to do extra household chores which make them tired. After farm work men don't do anything else but wait for the women to prepare them food to eat. Cooking is a tedious work. Because men idle at home, I will recommend that they assist in washing of clothes, bathing of children and helping in the kitchen as well. However, many women feel ashamed to see their husbands do these chores for fear that they will be branded as *kotobenku*⁴. Also some female friends may describe such women as being lazy.

(Hajia)

Source: Case study interviews, 2005

There are some women however who want to maintain the status quo regarding the gender division of labour. They are over worked and tired but for them that is the dictate of custom.

I will not recommend any changes in the daily household chores of men and women because the boys already help their fathers on the farm whilst the girls help their mothers at the kitchen.

(Rose)

Although women tire a lot by cooking in the kitchen, I will not recommend any changes in the household chores of both men and women for they are ascribed.

(Gladys)

⁴ This is a derogatory term used by some Akan groups to describe men who do not live up to societal attributes and expectations. Such men are perceived to behave like women and are thus sanctioned through name calling by the society.

It is the duty of the girl child to sweep, fetch water and help at the kitchen but the boys always go to the farm. I therefore recommend no changes in the household chores of both boys and girls.

(Abigail)

Source: Case study interviews, 2005

The economic contexts of women suggest one explanation for the different views on the gender division of labour. Women in favour of shared house chores worked on multiple plots which may include that of husbands. These perhaps would find working on multiple plots very tiring and resented being left to do house chores alone after a tiresome day out on the farm. Those who did not favour a change in the status quo worked on single plots either owned alone or jointly with husbands. It is thus plausible to suggest that they would not be as tired as their counterparts who worked multiple plots. Local radio FM stations have programmes that discuss gender issues in development- gender violence, starting a business, the ideal woman and many more. It is possible to suggest that some of these women too have listened in to some of the radio discussions and thus were informed by the contents of the discussions.

Within the domestic and socio-economic spheres of the community, decision making rests mainly with the head of household although this trend is changing particularly within the domestic sphere of married couples. Within the household women's increasing financial contribution towards household livelihoods has boosted their status and participation in decision-making. Such increase in participation in decision-making has sometimes been (mis)interpreted by men as a challenge to their authority and this has sometimes brought about tensions and conflict in households. Men admit the necessity for their wives' earnings towards the households' welfare and yet are resentful. In some parts of Africa, such resentment may have led to their turning to alcohol, wife beating or marrying another wife (Bryceson and Mooji 2000). In similar manner is the resentment shown by some women. If economic work is shared, they expect domestic work also to be shared.

6.6 Vulnerability Context and Coping/Adaptive Strategies

Farming was done within the context of specific environmental conditions which may be physical, demographic and institutional to which farmers have gradually adapted. As noted earlier these vulnerabilities are not peculiar to the study community alone but shared widely within the district. A gradual increase in population and individualisation of land due to land fragmentation had led to smaller land sizes. Intense cropping of the fragmented land had led to a decrease in soil fertility. A variable rainfall amount and changing patterns together with the presence and activities of crop pests had resulted in low harvests and consequent loss of income. Community members had reacted to these by adopting strategies that have had both positive and negative effects. An important negative effect had been a decrease in the length of the fallow period from about six to three years. This meant that more fallow land had been put under cultivation to the extent that most farmers no longer kept land fallow. There had also been frequent cropping of available farmland. All these had culminated in worsening the soil fertility situation to the extent that some farmlands had been abandoned because they were no longer productive. This situation meant that the farm based livelihood in this instance could not cope with and recover from stress and shock of reduced fertility or maintain its ecological integrity and this in the literature is a sign of unsustainable livelihood (see Singh and Wanmali 1998; DFID 1999a). One positive reaction to the environmental vulnerabilities however has been a diversification of crops grown from mainly traditional food crops to a blend of food and cash crops and also an increasing reliance on NTFPs for both domestic and commercial purposes. There had also been a diversification of income sources through other livelihood activities indicated in table 6.1 below. Although diversification of income sources is important it was done on a small scale in the community and even here, it is men who have diversified more. Farmers had been faced with long periods of vulnerabilities such that they had adapted to them as seen in the strategies embarked upon. Although the strategies had been intended to minimise the incidence of risk (i.e. ex ante) some of them had tended to perpetuate the scale particularly of physical environmental vulnerability. Women and the poor in the community were relying on NTFPs and petty commodity trading ex post to deal with the vulnerable conditions. The strategies adopted by women and other community members in the face of environmental, demographic and institutional vulnerabilities were in line

with what has been reported elsewhere in the literature (see Ellis 2000a; Ashley and Maxwell 2001). It appears however, that given the asset base of the community, farmers could no longer hold out and thus did not display any resilience to the disruptions. Some migrant tenant farmers had considered relocating to their primary communities but find the process too frightening to go through.

Another context within which farmers were particularly vulnerable was in the marketing of farm produce. First, farm gate price quotations were rather on the low side but because women were in need of finance to meet contingencies coupled with the fact that the transport infrastructure was poor and fares rather high, farmers had no option but to sell their produce. Women who made it to the market centres had to contend not only with high transport fares for themselves and goods but also District Assembly market tolls as well. Some women had found ways of avoiding the market tolls. First, women had created their own marketing centres outside the designated centres prescribed by the District Assembly in order to avoid payment of the market toll. This was in spite of efforts by the Twifo Praso District Assembly to get them to pay up. A revenue officer of the Assembly noted:

Some women try to avoid payment of tolls by selling at unapproved sites. Two days ago we had to use a vehicle to collect goods from Bimponegya to an approved market. These traders meet there and sell off their goods and then proceed to the market centres where they buy their basics for their households. We have for example used the revenue van to announce in Wawase that nobody should sell at an unapproved market centre. Still some people smuggle to sell. Sometime ago some revenue collectors had an operation in Wawase. They had a lot of money. The women are very difficult to deal with. We have announced several times in Praso here that they should not sell their goods beyond the bridge. Now they trade at Nuama Krom just to avoid payment of the toll. Traders are now devising all sorts of means to avoid payment of the toll.

Source: Revenue officer, case study interview, 2005

The avoidance strategy employed by women may be seen as a form of resistance to the policy of paying tolls at the designated market centres or an attempt to ensure a livelihood by whatever means available to them.

Second is the sale of the produce while it is still green on the farm. This was especially so in the case of cassava (*Manihot utilissima*) and maize (*Zea mays*).

Purchasers come from the urban centres a few weeks before the harvest to negotiate payment for the crops on the farm. When payment was made, the farmer handed over the farm to the purchaser who now used his/her own labourers to do the weeding and consequent harvesting of the crop. In spite of the fact that women claimed that they were always cheated during such transactions, they had no other option because they needed the money to meet daily household obligations. Third, farmers who sold cocoa in particular to purchasing companies faced a lot of problems getting paid. This was because the purchasing clerks took away the beans before paying at a later date. Non payment periods could take as long as three months.

Markets also provided a favourable context within which livelihoods may be lived. This was particularly the case with the government offering much higher prices for cocoa. Farmers had appreciated this price increase and had intensified cocoa cultivation. Some women indicated that they had started cocoa farms on small plots and were looking forward to harvesting in three or four years' time. The increase in the producer price of cocoa was said to have solved a lot of problems within households. A respondent buttressed this assertion when he said:

The soil here has lost its fertility. Cocoa is not doing too well but the price of 563,000 cedis per 65 kg bag is good. The receipts from the sale of just two bags will solve a lot of problems.

Source: Eric, personal communication, 2005

The vulnerability context affected households differently. While some households had coped and adapted, others had not done too well. Farming households with fairly large plots and access to some form of financial capital had coped and adapted better than the others. Households with fit members had made treks into the reserve to harvest resources to improve their circumstances; the aged and infirm had been unable to undertake the journey. They had also hired out their labour to illegal loggers to carry boards and beams for payment. Generally then, the more asset holdings a household had (in this instance, natural, financial and human) the better it had adjusted to the vulnerability context within which its livelihood was achieved.

Table 6.1 Non-Farm Community Livelihoods

Small scale food processing	This includes cassava processing into <i>gari</i> , <i>kenkey</i> from maize, palm oil from palm fruit and kernel oil from kernel of palm fruit. Most processed food is marketed for income.
Small scale industries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Soap making: Locally called <i>amonkye</i>, this soap is made from the potash obtained from burning dry cocoa pods and plantain husks. The soap is mainly for domestic use. ii. Pottery making from rich clay found in parts of the community
Collection and processing of NTFPs both for domestic use and commerce.	<p>Domestic use:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Food example snails, mushrooms, spices and game. ii. Household/Personal cleanliness e.g. Sponges, chew sticks, brooms iii. food aids e.g. Mortars, pestles, wooden crushers, fuelwood and pottery. iv. Construction e.g. Beams, bamboos, thatch, ropes and small logs. v. Medicinal e.g. Herbs, plants, ropes, roots and tree barks. <p>Commercial Use:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Sponges, chew sticks, game, crushers, pottery, canes and stones.
Wine processing and alcohol distilling	Palm wine is tapped from the oil palm tree, or the raffia palm. <i>Akpetshie</i> a local alcoholic drink is distilled from cane sugar and palm

	wine.
Services industry	<p>i. Labour hiring known locally as 'by day' to carry illegally sawn boards and beams from the bush site to loading trucks by the wayside.</p> <p>ii. Artisan skills such as fitting mechanic, commercial driving, tailors and dressmakers, hair dressers.</p> <p>iii. Machine operators such as corn millers and chain saw operators.</p> <p>iv. Chemical shop, provision shop, petty commodity and drinking bar operators. Also cooked food sellers</p> <p>v. Equipment hiring: sound systems/public address systems, spraying machines</p>
Prostitution	This thrives whenever loggers arrive in the community to do business. Young women involve themselves in this business.
Food and Petty commodity trading	Maize porridge, <i>kenkey</i> , chop bar operations, provision stores, second hand clothing etc.

Source: Case study data, 2005

Community livelihoods had become increasingly diversified since the 1980s particularly because of population growth, loss of fertility, and diminishing land sizes resulting from commoditisation. Whereas some activities had been intensified (oil palm, harvesting of NTFPs) or reduced (food crops, vegetables, rice, cocoa) new activities and crops had been introduced. These included commercial farming of oil palm, palm wine tapping and the hiring out of labour. It has been observed that rural farming systems and the production relations exhibited therein may be properly termed 'petty commodity production' because peasants own the factors of

production as well as employ themselves as labour to work (Bernstein 2004:129). It is seen as a specific social form of capitalist production in which farmers exploit themselves as employees and may also hire in labour. Diversification into small scale food processing, small scale manufacturing, wine processing, alcohol distillery and trading as identified in the non-farm income strategies of the community is a strategy of accumulation of capital. Hence there are multiple links between farming and other areas of economic activity that are also constituted by commodity relations (Bernstein 2004:132).

6.7 Household Income Strategies

Households obtained monies from embarking on the various livelihood strategies of agricultural intensification, non-farm livelihoods and migration. This income was apportioned to meet a list of needs both intended and unintended. Generally, women had less income to spend within a year than men. Although community members could not be definite about yearly incomes, they could approximate how much they made from the sale of certain farm produce, NTFPs, trading activities and so on. The difficulty in income estimation arose from the fact that farm produce and other income generating activities were sold as and when they were harvested and so income trickled in throughout the year. A conservative estimate of average income for women thus puts this anywhere between 500,000 and 3,000,000 cedis a year. A few isolated individuals however estimated their income above 6, 000,000 cedis a year but these were mostly men (personal communication, 2005). Among women, there was variation of incomes depending upon size of farm, crops cultivated and other non farm income activities undertaken. This income is in addition to food items that were used for subsistence.

Table 6.2 Estimated Incomes for 2004

Respondent	Income Source	Estimated Income (GHC)⁵(Exchange Rate; £1=18,000)	Total Estimated Income (GHC)
Esther	Forest resources: Snails, <i>awedeaba</i> , pestles	1.5M	1.5M
Hajia	Foodcrops Petty commodity trading	100,000 150,000	250,000
Gladys	Cassava Tomatoes Maize, snails	200,000 200,000 200,000	600,000
Adjoa	Cocoa Cassava Forest resources	100,000 200,000 200,000	500,000
Fosuaa	Snails Palm oil Grasscutter	2M 500,000 500,000	3M
Janet	Cassava Cocoa Mortar/Pestles	200,000 200,000 150,000	550,000

Source: Case study data, 2005

Incomes were distributed to meet social commitments, household obligations, invested in the livelihood activities and used to acquire more capital assets. Household obligations included the care and maintenance of the members – food, clothes, schooling, health, shelter, transport and many others. Social commitments or payments included payment of community levies, funeral and wedding contributions, market tolls, rents to land owners and the District Assembly and the payment of basic rates (locally known as *lampool*). Basic rates used to be called the land poll tax under the colonial administration. The current designation has also gone with changes in its definition and administration.

⁵ GHC is an abbreviation for Ghana cedis.

Whatever is left after household obligations and social commitments are met was either invested in the acquisition of more capital assets such as land or farm inputs and or in an entirely new livelihood activity such as trading. The meeting of contingencies such as medical bills and funeral payments is unintended. While men tended to invest more in farm input and other new livelihood activities, women's incomes were used more for social commitments and household obligations. This meant that women were unable unlike their male counterparts to invest in their farms. This reason together with the small sizes of farms may account for their low incomes. There appears therefore to be a pattern or cycle of low asset holdings which yield low incomes that in turn give rise to low asset holdings among women in the community.

6.8 NTFP-Based Livelihoods

The collection and harvesting of NTFPs play an important role in the livelihoods of community members particularly women, the poor and landless. These were collected both on farms and other off-reserve areas as well as in the forest reserve. Products may be collected seasonally or all year round and they may be area specific. This means that whereas some products are common to all areas, others can be found either in the farms and off reserve areas or in the reserve. Table 6.3 indicates the geographical spread of forest products.

Table 6.3 Geographical Distribution of NTFPs in the Community

AREA	PRODUCTS
Both reserve/off-reserve	Game, Tree species for pestles and mortar, medicinal herbs, plants, roots and barks, bamboo, snail, thatch, spices, stream, wild yams and cocoyams
Off-reserve only including farms	Mushroom, crabs, honey, fuelwood, colanuts, wild palmfruits, clay, fish.
Forest reserve only	Tree species for chew sticks, raffia palm, canes, sponge ropes (for construction), incense, rope for weaving baskets, seeds for soup, seeds for industrial use (eg. <i>Sunchiaba</i> and <i>Kusidwe</i> [<i>allanblankia</i>]), <i>awedeaba</i> (<i>Drypetes gilgiana</i>) and small logs

Source: Case study data, 2005

NTFPs were collected and harvested both for domestic use and commercial purposes (see table 6.1). Canes and bamboos were specifically collected from the marshy areas along streams and rivers while the other products are generally spread throughout the areas. Some products have specific collection periods coinciding with abundance and need. Mushrooms and snails were collected mainly between May and July while cane was harvested between June and October. The harvesting of cane during this period coincides with the cocoa harvest during which baskets for carrying cocoa beans and mats for drying were needed. Hunting of game is banned from August onwards both by the Forest Services Division and customary law and so game was harvested between March and July. The ban covered a period within which most animals are pregnant. Apart from the seasons indicated for the collection and harvesting of some specific forest products, the others were collected all year round. Trade in NTFPs in the urban areas of the country is very lucrative particularly in spices, medicinal plants, barks and roots, leafy vegetables and bush meat. Although respondents could not give the total income realised from the sales of the previous year (i.e. 2004), some could disclose how much they made per unit of item sold at farm gate price. Incomes

from the sale of NTFPs could be significantly improved if the goods are sent to the market centres to sell and not sold at the farm gate. Table 6.4 compares farm gate and market prices of selected NTFPs.

Table 6.4 Farm Gate and Market Prices of NTFPs Compared

NTFPs	Description	Farm Gate Price (GHC)	Market Price (GHC)
<i>Awedeaba (Drypetes gilgiana)</i>	Ten litre bowl	25,000	80,000
Snails (large)	12 units	10,000	30,000
Canes	Bundle of 100 pieces	30,000	50,000
Crabs	12 units	3,000	6,000
Chew stick	Bundle	5,000	8,000
Bath sponge	6 pieces	3,000	9,000
Clay pot	Unit	2,000	4,000
Game (prices depend on type of game sold)	Small	15,000-25,000	30,000-45,000
	Medium	50,000-65,000	70,000-85,000
	Large	90,000-120,000	150,000-180,000

Source: Case study data, 2005

6.9 Gender and Livelihoods Organisation: Summary and Discussion

Gender helps to structure the organization of community livelihoods. Land clearing and burning is mainly done by men while planting is done by women. Both men and women had uneven responsibility for weeding around crops, the application of fertilizers and insecticides and harvesting of crops. This is not to say that both genders do not take an interest in what the other is doing and to help out if needed. Farmers who cleared primary forests for cultivation indicated that men had to fell trees with the help of women. As men had to do this standing on platforms, women assisted by indicating which direction the tree was likely to fall and hence

guided the men accordingly. Women specialized in food crops while men cultivated cash crops although an increasing number of women were also cultivating oil palm and cocoa. The cultivation of rice in the swampy areas of the farmlands was said to be mainly a man's work. This was because apart from the initial planting and later harvesting and winnowing which were done jointly by men, women and older children, forty days of driving away birds from eating the harvest was mainly undertaken by men. It was said that during this period, men slept in the rice fields and women cooked and sent them food in the fields. This contrasts with literature on rice cultivation in the Gambia which was specific to women (see Carney 2004). In some districts of Ghana and Niger similar patterns of work have been observed (see Duncan 2004; Doka and Monimart 2004). It appeared that the amount of labour hours invested in a particular livelihood activity by women and men determined its gender specificity.

Women and children were also responsible for all post harvest management activities. Marketing of all food crops in the study community was done by women while men marketed cash crops such as cocoa and palm fruits. This implies that it is women who dealt with issues in transportation of food crops and payment of market tolls. Cash crops were marketed in the community with purchasing agents from cocoa and oil palm companies as well as individual palm oil producers trekking to the community to make purchases. Other livelihood activities that were gender specific included the following: In the utilization of NTFPs, women collected spices and herbs and processed canes, chew sticks and sponges (bathing and chewing) only after men had harvested these from the reserve. Also while women mainly collected snails when they were in season, men concentrated on hunting and trapping game. Men were also responsible for carving mortars and wooden crushers as well as making pestles both for domestic use and for sale while women concerned themselves with the making of pottery. In the area of labour hire out, women concentrated on carrying illegal boards and beams for a payment whilst men worked as farm labourers. Here again both genders did both jobs but they were concentrated unevenly in the two activities. Petty commodity trading is also a livelihood activity that both men and women engaged in. However, whilst women engaged in trading food items, plastics and provisions such as sugar, milk, soap, matches, biscuits, batteries and many others, men mainly traded in wrist watches, suiting and dressing materials. In this activity, men were seen to get involved in trading items that

required a substantial amount of financial investment. Last but not least is the gender skewed provision of services such as hairdressing, fitting mechanics, chemical shops and drinking bars. Apart from hairdressing and mechanical fitting shops, activities whose operations were owned and operated entirely by women and men respectively, most livelihood ventures were owned by men but maintained by women as wives, sisters, nieces or daughters.

It is again clear from the organization of household and community livelihoods that whereas certain activities were gender specific, there are a number of livelihood activities in which both men and women participated. This may be a sign that prevailing cultural and religious beliefs and norms that encouraged social interactions between the sexes were not being cast in rigid gender-based segregation of tasks and activities. It may also be that there had been transformations in gender relations resulting from changes in the natural resource base on which they depended, the adoption of new technology, information and other resources. Within the context of the community however, both attributions applied. As earlier observed from the worldviews of the community, a great deal of stress is placed on community values of mutual help, interdependence and social order. Besides, the fact that logging and reservation policies were in place meant that the resource base had dwindled and as such there has been pressure for social and gender relations to be recast in more cooperative terms if everybody was to survive. Co-operation in some cases, however, has come as a result of women negotiating power with men by using 'unorthodox' methods. This is evident in the manner in which women could leave domestic work and childcare for about three days as they go snail hunting in the forest reserve, leaving men to cope with the chores that they may not be familiar with. It appears then that when support from men does not come naturally and willingly, women can and do react against male influence and domination within the gender division of labour.

There is on the other hand an element of competition found between men and women in some aspects of the organization of livelihoods particularly around NTFPs. The collection and sale of snails and *awedeaba* seeds (*Drypetes gilgiana*) in recent years has been an activity that has been very lucrative. Men have entered into the business in large numbers and compete with women for the resource. They have sometimes been accused of pruning the *awedeaba* (*Drypetes gilgiana*) tree in order to access unripe seeds which drop off the trees naturally when ripe. A female

respondent remarked that ‘men are rubbing shoulders with the women and are now collecting snails just as the women do’; whilst the chief and an elder confirmed that the forest guards had made a complaint against those who collected the seeds and had threatened to stop people from collecting them if the greedy and destructive behaviour continued. The issue was also raised in a discussion with the guards. Apart from the snails and *awedeaba* (*Drypetes gilgiana*) seeds, women also blamed men for entering into the business of cane and rope cutting for sale for their own benefit instead of giving to women to sell. This complaint was made because the two had previously cooperated. The men had either been hired to harvest the items for the women or had done so freely as husbands and other family members because women were in charge of processing the NTFPs for the market. There appeared to be some form of covert tension as men were seen to be slowly competing and taking over livelihood activities hitherto seen to be women-specific.

In the organization of livelihoods, there were differences not only between the activities and resources employed by women and men but also differences in the livelihoods of indigenes and early migrant settlers. Migrant settlers concerned themselves mainly with both cash and food crop farming and trading of all forms – petty commodity, processed food or food items such as fresh or processed fish and food crops. In addition to the above, indigenes also relied heavily on the harvesting, collection and processing of NTFPs for a livelihood. One plausible explanation to the difference in reliance on NTFPs by settlers and indigenes observed in the field might be that commoditization of land and or transfers through benefit sharing systems of tenancy had left most land in the hands of settlers to the disadvantage of most young indigenes who must rely on the bounty of the forests (both secondary and reserve) for survival. Early migrant settlers had acquired large tracts of community lands for cultivation from the stool and some lineage heads. Where the community land size for farming was fixed it meant that the appropriation and expansion of farms for cocoa by migrants led to a contraction of available farmland for food crop cultivation and much later cash cropping by the indigenes. There were two cases of migrants having large farm lands on freehold basis adjacent to community lands. One case involved the family of an Akwapim migrant who bought about 124 hectares (50 acres) of land. Another involves the logging company in the area. The grandparents of the management team (siblings) also acquired a substantial acreage. Part of this has been put under reserve by the state (the company

has obtained logging rights and is now doing business there) while the rest has been given to tenant farmers. Although these two cases are not directly affecting community lands, there are instances of migrant farmers leasing large tracts of lineage and stool lands.

Another explanation for the different livelihood activities of migrants and indigenes could be found in the goals of settlers for embarking upon their initial relocation: that of embarking upon cash crop farming. Settlers may be preoccupied with this goal bearing in mind that they must make the most of their tenure. Besides apart from what has been allocated to them, most settlers see other land and forest resources as belonging to the indigenes and as such will not encroach but leave to the latter to do what they want with their property. Within the context of the use of NTFPs therefore, social relations among indigenes and early migrant settlers are found to be cordial. The younger members of the lineages of early migrant settlers as well as fairly new tenant migrants however compete with indigenes over the collection and harvesting of NTFPs particularly from the reserve. This is because this activity is an important safety mechanism for the poor and landless. There is nevertheless resentment and tension between indigenous youth and migrants over the issue of land, indigenes aggrieved that whilst they have little or no land 'outsiders' have taken over communal land.

It appears that the gender division of labour within the community helps people to do what they can do best as well as ensures complementarity of efforts and effective social organization. As such this may not be interpreted as marginalisation particularly of women. However, as will be shown in the next two chapters, gender division of labour affects women's access to basic livelihood resources of land and labour and overworks them. Thus the gender division of labour within the case study community is a means to discriminate against women, marginalise and exploit their labour time.

6.10 Community–Forest Guard Relationships: Co-operation and Conflict

The rank and file of community members is unaware of any management policy on the reserve. They understand that the reserve is demarcated by the government and as such they have to obtain permits if they have to take any product

from it. The idea of restricted rights of access and annual allowable cuts for domestic use spelt out in the new management plan is alien to them. Community leaders and some elders are aware of community rights over the reserve but have resigned themselves to the fact that this has been taken over by government. As members have no money to pay for permits, they 'steal' to enter into the reserve even to collect or harvest for both domestic and commercial purposes.

Even when you cut cane from the reserve and you are met by the guards they will catch you. When you are entering the reserve or coming out, you must be fast. You check across the boundary line and quickly cross into or out of it.

Source: Participant, male discussion group, 2005

Members of a female discussion group also had this to say:

It is difficult to get a permit these days. We can get it if we apply just that it is not worth applying for it. The permit covers a time period but because of transport and other costs it may not be worthwhile. It is better to steal and go into the reserve.

The forest guards have now refused to allow us to go and collect *awedeaba* because the men have pruned the branches of some trees in an effort to take the seeds. We have not quarrelled openly with the men over this act because we all steal to collect the seeds.

Source: Participants, female discussion group, 2005

'Stealing' for members is resorted to because they either have no money to obtain permits or the time and outlay invested in collecting permits do not correspond with the returns obtained. It could also be interpreted as an act of defiance or resistance to the reservation policy which gives only restricted rights of access. Resistance to state forestry intervention was also cited in Cline-Cole's (1996) study in Nigeria. Here he identified that locals ignored or perverted state forestry rules and regulations and physically evaded detection and control (p. 130). Asked why communities are not aware of their access rights for domestic purposes, an officer of the Forest Services Division commented that there is very little staff on

the ground to educate communities on their rights and obligations to the reserve. That education has generally been very limited and this explains why the Division has problems collaborating with communities to protect the reserve.

Resident community guards, however, have a healthy working relationship with community members. Their enforcement and protective roles had been compromised by the fact that they lived in the community. They rented houses built with illegal logs, received information on fires and illegal logging by outsiders in the reserve, and sometimes shared game and other products with friends in the community. These guards expressed a general fear that trying to enforce restricted access rights and allowable quantities would set the community against them.

We would be ejected from our houses if we seize logs for building purposes. They will tell us that if logs were not used, there would have been no houses for us to rent when we come to work in the community

Source: Forest guard, case study interview, 2005

Resident forest guards tended only to caution trespassers often not knowing themselves the full contents of their own management plan. They were much informed about the attacks on some colleagues in other parts of the country⁶ and were in no way going to antagonise people in their operational area. Visiting forestry officials and non-resident boundary line clearers however made it difficult for the community to depend on NTFPs for a livelihood. Officials conducted random checks on both the boundary clearing work of forestry workers and trespassers. They seized any product that members carry from the reserve. Forestry workers (who lived outside the community and were transported regularly by the FSD to site) who cleared the reserve boundary line also found ways of letting community members do their job. A male member of a discussion group remarked that:

When caught, the forest guards usually say if your ancestors had gone into the reserve, there would have been nothing left for you to collect. The guards try to mete out instant punishment such as asking you to weed their portion of the forest

⁶ These attacks on forest guards are reported extensively in the daily newspapers. At the time of fieldwork in 2005, the problem with community-forest guard tensions and conflict had again been breaking news in the Ghanaian dailies.

boundary line or seizing what you took from the reserve and using it themselves.

Source: Participant, male discussion group, 2005

A resident forest guard indicated that it was officials and other workers of the Forestry Services Division from the District Office who punished trespassers. According to him,

We in the community only give warnings because we do not want to antagonize the community. Our superiors who come in pickups on patrol from time to time most often seize collected products from trespassers and take them to the office.

Source: Forest guard, case study interview, 2005

This was buttressed by a community elder and leader who narrated:

There is what I will call *akasa* i.e. mild conflict between us and the forest guards. They have been cautioning us not to go into the forest... Anytime forestry officials come with the patrol vehicle they pack away a lot of things belonging to people who have illegally entered the forest e.g. pestles and mortars. If you have a permit to take the resource, you are let off the hook, anything short of that, everything is taken from you. We do not have any problem with the guards in this village. They would not take meat away from you even if you are caught emerging from the forest.

Source: Elder, case study interview, 2005

This is in spite of the fact that Act 624 (see section 5.2) clearly spells out the sanctions for trespassers into the reserve. The above statement from a guard illustrates that their presence in communities is only symbolic as they do not perform any real enforcement roles. Given the fact that these guards live within the communities, they have formed certain social bonds that make it difficult to enforce forest regulations. A member of a male discussion group revealed:

In the past, guards were arresting us but today this is not the case. They realise that we are dependent on the forest for our livelihood so they no longer worry

us. It was three days ago we learnt someone had been arrested. We even give them a portion of the day's catch (referring to game) when we bring it home.

Source: Participant, male discussion group, 2005

A forestry official suggested that the seized goods were 'supposed to be sold and proceeds paid into government chest'. One wonders how they leave their files in the offices to go and sell game or mortars and pestles in the market. Whether this is done or not should be common knowledge and was not worth pursuing.

Another source of conflict though covert stems from the work of 'hunters'. These are young men in the community who went round spotting timber species and lead illegal loggers to them. In return, they were either paid in cash or received beams and boards. The technical officer in charge of the reserve had had brushes with these 'hunters' because of their activities. There is no conflict with neighbouring communities over the resources of the reserve. This is because the reserve is large and each community thinks that it is harvesting products illegally. Within the off-reserve areas and farms, there is an absence of conflict between members because products are harvested on individual farms.

6.11 Logging and Community Livelihoods: A Blessing and a Curse

Logging has been embarked upon within the community farms and other off-reserve areas as well as the reserve since the demarcation of the reserve in the mid to late 1930s. This is because the reserve was established as a productive reserve (i.e. for the production of timber logs). Logging activities in and around the community have been both a blessing and a curse to the inhabitants. On the positive side, logging has had a multiplier effect on livelihoods and income sources. It has been a source of employment particularly to young men who are employed as chainsaw operators, operator assistants and hunters. Knowledge of the reserve helps the young men in their work as hunters who spot required timber species for the loggers. Operator assistants then weed around the marked tree and assist with its felling. This kind of employment benefits only the men in the community as no woman is employed here. However when illegal loggers fell logs and saw them into boards and beams (known locally as bush cut), both men and

women in the community are hired to carry the boards and beams from the bush to be loaded onto wayside cargo trucks. The general community economy also enjoys a boom when there is logging in the area. Rooms are rented as loggers move into the community to stay for the duration of their operations and trade particularly in cooked food (chop bar operations) increases. Unmarried women in the community may also benefit exclusively from the logging business. Some of them enter into serial relationships with the loggers in an effort to acquire some material goods. Some of these relationships continue long after loggers have left the community and sometimes lead to marriage.

Communities also benefit from logging activities in other ways. A few concessionaires have helped the community with some development activity. One such concessionaire was cited as providing labour and materials for re-roofing an old school block in the community whilst another widened and levelled the old road that leads to the main settlement. The vehicles of concessionaires have also been occasionally used to convey the sick and pregnant women in labour to the health post some ten kilometres away at Ateiku.

In spite of these benefits, loggers were accused of destroying farm produce in the course of their work on farms and off-reserve areas and failed to pay requisite and adequate compensation. This has often resulted in disagreements and conflict. In some cases reports had been made either to the District Assembly, the divisional chief at Mamponso or the oversight Forest Services Division at Dunkwa- On -Offin for amicable settlement of the conflict. However, some concessionaires have been noted to refuse to honour any settlement deals with the excuse that their agreements were with government and not communities and besides they had already paid large sums of money to the paramount and divisional chiefs by way of social agreement responsibilities. An elder summed up the plight of the community when he related this story:

A contractor from Kumasi worked in the secondary forest; on our farms. He created a lot of problems for us because he destroyed our cocoa and food crops. His activities brought a lot of conflict. He refused to pay for damaged crops. My mother is about 105 years old. This contractor damaged a lot of her cocoa trees and refused to pay. I took him to a lot of places to make him pay up but he refused to pay. The chief on whose land we are living indicated that the contractor should agree with individual farmers on what compensation to pay and how it is paid. But the

contractor always refused to pay the full amount. If for instance he has agreed a total damage of ₵250,000, he will pay about ₵100,000 or ₵50,000 and that ends it. Because we do not have money to litigate with him he used these tactics to refuse full payment. I must say that a few people also received full payment. He came to make fools of us. During haulage of his logs, he would damage cocoa and other crops, pledge payment and refuse to pay. He did that until he left this village not too long ago.

Source: Elder, case study interview, 2005

The law on payment of compensation is said to be archaic (Interview; District Forestry Officer, 2005). It did not pay to go to court for redress. The destruction of crops and non-payment of compensation to farmers is well documented in the literature on logging in off-reserve areas in Ghana (see works of Kotey et al. 1998; Amanor 2003; deGrassi 2003; Sarfo-Mensah 2005). In this community, however, farmers did not destroy timber saplings as is reported by Amanor (2003) and Kotey et al (1998). They prevented concessionaires from logging on their farms and gave their trees to illegal loggers on a benefit sharing arrangement. According to them, they benefited in this way and did not get cheated. Logging also destroys NTFPs and other tree species in the process. The felled timber as it lands destroyed not only mushrooms, snails, medicinal plants and others but killed game as well. Game that is destroyed may be trapped in tree hollows. This situation, loggers claimed they cannot prevent from happening no matter how careful they were. However what was destroyed depended on the length of the concession period. The longer the felling period, the more loggers could avoid felling in some areas until resources had been harvested there. The destruction of NTFPs that, women, the poor and landless relied upon to supplement farm incomes meant that all those involved in the chain of collection, processing, transportation and marketing lost some form of income and therefore a livelihood. It appears that both men and women win and lose with the operation of loggers and concessionaires. The extent to which this occurs differs. Women lost more than their male counterparts since in addition to getting their farms damaged, they relied more on non timber resources which loggers destroyed in the process of felling trees. In spite of the negative impact of logging and of open cast mining (if

it becomes a reality in the community), a section of the community – the young men – supported that logging should continue and mining should start in earnest. The support may be interpreted to mean that they were desperate for a livelihood, they had no farms to be destroyed or that they preferred immediate gratification to long term sustainability of livelihoods.

6.12 Environmental Awareness and Understanding

The community has a special relationship with the land on which they live and derive their livelihood. The belief in an earth deity that controls soil fertility and as such their very livelihoods means that the land and all that is on it must be protected so that it would continue to provide sustenance. Again rituals must be performed to acknowledge the bounty of the deity and to ask for more from time to time. Apart from the land, trees, streams and forest resources, community members also regarded aspects of their material culture as part of their environment, hamlets, cottages, houses, school, boreholes, palm oil mill, churches, grinding mill, chief's house etc. situated on Osenso lands. As such, this embraced all hamlets and cottages inhabited by migrant tenant farmers. The inclusion of the material aspect with the environment portrays a better understanding of the concept. This is in the light of current perception of environment as not exclusively nature but the social interaction with nature (see Fairhead and Leach, 1995 1996, 1998; Barrow 2002; Leach and Fairhead 2002; Fairhead and Leach 2004).

Members of the community perceived their environment in different ways. This is because they used different aspects of the environment for their livelihoods. One significant difference though is perception by gender. A count of resources taken from both the secondary forest and the reserve indicated that men knew of more resources than women. Men could count as many as eleven timber species (that concessionaires usually fell) and name most tree species used for carving mortars and pestles as well as for making chew sticks. This is because apart from the fact that they used these in carving, they were also contracted by women to cut ropes and canes which were then processed by the women for sale. Men by the nature of the harvesting they did in the reserve particularly knew the reserve very well and could describe areas in which certain NTFPs were in abundance. Women also collected NTFPs but were afraid to venture deep into the reserve for a number of reasons. First, women claimed that the reserve was dark and spooky and this

was reinforced by a belief that such areas were the habitats of dwarfs who were blamed for spiriting away community members that had been declared missing in the reserve. Second, women also claimed that it was difficult to obtain the resource they wanted because of the distance required to travel to reach their locations in the reserve. For instance, they had to travel some twenty kilometres (twelve miles) within the reserve and stay for three days to collect snails when they are in season. The threat of disturbing wild animals and snakes also made the journey into the reserve hazardous. Within their farms and fallow lands however, women knew the layout well and could identify which areas NTFPs could be obtained. Women were aware of their immediate environment, the one closer to them and that which they interacted with on a daily basis while men interacted with all sections of the environment irrespective of distance given their work patterns and were thus aware of both their immediate and external environments. Within the community men had a different awareness and knowledge of the environment than women. There is no doubt from the study that women depended more on forest resources than their male counterparts but the extraction of these resources was done indirectly by the men. Knowledge about what type of resources abound, their use and where they may be harvested was shared knowledge and handed down generationally. This finding is in tune with the work of Gururani (2002) when she expressed the position that women's knowledge about the environment had been obtained through discussions with men and not because of their roles. It appears then that whether women are seen to have in depth knowledge about their environment that surpasses that of men or whether such knowledge is jointly shared with men depended upon the peculiar circumstances that women found themselves.

When community members tend to cooperate over livelihood activities and strategies, such environmental knowledge is shared but when women are left on their own to struggle it out by themselves, then their acquisition of environmental knowledge becomes immense. The finding here on gender and environmental perception is at odds with political ecology positions on gender, environment and development in which women are identified more with the environment as a result of their experiential expertise obtained from their reproductive roles (see works of Dankelman and Davidson 1988; Jones and Carswell 2004a). It however confirms some positions within this school that women do not experience the environment in the same way globally, experiences

being mediated by variables such as geographical location, class, age, ethnicity (Leach et al. 1995; Leach, 2003) other personal and physical circumstances (fear, distance to the resource), type of livelihood activity and level of cooperation with men in the activity.

Community perceptions of the environment were also shaped by the common social and religious activities in which they are a part. Within the worldview of the community is the Osen stream which is inhabited by a god. Annual rituals are performed that include the pouring of libation and slaughtering of sheep at the stream not only for the Osen god but also for all the lesser gods of the land. The ritual site together with adjoining land had been demarcated as a sacred grove and community members had been forbidden to go to that site for fear of desecrating it. Another site of spiritual significance to community members was the royal cemetery. This had all the large timber trees left intact and only recently had the thick undergrowth been weeded. The royal cemetery also had an air of reverence around it and was demarcated together with the Osen grove as special environmental sites in the community.

The benefits of trees in the reserve and off-reserve areas were clear to members. Together with the undergrowth, the forest acted as a buffer to shield their settlements from storms. It also provided the much needed rain that helped their crops to grow. They depended on NTFPs as an alternative source of livelihood and relied on timber on their farms as an insurance against contingencies. In this direction they could seek the chief's permission to fell such timber to construct new houses or repair old ones and to sell off some boards and beams to meet medical bills (Chambers and Leach 1987). Hence leaving tree species standing as part of the farming system ensured that contingencies were met effectively. It was emphasised that all valuable timber species within farms had been harvested by concessionaires and so the ones felled by farmers with permission from the chief were not valuable to the loggers. Farmers also benefited from trees standing on their farms in other ways. Trees provided shade for farmers and the young seedlings and plants while their roots tended to prevent soil erosion by binding the soil. Dead branches could also be used as fuel wood at home while dead leaves dropped to manure the soil. Community members were also aware of the negative effects that logging had on the physical environment. Apart from the complaints of destruction to farm crops, they also discussed and knew that logging

negatively affected rainfall amounts and patterns as well as removed any wind break protection that they may be enjoying at present. They were also aware that logging destroyed the NTFPs they relied on. The sound of the chain saw drove fast game deep into the reserve where it was more difficult to hunt and trap. There appeared to be very little difference in the knowledge of community members as to the benefits derived from the physical environment and this accounted for their common stance against concessionaires, canoe builders and illegal loggers operating within their environment in spite of the fact that some were beneficiaries in terms of employment.

Community members had knowledge of traditional medicines and the use of specific plants, herbs, seeds, roots or barks to cure such ailments as piles (*kooko*), whitlow, stomach, eye and ear problems, snake bites and menstrual pains. Roots and barks were usually preserved in alcoholic beverages and drunk as both medicines and an aphrodisiac while leaves were either ground and administered onto the problem spot or boiled and drunk. Both men and women possessed such knowledge as it was shared and usually used as first aid before visiting the clinic at Ateiku. Traditional ecological knowledge for curing ill health was so widespread within the community that there was no professional traditional healer in the community.

Community members were also aware of the extent of degradation to the physical environment and the causes of such degradation. They were aware that over cultivation of farmland left the soil infertile and led to low crop yields. For them this happened when the soil 'loses its fat'. Farmlands that had become infertile had been abandoned and these had become colonised by what was locally called *bushia* or *akyeampong*. Adult members of the community and some children could easily identify *bushia* vegetation with unproductive land. Men were particularly aware of the farm practices that served both to encourage farming activities as well as destroy the physical environment. They knew the benefits of bush burning during land preparation but cautioned that if this was not done properly, bush fire could be started and this would destroy the environment. Bush burning was always done in groups so that the fire could be controlled. Secondly, members were apprehensive about the possibility of gold mining in their area in the near future. A gold prospecting company had already done feasibility studies and had pegged some farmlands for possible pay-off and mining within them.

Members indicated that though monies promised was huge, they were not prepared to sacrifice long term livelihoods for short term gains not to mention the extent of degradation that would be caused to the physical environment. A few young men were excited about the prospect of an alternative livelihood in the area but elderly men and women generally felt that mining would do nothing but wreck havoc on the land and deprive them of any meaningful livelihoods. They cited the case of mining in another settlement Agyempoma and queried whether the indigenes benefited in any way from the operations after they had sold their farms to the mining company.

6.13 Traditional Community Natural Resource Management Systems

Communities have long recognised that resources within their environments are not finite and have put in structures, principles and techniques to ensure that such resources are judiciously used by both the present generation and posterity. The evolution of indigenous resource management systems has been done within the framework of community worldviews in accordance with their ethics, norms and beliefs. Such systems have relied upon building reciprocal relationships among families and communities to redistribute risk and to strengthen social obligations (Field-Juma 1996). They ensured equity and provided checks and balances within the use of resources. Before the creation of the reserve, community laws, taboos and indigenous knowledge or ethno science regulated the use of environmental resources. Today some of these laws are provided for in the official forestry policy. These traditional resource management practices thus challenge some theoretical and empirical positions on communal use of resources. They nevertheless support the counter positions that there are differences in the use of resources on open access basis in which there is the element of free riding and those used based on common property rights. Traditional land and other natural resources management practices identified below have contested western science narratives on natural resource degradation (see Leach and Fairhead 2002b; Adams et al. 2003; Zimmerer 2004).

6.13.1 Land Tenure Systems

A system of control and land use has been evolved in the form of tenurial arrangements that define the manner in which land resources may be obtained and the conditions subject to which they may be used. Land tenure systems clearly distinguish between rights of access to land resources and the loci of power of control over their use. This arrangement has evolved from patterns of ancestral settlements on the land. Land ownership is therefore predominantly communal and its control or administration is vested in the leader or his/her appointee such as a family head while community chiefs hold land in fiduciary for the whole community. Lineage members who require land to farm approach the head and this reverts back to the lineage upon the member's demise. The vesting of the control function in a family head or chief guarantees security of opportunity for all those with access rights to the resource (Okoth-Ogendo 1994). It also ensures equity between and across generations. Thus the control function determines the rate of expansion or contraction or membership in the unit by means other than by birth and the distribution or redistribution of access rights in response to increased demand for land. The control function also determines important land use decisions such as specific land usages in particular areas of the community territory eg. weeding, planting and harvesting times, the duration of fallow periods and the nature of resource preservation where these required collective action by the community (Okoth-Ogendo 1994).

A number of occurrences have contributed to the present status of land tenure in the southern forest zone as a whole. First is the use of native authorities in the form of paramount and divisional chiefs during the British colonial rule. The indirect rule led to the alienation of land from lineage heads and village chiefs and this was vested in the paramountcies. Second is the commercialisation of agriculture, mining and the establishment of rubber plantations and logging in which vast tracts of family and community lands were sold outright or given out on long leases. Such cash transactions in land have tended to alienate kin groups from lineage and community lands and have led to the individualisation of land in communities in which bought land can be inherited by children upon a father's death. A third innovation in the tenure system has been the introduction of share cropping with tenants and this takes two major forms in the community. Land must first be acquired with the presentation of alcoholic drinks and a token fee that is

determined by the family head, chief or individual land owner concerned. There is the *abunu* system in which the harvest or proceeds from the sale of the harvest is shared equally between the landlord and tenant on a fifty –fifty basis. This benefit sharing arrangement is agreed upon when the land owner gives up an already cultivated cash crop farm to the tenant either as a result of old age, ill health or a lack of customary successor who wants to continue with farming. The benefit sharing is on equal basis because the land owner has already expended a lot of energy and resources in clearing primary forest and investing in it. When primary forest land is given out for the cultivation of cash crops then the benefit sharing system is *abusa* in which the land owner takes one portion while the tenant takes two portions i.e. 1:2. The implication is that the tenant is the one who invests energy and resources in clearing the primary forest and cultivating it. This is also the case with land that has been given out for the cultivation of food crops. In all instances what is shared is what is left after costs have been deducted. Conflict sometimes arises when the landowner perceives that the tenant is cheating him out of his due share of the harvest or proceeds. It may be that the tenant is deliberately cheating such as inflating costs or that he has a genuine case for failing to declare a good harvest such as a period of illness. A perception of cheating may result in the case being sent to the elders for arbitration in which case the farm may be divided according to the benefit sharing system so that each person can tend to his portion of the farm. Occasionally however, some land owners do not send tenants to community elders but report them to the police at Twifo-Praso with unpleasant consequences. Here, tenants may be detained in police cells and threatened by the police. This recourse is taken by land owners who wield power and have the right connections within the police service or who have money to ‘grease the palms’ of some unscrupulous policemen to do the dirty job. Chiefs have been cited as the main culprits in this instance.

Early migrant tenant farmers in the community had the opportunity of buying their farmlands through outright sales or going by the benefit sharing arrangements. The choice open to them depended upon the particular ethnic group that had land. Whereas the Wassa group and integrated Ashanti settlers resorted to benefit sharing tenurial arrangements, the Twifo group in neighbouring central region sold land outright to the migrants. The two types of land acquisition have profound implications for land management within the farming system and hence

the livelihoods of people in the community. Tenant farmers mostly embark on extensive and intensive farming. Fallow periods are drastically reduced or non-existent which leaves the soil infertile whilst migrant land owners leave sufficient fallow areas and do not over work their land. The behaviour of the two groups of farmers is different probably because tenant farmers fear that someday they will lose access to their farms and therefore want to extract as much as they can from their brief stay on the land. Fear of losing land is real given the numerous conflicts that abound between them and their land lords. Outright sale of land to migrant farmers ensures security of tenure. As such, common sense is applied to the use of the land and owners live off the land for a long time. A male migrant land owner during an informal discussion remarked that 'it is better to eat everyday than to eat everything at one go and have nothing to eat thereafter'.

6.13.2 Natural Resource Conservation Practices

In addition to the control and redistribution of land in an effort to manage land resources, the community also uses culture and belief systems to conserve environmental resources both for present and future generations. Both the sacred grove at the Osen stream and the royal burial ground have spiritual and religious significance for the community. The taboos on entry and desecration of the sites have helped them to be rich both in flora and fauna. These are important sites for medicinal plants and herbs and one can only take such plants with permission from the chief and elders particularly the overseer of the sites. The huge timber and tree species that grow there particularly at the stream site have helped to protect the water from drying up and created its own eco-system and micro-climate. In recent times however, the shortage of land for farming has led to encroachment of these sites. Second, the farming system practiced itself ensures the conservation of land resource. Fallowing and mixed cropping both have their advantages in restoring soil fertility, and allowing regeneration of secondary vegetation and increase in fauna. In addition, the institution of taboo days on Tuesday and *Adimfie* ensures that land is not extensively farmed and that it is sufficiently rested. It is believed that members who flout these taboo days will be accosted by spirits on the farm and such fear prevents them from flouting the taboo. Third, there is prohibition on the felling of certain tree species because of their spiritual and medicinal significance. The bark of the mahogany tree is potent medicinally for the cure of a

number of ailments. As such, community members are forbidden to cut down the tree. There is also *ahoma bosom* and others that have spiritual connotations and used medicinally but these are found in the reserve. *Ahoma bosom* is so revered that anyone who goes in to take a part of it is expected either to place an egg beneath it or to strip naked before harvesting. Fourth, customary and community laws prohibit the killing of pregnant game in the off-reserve areas. As such, hunting is banned between August and March when most animals are gestating. As Akans, community law forbids the eating of the clan's totem. This ensures that fauna is conserved. The totems of Akan clans are regarded as sacred because oral tradition has it that the particular animal used had in the past come to the rescue of some founding members of the clan. For instance, the buffalo is sacred to the Bretuo clan, as the parrot and crow are to the Agona and Asona clans respectively.

6.14 Conclusion

Community livelihoods are organised within the context of dwindling environmental resources. Members' awareness of the nature of their environment and centuries of interaction with this has enabled them to put in place efficient management systems aimed at ensuring that they can cope with the dwindling resources as well as sustainably manage it for the present and for posterity. In addition, community members have drawn on traditional ecological knowledge to heal various ailments, organise farming and other livelihood activities as well as in domestic life.

Community members have multiple livelihoods although farming is the major livelihood that is embarked upon by almost all adult members. Women, the landless and poor also rely heavily on the resources of the forest for survival in spite of the restricted rights of access to the reserve for both domestic and commercial usage. Conflict is endemic in the social organisation of the community although this is subtle and therefore does not threaten to disrupt the social order. It is prevalent and found both among community members and between members and people on adjacent lands as well as between members and loggers and forestry and District revenue officials. It is present in areas of organisation of farming, tenancy and benefit sharing arrangements, collection and harvesting of NTFPs, the payment of market tolls and the observation of customary and community laws. Thus having a common livelihood and sharing an interest in livelihood resources

promote conflict albeit covert among community members and between members and perceived common enemies. Organising the community in this instance is carefully balanced between the promotion of community values and a resolution of conflicts that arise from the communal relations although conflict resolution between community and officials has been problematic. In the light of the above no community is conflict free no matter how high communal values and sentiments are held and practiced. The institution of land tenure and traditional resource conservation practices may be rooted in the conception of environmental governance and developed in reaction to the concept of the tragedy of the commons (see Hardin 1968). Hardin's argument that the commons will be degraded as a result of the open access policy in this case does not apply because contingency arrangements through the institution of taboos and customs have checked degradation.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Access to Community Livelihood Resources: Intervening Policies, Institutions and Processes

7.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses gender and access to livelihood resources. It identifies the formal and informal policies, institutions and processes within households, community, market and state that have mediated community access to livelihood resources and the subsequent livelihood activities or strategies pursued. In doing this I highlight their operation and impact to disadvantage women and the poor. Within the context of the study these include customary and community laws, state forest reservation and logging policies, farm gate transactions, land disputes, local government and state infrastructural development and toll policies. In the course of such discussions I attempt to first, highlight how community members perceive and manipulate constraints that inhibit access to their livelihoods as well as show how social agency is employed to access resources. Second, I highlight the contested arenas of power in the allocation of resources. I examine the gendered and institutional access to resources. I also discuss and examine other personal and environmental factors that mediate access. In addition, I emphasise the erosion of customary social support systems particularly in the wake of the ERP/SAPs and the gendered dimension impact. The discussion is made within the context of the theories regarding the politics of access to natural resources between community and state and between men and women. I also consider whether the expectations of local communities are met by reservation and logging policy.

7.2 Access to and Control over Livelihood Resources

The various livelihood activities undertaken by community members generally have relied upon the use of capital assets in varying combinations. Table 7.1 indicates the most used capital assets for different livelihood activities.

Table 7.1 Livelihood Activities and Most Used Capital Assets

Activity	Capital asset used
Farming	N, F, H, S, P
NTFPs	N, H, S
Small scale production	F, H, P, I
Alcohol Distillery	F, H, P
Petty commodity trading	F, H
Cooked food trading	F, H
Services provision	F, H, P, I
Marketing of crops and processed NTFPs	P, H, S

Source: Case study data, 2005

Where N = Natural capital

F = financial capital

H = Human capital

P = Physical capital

I = Information capital

S = Social capital

The nature of capital assets identified within the community for various livelihood activities have been set out in table 7.2.

Table 7.2 Community Livelihood Capital Assets

TYPE OF CAPITAL ASSET	SOURCE
Natural	Forest land, stream, stones, fuelwood, NTFPs, clay
Financial	Incomes from sale of farm and NTFP products, loans, incomes from other livelihood activities, and remittances from migrants (for the purchase of seedlings, hoes, cutlasses, fertilizers, spraying machine, chemicals wellington boots and labour
Human	Personal labour, hired labour, traditional farming knowledge and skills, good health, knowledge of the environment and skill in the harvesting and processing of NTFPs
Social	Family, kinship and community networks, political connections
Physical	Road, markets, vehicles, farm implements
Information	Radio education, oral communication

Source: Case study data, 2005

Access to and control over livelihood resources is critical for the rural poor in terms of their survival and well-being. Secure access to assets determines the incentives and opportunities for them to among others ensure household food security, earn income by producing marketable surpluses, accumulate capital and assets, access financial resources and invest in alternative income generating strategies (Moore not dated). Although some livelihood assets/resources are available to the community generally, there are significant differences between those available to men and women and within the groups of men and women. Access to livelihood resources within the community is thus seen in terms of gender and other axes of social relations such as class and age. Institutions such as the

household, community, District Assembly, the market, state and international community operate at these levels and offer opportunities or constraints to access livelihood resources. Table 7.2 indicates the livelihood assets or resources that community members rely upon for their livelihoods. These have been categorized into six types: natural, financial, social, human, physical and information. Although access to these assets has been discussed separately below there is nevertheless overlap between factors and institutions. The format taken here is to aid the discussion and help isolate the issues.

7.3 Natural Capital Resources/ Assets

Natural capital represents the natural resource stocks from which resource flows and from which livelihoods are derived (eg. land, water, wildlife, biodiversity, forest resources and wider environmental resources) (Carney 1998; Scoones 1998; DFID 1999a).

The most used and most needed natural resources by the community are land and NTFPs. These form the basis of the livelihoods for a great majority of members. Access to land within the community was mediated by its fertility, custom and community law, land disputes and state policy of forest reservation. On the other hand access to non-timber forest resources was mediated by personal factors as distance, age and health of community members, competition between men and women, community, local government and state policies of reservation. The policy of reservation has not only alienated farm land from the community to create a shortage but also alienated all forest resources from the community, allowing only restricted rights and the use of permits. The logging policy has also negatively impacted on non-timber forest products both within the reserve and the secondary forest. As women, the poor and landless have been identified as the groups that rely most heavily on these resources due to the peculiar circumstances in which they find themselves regarding livelihood activities, their access is effectively threatened.

One factor that determines general access to land within the community is its fertility. Infertile and unproductive land is abandoned and taken over by *bushia* secondary growth. The causes of the infertility have been discussed in chapter six to include high population densities, variable rainfall patterns and intensity and over cropping. Other factors determining access are institutional in nature. At the

community level, custom and laws dictate access and control. Land is communally owned by lineages and lineage heads who are invariably males hold it and administer it in trust for community members. Land may also be owned by a stool in which case traditional councils have allodial titles to the land and hold these in trust for communities (Rattray 1929; Arhin 1983; Duncan 2004). This is in conformity to traditional worldviews that land belongs to the living, the dead and the yet to be born stool subjects or lineage members. In this regard, all stool subjects and lineage members regardless of sex have an inherent right of access to land (usufructuary rights). Land therefore can be worked by members of the kinship group and inherited only by members of that unit. The lineage is thus important in determining rights to land and other immovable property. In spite of such usufructuary rights of access to land, females within the lineage are expected to rely on their husbands for use rights of the latter's land or if single may be given only a small piece by the family head. Thus under Akan customary law, spouses have only use rights to lineage land. Within the matrilineal kinship descent system of the community therefore women's individual rights to lineage land can be exercised out of marriage, during marriage and upon divorce or in widowhood (subject to certain conditions). A widow has no right to inherit property (land in this case) of her deceased husband for two main reasons. First, land may be lineage land and second, customary asymmetrical rights of spouses regard property as individual property of the man, the spouse having no ownership stake. She however may continue to have use rights of the land provided she had children by him, continues to live in the deceased's house and does not remarry. This aside, custom regards initial right to land when this is accomplished through the clearing of the land and this task is generally assigned to men.

The combination of factors gives women no control over land. Respondents claimed that women may own or control land through outright sales, as gifts or as tenants. Women who have control over their land make decisions regarding what portion to use during a particular season and whether they want to plant food crops or cash crops. They are also in a position to decide whether they want to transfer their land through sale, inheritance, gift or tenancy. Women who jointly bought land as migrants with their husbands however either take over the farms completely or share with members of the husband's lineage upon his death. They may also be given part of the land as gift while the man is alive in the presence of relatives from

both sides as witnesses to the transaction. Other women also had land gifts from personal land owned by their fathers or inherited such land upon the death of their fathers.

Women within the community however fell in three groups in terms of land ownership: those who claimed they owned land personally through gifts, inheritance or as tenants in their own right, those who had joint ownership with their husbands and those who indicated they were non-owners of their land but only caretakers (share croppers). Most women accessed multiple plots of land through various means and thus fell in more than one group. The majority of elderly women were in the first group, both migrants and indigenes. This is because early migrant women had jointly bought land or taken tenancies with their spouses and so had secured land as gifts or are still continuing with the tenancy arrangements even after the death of their spouses. A number of such migrants also come from patrilineal kinship descent systems where children inherit property. Widows therefore control such properties until children are old enough to take over. Also elderly indigenous women could claim ownership of land that was personally acquired through clearing by their husbands since such land did not count as lineage land. Women classified in the second group are both elderly and young who still live with their husbands. Much younger women comprise the third group who are either recent migrants or members of the lineage of an early settler migrant. These are yet to inherit land or access it through inheritance. Women generally have problems getting tenancies in their own right other than through men as husbands or family members. A respondent summed up the sentiments of women regarding tenancy and gender:

Men in this village stand a better change of getting land to work than females because by tradition it is the man who goes in to arrange for the acquisition of land for the household to farm. Even if a woman is interested in seeking land to farm on, the husband or a man has to lead her to the landlord.

Source: Case study interview, 2005

The role played by men in the negotiations for land tenancies can be explained in a number of ways. First, it may be linked to a societal perception that women are irrational. Landlords thus would prefer to negotiate with 'rational' men

and hold them to account should the terms of the transaction be breached later on. Instances have been cited of landlords using the police to intimidate tenants who had not kept to the oral contract. Second, since tenancy agreements are orally made, the terms of the contract may shift during the farming season. The anticipated insecurity of tenure prompts women who may be less able to resist the unfavourable alterations to use men as a front so that in the event of any alterations the men can resist on their behalf. It appears in the case of access to farm land, constraints have been overcome by women and other members going in for multiple tenancies, becoming caretakers (share croppers) of some absentee farmers or working on portions of land bought or tenanted to parents or in-laws to meet their requirements. This is evident in the summaries below.

Auntie Kaya, a 52 years old married woman worked on her husband's three and a half poles cocoa farm but had managed to access her own piece of land from a friend using the *abunu* share system for cocoa and another on *abusa* terms to cultivate food crops.

Esther is a thirty year old married woman. She worked three plots of land which belonged to her father-in-law planting cocoa, cassava and oil palm.

Hannah is a fifty year old married migrant who worked on two plots of land her husband helped her to acquire on *abunu* terms. She farmed cocoa and food crops separately on the two plots.

Source: Case study data, 2005

The findings on access to and control of land conform broadly with those of the agriculture study by Duncan (2004). In the country wide study, the author also identified, inheritance, gifts, rights of use of husbands land, sharecropping as tenants and outright sales as ways in which women access farm lands in the regions studied. Each region however had its own peculiarity in that one or more of the means predominated (full ownership in Ashanti; sharecropping in Brong Ahafo and pleading in the North) although generally the majority of women had use rights of

their husbands land. In a Niger study, Doka and Monimart (2004) identified land gifts from husbands, rental and pledging as the most common source of women's access to land. Land that has been given out as gift was however taken back upon divorce. Renting within the context of their study could be likened to a short tenancy in the context of this particular study as it was limited to only one farming season and even this had to be backed by a husband during the negotiations. Pledging of land involved the giving of one's land in exchange for a cash loan with the land either returned upon payment or sometimes converted into a sale when the loan could not be repaid. The authors identified that women who belonged to *susu* (informal saving) groups were in a position to access pledged land and eventually buy these outright.

Other factors, discussed in detail in chapter six affect women's access to land. They included the presence of land disputes either over boundaries, inheritance or gifts, the use rights of husbands land and the need for extra labour. Whereas boundary disputes are resolved quite easily by elders, that over inheritance and gifts may drag on for some time and prevent women from making any meaningful investment in the land under contestation; the latter being the result of multiple interests in land that result from the labour input of both elementary family members and kinsmen. Respondents indicated that relatives of a deceased man may question how a land property of the deceased man came to be gifted out or inherited by a spouse or child and this may start a protracted dispute between the two lineages. It was also claimed that married women have use rights to farm lands of their husbands. In the first few years of the cultivation of cash crops, women can intercrop the farm with food crops. They were likely to receive a small portion of land from their husband when the cash crops start maturing so that they could cultivate the food crops. This is because the mature cash crops now prevent the food crops from growing due to lack of sun shine. Women also claimed that it was difficult for them to expand their farms because of the need for labour to perform traditional male tasks such as land clearance and preparation. The absence of such labour in part accounted for the smaller farm sizes.

Non-timber forest products are also an important natural resource upon which community livelihoods are based. Access and control over these also depend upon physical and institutional circumstances. One determinant of access is the location of the resources in the community. It was fairly easy to access resources

that were found within the secondary forest or *mfufu kwae*. Here community members harvested what is found on fallow portions of their own farms and therefore did not compete with others for the resource. The acquisition of a resource such as game depended to a large extent on one's gender and skill in setting traps or hunting the game. Women in general did not hunt or trap game because it was a male specific activity. Even here some men who are aged or less skilled did not embark on this activity.

Physical determinants of access to resources of the forest reserve included the distance from the community to the reserve coupled with a fear of the unknown while in the reserve. This effectively ruled out the aged who had health problems making the journey, some women who were saddled with a lot of housekeeping and child nurturing chores and generally the fearful which included a lot of women. Distance also prevented those who travel to carry large quantities of the resource back to the community.

The distance to the forest reserve is also very far and this has reduced the number of people who visit the reserve. Those who manage to make the trip cannot haul a sizeable quantity of resources.

(Janet)

It is very scary to go into the forest reserve. We usually go in groups.

(Effia)

Source: Case study interviews, 2005.

The policies of the District Assembly and state all regulate access to and use of NTFPs both within the secondary forest and the reserve. The harvesting of bamboo poles for domestic use as well as the tapping of wild oil palm trees for wine even in the secondary forest must be sanctioned by the District Assembly for a fee. Focus discussions indicated that the community usually 'stole' to use such resources until the authorities finally caught up with them and sanctioned them accordingly. In this instance, it was men and in particular the youth who had their access to bamboo poles and wild oil palm trees curtailed. This is because they were

responsible for repairing houses and for tapping palm wine which they sell themselves in gallons or allowed wives and other female family members to retail. Another state policy, referred to earlier in this study deals with the policy of reservation and logging. The 1994 Forest and Wildlife Policy is the most current in operation (GoG 1994). The focus is on environment protection and sustainable resource utilization for economic development. The policy offers an enabling environment for businesses based on timber and forest resources to grow in the form of incentives and assistance, a reduction in bureaucratic red tapeism to aid smooth operations, and local market development. Thus this policy appears to be business oriented. In spite of the fact that it recognizes that fringe communities rely on forests for their livelihoods, no section within the policy is dedicated to ensuring that such livelihoods are not negatively affected. When rural communities are mentioned, it is to do with helping with management of the reserves created. The policy on logging ensures logging is done not only within production reserves but largely in off-reserve forests where people have established their farms. As timber concessions sometimes cover farms; respondents indicated that trees they deliberately left and nurtured to provide shade for young tree crops, seedling and themselves as well as to protect soils from erosion had been felled by concessionaires.

The logging policy also recognizes stools as landowners and community chiefs as owners of timber resources within farms and other off-farm areas outside the reserves. A forestry official indicated that as a result of the official recognition of stools and chiefs as owners of land and trees, timber concessionaires only do business particularly with the stools and not farmers who directly rely on the resource for a livelihood (see chapters four and six for more discussions). Responses backed by focus discussions revealed that women, the poor and landless have defied reservation regulations and harvested non timber resources not only for domestic use but for commercial purposes as well e.g. with the sale of *awedeaba* seeds, canes, chew sticks and sponges. Some respondents claimed that they used to apply for permits to collect commercial quantities but have since stopped because business had become unprofitable. Although, the impression is created that community members have to 'steal' to tap wild oil palm trees for wine or enter the reserve, the act is seen as either one of defiance or resistance to local government and forestry regulations as well as a challenge to state officials to do their worst or a

desperate attempt at achieving self provisioning. Forest communities resist such regulations because of the perceived injustice meted out to them by the state and its agents by alienating their land. Their mode of resistance has been aptly described as 'a culture of conspiracy' (Amanor 2005:16), and 'weapons of the weak, (Scott 1976).

The state has embarked upon relations of exploitation and prevention of access to land and forest products with the case study community. These relations are based upon the state's perception of environmental degradation and conservation efforts in the interest of the public good. These struggles between community and state have not ended in concerted efforts by the community generally or women in particular to protect or fight for their livelihood base as has occurred elsewhere in South East Asia (Chipko movement) and East Africa (Green belt Movement; ICDPs and COBRA). This failure is either due to a lack of concerted leadership to mobilize the community or a resignation to their plight and acceptance of their situation. One thing though stands out and this is the customary management of the resource base (discussed in chapter six); the collective viewing of the resource and subsistence base not as open access but as common property with rules of access and use. Even in the reserve where there is the likelihood of free riding (and indeed there have been instances identified), the action of state officials tend to restrict this. A case then for a 'tragedy of the commons' (see Hardin 1968) befalling this community cannot be made regarding access to and use of land and forest resources. Rather the interventions both informal; and formal put in place are in line with literature on the management of common pool resources and common property regimes (see Vivian 1991; Ostrom et al. 1999; Messerschmidt 1999).

The relations between women and men over access to land and forest resources can be explained in terms of Gender, Environment and Development perspectives of political ecology theories although women in this instance may not be identified more with the environment than their male counterparts. Community members' differential relations with the environment have been informed by the following: first, men's dominant position within the household, second, gendered environmental rights and responsibilities and third, differential access to resources particularly land.

7.4 Financial Capital Resources/Assets

Financial capital represents the financial resources which are available to people (whether savings, supplies of credit or regular remittances or pensions) and which provide them with different livelihood options (Carney 1998; Scoone, 1998; DFID 1999a). Respondents indicated that financial capital was mostly needed to purchase farm inputs (physical capital) such as implements (cutlass, hoe, spraying machine), seedlings, chemicals (fertilizers, weedicides, pesticides), protective gear (Wellington boots) and hire labour. Financial capital was also required either to set up other non farm livelihood activities or expand existing ones. Women needed credit not only to farm but to process cassava into *gari*, palm fruits into palm oil, invest in trading, hairdressing and other businesses. Generally this was obtained from the sale of farm crops (green harvest or mature produce) and NTFPs, incomes from other livelihood activities, remittances from migrants, and loans from family, friends or 'shylock' money lenders. Apart from the sale of food crops, cash crops and raw or processed non-timber forest resources and income from other livelihood activities, the other income sources were not remunerative.

Respondents indicated that remittances were low and sporadic, friends and family were struggling to make ends meet and did not help much while traditional money lenders were too expensive to use as they charged not less than a fifty percent interest. Besides, one had to move out of the community into others to access their services. The levels of financial capital available to households and individuals from their own resources were therefore generally low. This may also be explained in terms of a vicious cycle of events within the community that relate to low incomes (as a result of the nature of the livelihood activities pursued and weak bargaining position for improved and fair prices) and a low savings culture. As earlier indicated regarding the income budgets of households, not much of such resources got ploughed back into livelihood activities as a substantial amount went into household maintenance and social payments (funeral contributions, market tolls, weddings etc). Financial capital is thus important not only to acquire physical and social capital but also human capital. Some general comments from women indicate how difficult it is for them to access credit.

Esi, thirty eight years old and the second wife of her husband, farmed a plot of land four poles in size. For

her to acquire a loan was difficult and money to hire labour was a big problem and this acted as a constraint on farming.

Janet who is the second wife of her husband worked on her own one and a half poles of land in addition to helping her husband on his farm. She indicated that she did not use insecticides because she had no money to purchase them. According to her, 'both men and women lack money to farm. It is difficult to get financial assistance from other people because they are also crying for help'.

Another respondent, Dinah, a twenty three year old married woman farmed cocoa and food crops such as cassava and cocoyam. She could not afford Wellington boots. She was frustrated saying that 'there is no credit facility for us in this community. There is no self-help group to assist us in getting money to help us to farm. We have no source of information and advice from both agricultural officers and other people to teach us new technology and methods of improving our farms'.

Source: Case study data, 2005

A few women on the other hand indicated that although they did not have money, the use of fertilizers made food tasteless, gave food crops short shelf lives, had adverse effects on the fertility of the soil and had negative health consequences and so they did not use it. They had no scientific proof to back their assertions but relied on their own experiences.

In addition to the personal circumstances of individuals and households, institutions such as the bank, market and state worked either to promote access to financial capital or constrain it. All respondents indicated that there was no chance of them getting loans from the rural bank at Ateiku in particular or any other bank

in their district. Rural banks were blamed for insisting on giving secure loans to farmers. Women did not have the necessary collateral to insure against such loans because the prevailing cultural land titling system did not give them control but only usufruct rights over land. Those who owned their land were also illiterate or semi-literate and had not legally registered their land and thus had no legal documentary titles to the land. Rural banks were also said to have a preference for large scale cash crop farmers, a policy which tended to favour men. This was because they found it costly to administer large numbers of small loans to widely dispersed borrowers who lacked collateral. The rural banks operated a policy of offering micro-credit to women groups. This policy ensured that all members of the group had corporate responsibility for the loans given to individual members and therefore full recovery of loans became assured. Women in the community claimed that they had complied with the regulations for obtaining micro-credit by forming groups of twenty-three each and had opened a savings account with the bank in 2003.

Group leaders had become frustrated with fruitless trips to the bank to follow up on the loans. As a result a number of respondents indicated they would not get involved in another venture if there was another initiative. Another dimension was given to the problem by one respondent when she explained that it was perhaps the failure of women who had earlier collected loans from the bank to pay back that had made the bank unwilling to give out more loans to them. Microcredit programmes to support small scale enterprises in Ghana were introduced in the era of structural adjustment when policy makers realized that IMF/World Bank prescriptions had had negative effects on the poor particularly women. The scheme entailed a credit component that dealt with adult literacy, legal awareness, health and hygiene awareness, leadership training, skills and management training that supported programme participation (Simeen 2003).

Some women managed to overcome the constraint to access credit. They did this through working as day labourers either on other farms or carrying boards and beams, engaging in other non-agricultural income generating activities, selling their harvests green or pledging their crops to potential market queen buyers. A few women indicated that they had managed to acquire loans from friends, family members and a church group.

The above findings differ from Duncan's (2004) when she found most women farmers had access to credit through husbands, friends or relatives, susu

contributions, green sales to traders and through formal sources such as from the Agricultural Development Bank (ADB), rural banks and co-operative associations. Women in her study also complained about delays in the processing of their application for credit, long travel distances to the banks and levels of interests put on loans particularly by rural banks.

Susu groups operate rotating savings systems as a mode of saving for low income women in the country. Their activities are highly compatible with the erratic nature of informal sector enterprise and constitute a much preferred mode of saving for the clients. Women form 70% of the clientele and is popular in urban than in rural areas of the country (Badden et al. 1994). Susu groups may be self-helped groups or run by commercial operators. The self-help groups are based on affinity. Here, members contribute a mutually agreed amount on a regular basis and this amount is given on a rotating basis to each group member. The recorder of this group is given a token fee. Commercial operators take daily savings from registered member's savings that the individuals involved may withdraw on a monthly basis or part withdraw during the month. Monies collected are saved with commercial banks and the collector keeps a day's saving per client as a fee. No interest is paid on savings made.

The activities and policies of agricultural-based industries have provided environments within which farm inputs especially have been inaccessible to women and the poor farmers in the community. Respondents claimed that cutlasses, hoes, Wellington boots, spray machines and chemicals were all expensive on the market. They also claimed that even when these were provided by recognized agricultural companies and marketing outlets, the prices fell outside the pockets of some community members. The finding here is important in the light of the fact that the Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (GPRSP)¹ and the Medium Term Agricultural Development Programme (MTADP) have committed government to promote local food sufficiency through improved extension and support programmes and increased technical and policy assistance all aimed at achieving pro-poor results (GoG 1999; Duncan 2004). It would appear that such government policies are yet to benefit some women farmers.

¹ The GPRSP is the current policy framework used by the IMF and the World Bank to determine debt financing and relief for the country. It is supposed to be anchored around country ownership and broad based participation

Some women claimed that cutlasses in particular were not gender friendly. They were too heavy for them to use. They thus relied on used and worn out cutlasses provided by husbands or male friends. It appears that the manufacturing companies have assumed that all farmers and for that matter all those who use their product are strong enough to carry the weight of their product. They seem to be gender insensitive to the fact that differences abound in the strength of the users. This assertion is made in spite of the fact that cutlasses come in two sizes of varying weights. It is also possible to assume that women who made the complaints were not physically fit to use the cutlasses or that because husbands purchased them, they only bought what they felt was good for them to use without thinking about the needs of their wives.

In terms of the acquisition of seedlings, responses backed by focus discussions revealed that some men and households had access to improved oil palm seedlings provided by nurseries within the district. The Benso Oil Palm Plantation (BOPP) provided a package for an out grower scheme in which seedlings were supplied to large scale farmers who in turn sold it to other farmers. The Mpohor Wassa District Assembly itself had also embarked upon a similar project. The idea was to prevent small scale farmers from using their own nursed seedlings or 'volunteer seedlings' (obtained from other local farmers) which was not of improved quality. They also had access to subsidized improved cocoa seedlings provided by seed stations in the region while others used their own. The use of such improved seedlings ensured that good quality beans were produced and the harvest was improved. Field data also indicated that improved varieties or seedlings for traditional food crops such as cassava, cocoyam and plantain were not readily available. Although the district agricultural office had introduced new and improved varieties and claimed to have transferred the technology to farmers within the community, respondents indicated that they were yet to be contacted by their extension staff. In addition, agro-chemical stores that sold improved maize seeds, chemicals and spraying machines were located in the urban centres such as Twifo Praso, Cape Coast and Dunkwa-on-Offin all located outside the district but nevertheless much easier to access than the district capital. The ineffectiveness of technology transfer of improved varieties of food crops had an effect on the size of harvest and quality of produce and this had implications for the incomes received

from their marketing and therefore incomes available to women who in the main grow such crops.

The findings are in line with country wide estimates that reveal that only about 20% of households use fertilizers and this is estimated at 8kg per hectare compared with an average of 60kg per hectare for developing countries generally. In addition, only about 10% of households purchase improved seeds for planting (GoG 2003).

The state and its agencies also mediated access to financial capital in a number of ways. One important agricultural policy of the current government is to promote cocoa production and thereby increase foreign revenue from it through a free spraying of trees once annually (GoG 2003). This is geared towards combating pests and diseases that affect cocoa trees and pods. Although a step in the right direction, farmers indicated for any sustained impact to be felt, they had to spray twice more within the year. The exercise is in its fourth year and has reduced the spraying cost of farmers by a third. In spite of this, only a few farmers had been able to keep up with the spraying of cocoa farms because they claimed the machine was expensive. The policy of structural adjustment had also acted to constrain access to resources particularly by removing farm input subsidies (eg on fertilizer) and tightening credit availability. A male focus discussion revealed that only a few men within the community had acquired the machines and this they either lent out to friends or hired them out. On the average, respondents claimed that farms that jointly belonged to couples were sprayed more than once a year whilst those that belonged to widows or unmarried women did not get additional spraying after the state spraying had been done. A male farmer noted:

I bought a spraying machine for ₵350,000; this is the *cafucafu* type (imitating sound of the machine). I am not rich but I have to buy one because it is difficult to hire it. It is always better to own one.

Source: Cudjoe, personal communication, 2005

The producer price of cocoa had also risen markedly in recent times. As at 2005, the price of a 65kg bag of beans was pegged at 563,000 cedis. This farm gate price had increased from 144,625 cedis in the 1998/99 cocoa season through 220,789 cedis in 2002 to the present figure (www.ghanaweb.com; www.icco.org). It

is also of interest that between March 2001 and October 2004 cocoa farmers were paid bonuses to the tune of 428 Billion cedis. These were paid because the targeted volume output was exceeded by farmers (www.cocobod.gh). Although farmers were happy with the price increase, complaints were rife that produce buying companies delayed in paying them and this had brought them untold hardships. Farm gate cocoa prices paid to farmers did not compare favourably with world prices. For instance whereas in 2002, the government paid \$763 (6.2M cedis) per ton of cocoa to farmers, it sold this for \$2,200 on the world market (<http://news.bbc.org>; www.icco.org). The state is the major purchaser of cocoa (70%) while five private companies: Produce Buying Company (PBC), Fedco, Adwumapa, Kuapa Koko and Cashpro purchase the remaining 30% for the state to market abroad (www.cocobod.gh).

7.5 Physical Capital Resources/Assets

Physical capital represents the basic infrastructure (transport, shelter, water, energy and communications), the production equipment and means that enable people to pursue livelihoods (Carney 1998; Scoones 1998; DFID 1999a). The physical infrastructure of the district to a large extent influences community access to livelihood resources. The community could be accessed from three main areas, the Twifo-Praso district, Tarkwa area and Daboase area. The two roads to the community from Twifo-Praso and Daboase merge as one for about seven kilometers until it reaches the community, then through the community towards Tarkwa. This main access road is untarred and narrow and makes it difficult for two average sized vehicles to ply it conveniently side by side. Field observation backed by responses revealed that very few vehicles used the road and these were almost always overloaded with goods and passengers. Both community respondents and district assembly officials blamed the condition of the road as influential in hiking up approved transportation fares released by the Ghana Private Road Transport Union (GPRTU) for the use of commercial drivers in the district. Respondents thus complained of high transport fares to market centres. Such high fares affected not only the cost of produce eventually sold but also the cost of inputs that members bought on the open market. An estimation of the cost of cutlass was placed at 45,000 at Ateiku, 35,000 at Twifo-Praso and 25,000 cedis in Kumasi. This indicates that input prices are higher in most rural areas than in urban areas, a situation that

puts an enormous burden on poor farmers in the context of production costs and incomes. Women and other people used taxis to sell their produce at Ateiku market some 10 km away. This was the only available means to access the market. They were charged 5,000 cedis as fare and on top of that paid anything between 3,000 and 5,000 cedis per head load of food item. This means that the actual amount paid depended on the quantity of items to be marketed by any individual on a market day. Those who sold in Twifo-Praso did not go by taxis but larger commercial vehicles and trucks. It is estimated that they spent anything between 20,000 and 30,000 cedis to transport themselves and their produce to the market. A few community members also sold particularly processed NTFPs such as canes, sponges and chew sticks in the larger urban centres such as Cape Coast and Accra to middlemen. These also indicated that the transport costs made the business less lucrative.

The observation in transportation to market centres in this case study is different from the countrywide finding that headloading is the predominant means of transport (Badden et al. 1994). The different finding may be explained in terms of the distance to the market centres. Ateiku and Twifo Praso are some 10 and 26 km respectively away from the community. It would not only be time consuming to headload food crops but the act would have negative health consequences for the women involved, and only small quantities could be headloaded at a time. Marketing of food crops in the market centres is the sole responsibility of women and young girls. This finding runs contrary to Amanor's (1993) suggestion that women are less likely to market what they grow.

Respondents indicated that as a result of the high transportation costs incurred most of them preferred to sell their produce to middlemen who called at the farm gate. They were not organized and thus did not present a united front to bargain for fair prices even at the farm gate. The middlemen were organized market queens² who offered much lower prices for specified quantities of the produce in an attempt to cover rising transport costs and to make a retail profit. Marketing of farm produce brought in personal incomes to women who then disposed it as they wished

² Local markets in urban centres are usually organized by women who form cartels to sell specific food items. These women groups are represented by leaders identified as queens who dictate daily market prices and gate keep entry into selling their products. The market queens are also responsible for arranging transportation and purchasing of food items sold by their cartels from producing regions of the country.

contributing to their autonomy and as a strategy to reduce dependence on husbands and other males. Organized market queens tended to exploit women by paying lower prices for their produce and deprived women of the much needed financial credit to invest in and divest into other livelihood activities. The lack of organization and access to information on market prices on the part of women has aided their exploitation. In this instance women's exploitation and marginalization occurred not in their relations with men but with more powerful urban based women. The combination of high transportation costs, post harvest losses and lack of effective organization conspired to offer low farm gate prices to community women. In addition to the lack of spatial access to markets through feeder roads and other vital networks, field data indicated that there was also a general lack of farm to village access roads. Farmers thus walked long distances to farm and this had implications for the transportation of harvests and post harvest losses. Women claimed that the situation was a disincentive to any livelihood activity.

Discussions with District Assembly officials revealed that the poor physical infrastructure and resourcing of departments affect community access to physical capital. Electric power is another rural infrastructure that helps with processing of agricultural produce and this was non existent in the study community. Only about a third of the Mpohor Wassa East District generally is linked to the national electricity grid. This does not encourage small scale industries that need power in their operations to expand and survive. There is a potential for agro processing (eg. *gari*, kernel oil and oil palm extraction) as a viable livelihood activity in the community but the absence of electric power has reduced this activity to a crude form (see plate 13, Appendix C). In addition, general state policies regarding health, agriculture and infrastructure have affected community access to livelihood resources. In the health sector, there is a policy of the sick paying cash upfront before any serious treatment is given them. This invariably affects the health of the people and thus the quality of human capital available for both farm and non farm activities. The health policy however has driven community members to rely more on medicinal plants, roots and herbs in their environment, hence improving their access. A poor resourcing of agricultural departments has affected the quality and spread of extension services offered to communities and groups in terms of skills and technology transfer. Again, a physical infrastructural policy tends to favour

urban rather than rural areas and thus has negatively affected policies of District Assemblies and the Feeder Roads Department.

7.6 Human Capital Resources/Assets

Human capital represents the skills, knowledge, ability to labour and good health important to the ability to pursue different livelihood strategies (Carney 1998; Scoones 1998; DFID 1999a). It is important for the successful execution of any livelihood activity. Community members indicated that they relied on their own labour, good health, traditional knowledge and skills, ingenuity and resourcefulness as sources of human capital in their livelihood activities. State policies particularly in the areas of health and extension services have already been noted to make it difficult for an improvement in the human capital resource of all members of the community. It must also be noted that while most people found it difficult accessing health facilities because of the 'cash and carry' policy, a few were able to pay for such services. These included fairly large cash croppers, members with independent children and others who received remittances that help them engage in this activity. Again, very little hired labour was used because of financial constraints. Wages for hired labour were either paid 'by day' or on piece meal basis. The former involved payment for a day's work whilst the latter was paid according to a set piece of work given as for example weeding a specific piece of land or carrying a defined quantity of beams and planks. Focus discussions and interview responses revealed that in the area of labour hiring farmers would employ males or females depending on the task to be performed, but very few farmers used hired labour. While men would be preferred if tough jobs such as land clearing and tree felling was involved, both women and men were hired if planks were to be carried or weeding was to be done. Both were given the same wage rates if they did the same work but because women had other domestic commitments, they did not work as long as men and therefore earned less per day than their male counterparts. This situation is different in the labour market in the agricultural sector where female farm workers are paid only half the daily rates of males and receive no fringe benefits (Manuh 1988, cited in Badden et al. 1994:13).

In terms of skills and technology, farmers indicated they still depended on traditional skills acquired from learning from the elderly with only a few modifications. Modern skills acquired include planting in rows and spacing out

crops and the application of chemicals. Almost all women farmers used the line and space technology but very few applied fertilizers, pesticides or sprayed their cocoa farms after the government had sprayed.

7.7 Social Capital Resources/Assets

Respondents claimed that the subsistence ethic of the community is gradually eroding with the disintegration of social arrangements that emphasised reciprocity and redistribution and risk aversion. Social capital represents the social resources (networks, membership of groups, relationships of trust, access to wider institutions of society) upon which people draw in pursuit of livelihoods (Carney 1998; Scoones 1998; DFID 1999a). A subset of this category is political capital (CATAD/IFSP, 2003). Social capital at the meso level is associated with families and local community associations and the underlying norms (trust, reciprocity) that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit (World Bank 2000:129). It also includes associations in which relationships among members may be hierarchical and power sharing unequal. Thus social capital has both positive and negative effects on members. The concept may be broadened to focus on the social and political environment that shapes social structures and enables norms to develop- formalized institutional relationships and structures such as government, political regime, the rule of law, the court system and civil and political liberties – that have important effects on the rate and pattern of economic development. Social networks and organizations are key assets in the portfolio of resources drawn on by poor people to manage risk and opportunity (World Bank, 2000:129). Membership of social groupings involves an implicit agreement or obligation to share and claim resources. Gifts and obligations are built up through good times to be claimed during bad times as a form of social insurance. This signifies a pooling of risks and sharing of vulnerabilities. In similar vein, citizens may pay taxes or rents and be able to claim certain benefits such as public goods and services from the state (Start and Johnson 2004).

Field data suggested that community members employed customary norms of social agency (through reciprocity and obligation) to establish networks for the procurement of both land rights and labour to facilitate access to livelihoods. This was limited to households, extended families and friends. By far the most established networks were those organized and maintained by community elders

and well to do household and lineage heads (see chapter five). Although the main source of labour in farming was individual, households tended to pool labour. Wives and some grown up children helped to work on household farms as well as work on the husbands (fathers) individual cash crop farm. Young farmers also pooled together the labour of friends particularly during land preparation and harvesting of crops. Payment was not made for such services but the convener was obliged to feed the helpers and to reciprocate such a gesture when called upon in future. This is the *nnoboa* group and only a few respondents indicated they used the services of friends this way to cut down on cost of hiring labour and to reduce tiredness where their own labour had to be used. There were however no community based groups that pooled savings together for credit to individual members nor were there any *susu* groups to encourage members save on a daily basis so that saved contributions could be taken when needed to finance livelihood activities. Social payments made by individuals to kinsmen, friends and community institutions were in expectation of future reciprocation. These therefore guaranteed the individual labour on farms and with other businesses when called upon to help.

Focus discussions and key informants however revealed that social support mechanism were firmly in place and worked well prior to the introduction of cash crops. Such support mechanisms have since then but particularly after the introduction of the ERP/SAPS in the early 1980s disintegrated. These were the norms of reciprocity and obligation, redistribution of wealth that ensured sharing, mutual support and aid, use of communal land and which were geared towards insuring against members falling below the subsistence level. There was the tendency to be individualistic in outlook with the introduction of cash crop production and private property relations in the community. Private land was no longer given freely to the landless upon presentation of a bottle of local gin. New arrangements had been introduced that made it difficult for the landless to access land at little cost. Social redistribution of wealth was dying out. What were practiced to some extent were presentations of food crops to in-laws and church pastors or to help with social activities such as funerals and weddings. Such presentations are significant for a variety of reasons. Marriage is seen not between two individuals who are in love but between two extended families. Cordial in-law relationships are important in this respect for successful marriages and such relations are maintained sometimes through the exchange of gifts. There is also a

belief that he who preaches the 'good news' feeds around it. As such pastors are also given presents in cash and in kind by their congregation for their church work. Social payments were also made in respect of funerals and weddings in anticipation that the gesture would be reciprocated at the appropriate time but the value of such payments had greatly diminished.

Some women, the poor and landless had been hardest hit with the erosion of customary support mechanisms. They were unable to cultivate and invest in networks and so received very little in return. As such this category of community members had been unable to avert or spread risk. They had been hardest hit by the changes in the organization of livelihoods and were therefore vulnerable.

There appeared also to be a case of claims, reciprocity and trust between the local government and political authorities and the community. The payment of local taxes and market tolls insured that basic infrastructure be put in place to support livelihood activities within the community. Thus the community expected local government to provide market stalls and sheds, drains, toilets and water facilities for their use whilst in the markets. These appeared to be non-existent and partly accounted for the lack of enthusiasm in the payment of the tolls. The Member of Parliament for the constituency was praised by community elders for supplying them with two cases of cutlasses (totaling 40 pieces) with a promise to send more to be sold at moderate prices. It is possible to suggest that her action was to reciprocate for the support she had from the community in the last parliamentary election held in 2004.

In the area of marketing there also existed well-established marketing chains that transferred cash crops (cocoa and oil palm) from the farmer to the final consumer. Such well established marketing chains did not exist for food crops. The Ghana Cocoa Board (COCOBOD) and its subsidiary organizations offer cocoa farmers among others improved seedlings, free mass spraying of cocoa farms and control of pests and diseases, free extension services, organize the purchase and haulage of cocoa and easy accessibility to purchasing centres (GOG 2003). In similar vein, the oil palm plantation industries provide similar packages for oil palm producers. Most women farmers are food crop producers and therefore did not benefit from the package of incentives given to their male counterparts who engaged in cash crop production. Women did not have reliable marketing outlets for specific food crops and vegetables in the district or the Twifo-Praso district and

therefore did not enjoy the supporting conditions that specific food and vegetable grower associations could have offered.

7.8 Information Capital Resources/Assets

Information capital represents the different kinds of data endowed with relevance and purpose used by people to make decisions in pursuit of livelihood objectives (eg. market opportunities and outlets, input information, pest control, fertilizer application and investment opportunities)(Odero 2003). Information as a resource is a vital livelihood asset to people. It provides a strong leverage that can be used to access other forms of capital. The data information provides is endowed with relevance and purpose and used by people to make decisions in the pursuit of the livelihoods whether in the labour market, the credit market, the land market or the commodity market (Odero 2003). For instance information on when the rains are expected in a particular farming season, their duration and intensity, will guide farmers as to when to start preparing the land for cultivation. A lack of access to information contributes to the poor people's sense of isolation. People need to exercise their cognitive skills in order to understand, explain, compare and evaluate information. Human capital thus becomes critical in the application of information capital.

The most important sources of livelihood information to community members were through friends and family members and through the radio. Social discussions and radio education by extension officers and other discussions provided valuable information on new farming technology, correct application of chemicals, alternative livelihoods sources, marketing opportunities and prices. These are important given the fact that actual extension agent to farmer contact was non-existent because of the small numbers of extension agents in the field. The countrywide ratio of extension agent to farmer is 1:2500 (GOG 2003). This study revealed that most women had not heard of an extension agent and had not been in contact with one while some cocoa farmers had been contacted by agents stationed at Ateiku. The low contact of farmers generally but women in particular with extension agents has been well documented. Data for 1987 indicate that the ratio of extension officers to women farmers contacted in the study region was 1:459. However the ratio to women farmers country wide was over 1:11,000. Less than 1% of women farmers in the study region had had any form of contact with agents in

1987 (Badden et al. 1994). Data from the district agricultural office revealed that although the situation had greatly improved there were still not enough extension agents to go round the large numbers of farmers in the country. Apart from the short-falls in the training of agents, farming was largely on small scale in the country and this made group extension difficult. There was no extension centre in the area and distances between farms were wide. To compound the problem, the extension division had logistic problems and thus was not mobile.

The division was not up to date on new developments in the field because facilities for information dissemination through digital resources and journals were not in place. This was because IT equipment and subscription rates for journals, digital and internet services were expensive (DFID/FAO/ODI 2001). The above problems had led the extension department to provide information when it was made available to them (as part of a specific programme) and not on demand. The radio programmes delivered although rated good by respondents were in the light of the above constraints suffered from a paucity of information sources for their content. In addition, the district lacked Public Information Officers who were qualified and experienced to collaborate with these local FM stations for programme preparation (DFID/FAO/ODI 2001). The district itself like most rural districts in the country was poorly connected with telecommunication facilities and as such farmers could not contact the extension department for information if they required this.

In spite of the importance of the radio as a source of information, these were owned by men who tended to listen to programmes under trees with their friends during times when their wives were busy with domestic work. Most women thus did not benefit directly from the radio programmes but by word of mouth from husbands and others. The paucity of information that reached women in the area of extension, alternative livelihoods, market and credit facilities made them vulnerable.

7.9 Community Expectations of the Reservation and Logging Policy

Community members were despondent and frustrated. Questions were often asked why there was abundant land and yet members faced hardships on a daily basis – land shortages, destruction of farms and non payment of compensation,

restricted rights of access to forest resources. Both leaders and members also contended that they lived with the resources but outsiders benefited from them, a reference to activities of loggers. Leaders voiced out complaints about the community not involved in social responsibility agreements. They also complained about not receiving part of royalties paid by concessionaires (royalties were shared between central government, the Forest Services Division, paramountcies or stools and District Assemblies). For community members, the disadvantages of the policy far outweighed the benefits of employment and incomes, boost in community economy and general development of the community. For members, the least the policy could do for their benefit was to release some land for their use or allow them to practice the modified *Tuangya* system. This system has been instituted mainly in severely degraded reserves. It is a partnership agreement between the Forest Services Division and farmers in which degraded portions of reserves are given to farmers to cultivate whilst they at the same time plant and nurture seedlings (supplied by the Division) into trees. Farmers cannot plant tree crops and are given new patches to farm as soon as their plots are recolonised with trees. The community also expects that logging fees and royalties would be used to provide basic infrastructure such as good roads, electricity, pre-school facility and a health post for their use.

7.10 Conclusion

Community access to livelihood resources generally, but women's in particular, have been mediated by policies, institutions and processes at the household, community, state and market level. These dictate access to livelihood resources. They include customary laws that dictate access to land and other non timber forest resources, the state policies of reservation and logging, local government rents and other payments, operations of financial institutions and state and private organisations and the activities of urban market queens at the farm gate. Other factors that mediate access were physical in terms of distance, fear, soil fertility, skill, land disputes and availability of labour. Social relations of support and enhancement as well as domination and marginalisation in terms of access have been created by these formal and informal processes, institutions and policies. They are gendered and class based. Some women, the poor and landless have lost access to basic livelihood resources. In addition, customary social support systems and

structures eroded with commoditisation and individualisation of land, and forestry and logging policies particularly since the early 1980s. The social relations between community and state and within the community but most especially between women and men over resource access fit into perspectives in political ecology theories of access to environmental resources. These relations may be explained in terms of power and domination and become crucial in determining the nature of the human-environment relationship. The next chapter draws together evidence of social transformation resulting from commoditisation and land shortages and argues that these have created cleavages that need to be bridged if an implosion is to be averted.

CHAPTER EIGHT

The Political Economy of Social Transformation

8.1 Introduction

The commercialisation of agriculture, commoditisation of the market, land and labour, demographic changes and rainfall variability and seasonality have significantly altered production relations within the community. They have also affected the social structure of the case study area and impacted across class and gender. Not all men have won nor all women seem to have lost but winners and losers are found in all groups of men and women. Some women particularly have been active in renegotiating new and favourable positions for themselves with respect to domestic work and access to livelihood resources in their relations with men. The dynamics of processes in the community in relation to community livelihoods have created identified axes of rural and social differentiation and change. Within the country as a whole, international structures and processes have been crucial in determining the nature and course that livelihoods take. In the case study area, local dynamics were found to be more important in determining the livelihood activities, processes and relations and consequently effect of these on community members. This chapter looks back to chapter six and discusses the social transformation that has occurred within the study community as a result of the dynamics of the interplay of the livelihood processes. This is important and necessary for a holistic understanding of the impact of these processes on social structures and institutions, community relations and for the position of women and the poor. I explore the changing gender and production relations, commoditisation and conflict, de-agrarianisation and de-peasantisation and loss of social identity in the case study community.

I also identify and begin to explain the contradictions or paradoxes in the process of commoditisation and social relations of production between men and women. The commoditisation process has on the one hand improved some women's access to land and thus incomes from farming while on the other hand the same process has made the exploitation of some women's labour time possible. Social relations between men and women have also been those of support and complementarity on the

one hand and exploitation and conflict on the other hand in both livelihood organisation and access to resources. Other class relations have been one of both investments in social networks and exploitation of network members. Cleavages have become obvious in the community as a result of the dynamics of change and these are along the lines of gender, seniority and power (mostly inter-generational) and control of farmland.

This chapter provides a holistic and interrelated explanation for the transformation and fault lines that appear in the case study area. I do this within the context of political economy. The mode of articulation of capitalist commodity production into a subsistence economy produced internalised social relations of power that has affected community norms of reciprocity and the right to subsistence (Scott 1976). This political economy explanation of the changes in the community is reinforced by the crisis of patriarchal control and domination that is embedded in the social structure. I argue that if the trend of events in community social transformation continues and if identified cleavages widen, it is possible that the society cohesion may fracture and a consequent disintegration take place.

8.2 The Changing Relations of Production: New Labour Process and New Land Rights

Incorporation of a viable cash economy into livelihood activities has led to an alteration of labour and land relations within the community. There is now a partial shift from a total reliance on household labour in subsistence food crop farming to some hiring of labour for particularly cash crop farming. This has led to a growing labour market in the community. Young men particularly who may be indigenes or migrants hire out their services to cocoa and oil palm farmers in the community on a daily or seasonal basis or obtain tenancies with them as share croppers. Not many households however consistently hire such labour on the farms. Peak labour hiring periods coincide with clearing for the establishment of new farms and harvesting of cash crops. Family labour has also declined partly as a result of commercialization and partly due to circular migration to urban centres, schooling and apprenticeships and diversification of income sources. The burden of providing additional labour in the face of

commercialization and declining family labour has fallen on women. As one respondent noted, repeated by many other responses,

I use my own effort in labour. I do not hire any labour because I do not have the money to pay.

[Hannah lives with a husband and 7 children. The household has three plots of farms. She farms on two plots while her husband farms on one].

The situation within agriculture, where women's responsibilities increase, has been referred to as 'the feminisation of agriculture' (see Duncan 2004; Doka and Monimart 2004; Cotula and Neves 2007). The shortage of labour has posed a great constraint to farming given the fact that most households farm on fragmented pieces of small sized farmlands and are too poor to hire labour. It is plausible to suggest that the introduction of cash crops has improved incomes to households and this ultimately prevents farmers from reverting to subsistence food crop farming in the face of the labour shortages.

Berry (1993:142) observed that returns to crop production on small scale farms were often too low or unreliable to cover the cost of using hired labour on a regular basis. As a result of this limitation, labour hiring has been associated with farmers with large land holdings or steady access to off-farm income. The intensification of the use of women's labour on farms may imply that they spend more time on the farms and are left with little to spend on other activities such as marketing and seeking information on farm improvements. It is plausible to suggest that this may also be one of the reasons women called for more support with housework from men. Although the use of women as family labour is seen as exploitation, the commercialization of agriculture provides them with the means to earn and spend independently of their husbands and male elders. This is consistent with other evidence on sub-Saharan Africa (Berry 1993). The extent of individual women's work burdens in the changed labour process will however depend on the nature of crops under cultivation, the stage in the life cycle of the household and the social obligation of lineage members to foster children of relatives. Ghanaian households are known for fostering children of relatives. The age profile of the household determines how much labour is available to any particular household at any one time. In spite of this evidence shows that women's labour burdens have increased as the production of food crops shifted to include cash crops. Again

diversification into non-farm income sources such as the processing of *gari* and oil palm from agricultural products; and the harvesting and processing of non-timber forest products such as *awedeaba* (*Drypetes gilgiana*), sponges and chew sticks has taken up more of women's time. In spite of diversified income activities overworking women, women anticipate better prospects as it improves their income and gives them the needed autonomy from complete and total reliance on the bounties of their spouses. The average household size of six contains dependent school going children. Households cannot always have the benefit of the labour of older children. This is because after nine years of basic education these continue to learn skills and trades in urban areas needed to enter into non farm livelihoods in future (dressmaking and tailoring, fitting mechanics, hairdressing and many others) or are fostered by relatives outside the community. Changes in the labour process without a doubt, impact on the time budgets of women and this overworks them.

Customary land tenure within the study area involves stools and chiefs having allodial titles to land by which they keep the land in trust for communities under the stool or for a community in the case of a chief; and family or lineage land controlled and administered by a head in which all lineage members have usufructuary rights to it. Land here, as in almost all rural Ghana, is in customary law communally held. Commercialisation of agriculture and the subsequent commoditisation of land have brought in their wake private ownership of land either through outright sale or renting. Such individualisation of land has meant that it is now possible to have self acquired land through gifts, inheritance or various forms of crop/land sharing arrangements. The process of individualisation of land has been strengthened by the passing of the Interstate Succession Law (PNDC Law 111) in 1985. Evidence from both migrant and indigene respondents revealed that individualisation of land was fast replacing customary tenure relations. Migrant respondents explained that they had relocated with their spouses and /or that they practiced the patrilineal system of inheritance. The transfer of land as gifts to wives and children by indigenes had bred a lot of inter-family conflicts as there were obviously multiple interests in such farms – coming from labour investments made by both matrilineal kinsmen and nuclear family members. Okali (1983: 110-123) has recorded instances of contested cases in the courts in her study of cocoa farming among the matrilineal Akan in two communities in the Eastern and

Brong Ahafo regions of the country. In the case study community therefore customary land tenure relations had transformed significantly. Not only could outsiders now access land through various tenurial arrangements but these new tenurial arrangements had been transferred to intra-community and intra-lineage relations of production. Indigenes thus competed with migrants to acquire share cropping and other tenancies in the community. Thus control and access rights to land have changed significantly in the community. This not only affects access to land resources by lineage members who have usufruct rights to such lineage lands but more importantly lineage women who may be completely dispossessed from rights of usufruct. This means that women may now only have access to land through marrying. Commoditisation of land has thus intensified competition over land between groups and individuals and between individuals. Such competition is evidenced in disputes over inheritance of farms and negotiations over compensation for the labour of family members invested in developing farms. This finding parallels findings elsewhere in sub-Saharan Africa (Okali 1983; Berry 1993). Relations between kinsmen over land and labour become akin to a business relationship in which land is given only to those who bring in regular income into lineage coffers. In similar vein, the youth also give out their labour to those landlords who are willing to pay in share contract form. In addition to farming on small pieces of their own lineage land they acquire tenancies from other private landlords and lineages. Share contracts then are replacing usufruct access to land and may be contracted between friends, parents and children, lineage members and non-relatives but with increasing land shortages this may also be difficult to contract. These changes have been well documented by Hart (1982), Beckman (1976), Hill (1963) and others in their examination of the political economy of cash agriculture in West Africa and Ghana.

The transfer of sizeable land holdings to migrant farmers viewed as 'outsiders or strangers' to the area and the potential land shortage this creates has been equally identified by Kasanga and Kotey (2001) in their work on land management in the country. According to them, the *abunu* and *abusa* share tenancy arrangements in the Western region requires tenant farmers to plant the whole land given with cocoa trees after which the farm rather than the output is shared. The new improved cocoa takes about three years to start fruiting and sharing of income starts soon afterwards after

production costs have been deducted. The actual sharing of a farm takes place only when the farm has been fully planted.

...the tenant then assumes ownership of his land. Because cocoa tree planting is a long term investment, lasting more than 70 years, there were no cases found where ownership of shared-cropped land had already reverted back to the original owner. Rights appeared to remain in perpetuity, as borne out by the fact that the tenant turned owner had the right to sell his share of the cocoa farm.

(Kasanga and Kotey 2001: 15)

Their observation echoes evidence in my study on the changing tenure to individualisation and the constraint on access to communal land by indigenes resulting from the new land tenure arrangements. The processes of new labour and land relations have also been identified in agriculture in the Garanhuns municipality of Brazil as it witnessed the introduction of cattle, cotton and later coffee as commercial products in the mid 19th century to mid 20th century (Clay 1980). Before commercialization, the landless in the municipality had free access to private land. This changed significantly to a symbiotic relationship in which landowners gained access to the labour of the landless for their cash crops in return for subsisting on their farms. The symbiotic relations were possible because of the complementarity of the agricultural cycle in terms of intercropping subsistence food crops with cash crops and the exchange of labour of tenants for piece of land to farm. My study however shows that tenants did not crop the same cash crop farms of the landowners with their subsistence crops but were given other lands to crop and they were not obliged to pay rent with their labour. The nature of the changed production relations in Clay's study is quite different from what pertains in the present study. Yet the two areas have both experienced changed production relations with the introduction of cash crops. The changed mode of production (with its new relations) and the manner of articulation of commodity capitalism within the economy in the present study have created a social differentiation of community groups based in the main on access to land into those with investment in private property or access to land, those in the labour wage market and the poor and landless.

There is a strong relationship between land ownership, tenure, vulnerability and livelihood security. Ghana, like other countries in sub-Saharan Africa has embarked upon a land administration reform programme with a clear objective of

stimulating economic development, reducing poverty, promoting social stability by improving security of land tenure, simplifying the process of accessing land and making it fair, transparent and efficient, developing the land market and fostering prudent land management.

(Fobih 2004:8)

This programme is expected to work within a National Land Policy that was launched in 1999. Among other outcomes, the Land Administration Programme (LAP) will establish customary land secretariats to compliment efforts of the Land Registry to strengthen the customary system of land rights management, ensure security for the most vulnerable and reduce the risk of landlessness and exclusion and help fight poverty. LAP is also expected to improve security of tenure, certainty of ownership, reduce litigation and offer easy access to land. It is expected this will impact positively on food security and agro-based industries, promote the smallholder farmer sector and curb rural-urban migration. In a community where land transactions are mostly orally made and boundaries are not strictly demarcated, it would be difficult if not impossible to implement the LAP. Again, LAP would create opportunities for fraudsters to register land that they do not own. Within the context of this case study, these objectives are mere rhetorical as institutionalising private ownership to land would further alienate land from the community and break down customary rights of tenure to further disenfranchise women and the poor. This position is confirmed by Cotula and Neves (2007: 31) who reveal that government interventions in land relations in Africa have produced both intended and unintended outcomes depending on the way these interventions are anticipated, reinterpreted and manipulated at the local level. The researchers suggest that government interventions have affected the way customary land tenure systems operate as they have sought to codify custom or empowered the courts to apply it.

8.3 Socio-economic Differentiation, Class Formation and Mobility

The policy of forest reservation together with land commoditization has tended to intensify social differentiation. One axis of social differentiation within the community has been along size of landholding. Farmers with large land holdings have taken advantage of better access to agricultural incomes to further intensify their operations. These are rather few in number and are distinguished from small scale farmers who have diversified into non-agricultural income sources and the landless who sell their labour and also depend on non agricultural income sources. Another axis of differentiation is the ability of households to hire labour but this difference is narrowed by the *nnoboa* pooling of labour on farms of small farmers. Such ability to hire labour depends upon the differential access of households and individuals to both farm and non-farm income. Based on this axis of differentiation, social groups may be narrowed down to two based on the control of private property. These are those with private property in cash crop and those who operate in the labour market. Thus within the community differentiation has resulted from the commercialization of agriculture (cocoa and oil palm), the institution of private property through land commoditization and diversification of income sources. Generally, the inequality in access to land has led to a rapid growth in the labour market and of capitalist relations of production (Beckman 1976).

Social differentiation within the community is also visible along power (community leadership) lines. Thus community councillors and those who associate with the chief's court (such as linguist, town crier, palace errand boys) all enjoy a certain level of esteem and use this to lay claim to land and labour resources. The chief and councillors use this power to get other community members to run errands, while heads of households and lineages appropriate the labour of household members and/or kinsmen. Although the use of the latter is gradually diminishing, it is still evident in the community. Community leaders and household heads may consciously or unconsciously invest heavily in maintaining their social networks. They make social payments during funerals, weddings, naming ceremonies and other social occasions. Such payments strengthen their ability to call on elders to testify on their behalf during land disputes. They provide for their dependents in terms of education, training, apprenticeship or set them up in business acts that strengthen their claims to seniority

and prestige. Migrant tenant farmers have also invested in houses and other property in their communities of origin even though these are being used by relatives and occasionally by them when they pay visits. Such investments bear testimony to their commitment to kin and community and hence their right to make claims on the loyalty or resources of relatives and compatriots. Community elders and household heads also contribute to community groups and projects. Such contributions help to build networks and enhance their reputation for generosity and public spiritedness (Berry 1993:160-161). The community is thus not particularly egalitarian as control over resources and political power is concentrated in a minority of households and their heads. The use of social power and esteem to claim livelihood resources by this group of people by their investment in networks places them in a land owning class (with private property in land) and can also hire labour or call on the labour use of network members. These elders have been accused by the youth of corruption as they have consistently abused their positions by selling lineage and community land and not paused to reflect on how other members of the community will subsist. In another vein, they have been accused of using their privileged position to regulate access to large game by insisting on sharing with anyone who makes a catch or find and meting out punishment to those who fail to comply with the regulation.

Social mobility had been achieved through a number of means namely diversification and improved incomes, out migration and access to and control over livelihood resources. Through migration and diversified income sources, some members could raise sufficient credit to invest in land or other property such as buildings or commercial vehicles. People also operated in multiple social networks at any given period. For instance migrants with ties to their descent groups participated fully in all facets of life in their new community. People through marriage had created a household network in addition to their kin network. They could also be members of a church and *nnoboa* group. Such networks were fluid as people moved in and out with ease. Participation in social networks had enabled members to have access to land and or labour resources but depending upon one's initial status access could be wide or limited. Field data however showed that some networks were either disintegrating or were not active and therefore did not provide the expected level of support. Focus discussions revealed that community elders, some household heads and the well

established farmers benefited most from these networks. This was because they had the resources to make the necessary investments.

8.4 Disintegration of Community Social Identity

Migration and the changing community relations of production are gradually leading the hitherto 'traditional' community to open up to outside influences. The petty commodity trading activities of both sexes, marketing of farm crop surpluses by community women, commuting of market queens and other middlemen to buy food crops and 'green harvests' and circular migration of the youth into urban areas in search of jobs and apprenticeships have all worked together to open the community up to 'foreign' influences- urban lifestyles and traditions.

The community has experienced an influx of migrant farmers and labourers since the diffusion of cash crops into the area. These have come from both urban and rural areas and have brought with them their unique life experiences, attitudes, and outlook and life styles. Some of the youth within the community in recent times have also embarked upon circulatory (seasonal) migration to urban centres particularly during slack farming periods to engage in informal sector jobs. Presently a great number of youth embark on return day trips to Twifo Praso to work in the informal sector. Circulatory migration whether seasonal or daily helps the youth to relinquish their identity as a way of distancing themselves from the poor economic prospects of their agrarian backgrounds as well as the social confines of traditional familial roles. The use of migration (circulatory) by the youth in addition to other livelihood activities both on and off-farm demonstrates that livelihoods in the community are not only multi-activity/tasking but also multi-local. This is because increasing numbers of youth now exploit opportunities in different places and therefore live from agriculture, non agriculture and urban incomes. Circular migration has tended to breakdown old dichotomies of the rural-urban divide with regions no longer bounded by space and people no longer rooted to space. The use of migration as a multi-local income strategy and the multiplier effects of this has been discussed by de Haan (2001:315-318).

The youth who stay behind in the community vent their frustration by resisting laws and challenging authority. As generations of youth relate with urban areas or

acquire such resentful and defiant characteristics, the community will lose its identity as agrarian and 'traditional' i.e its farm-community characteristics.

The traditional agrarian foundation of the community economy is also slowly giving way to one which is diversified into other off farm activities. There has been a notable contraction of rural labour time expended on livelihoods from agriculture. This is as a result of a movement of labour time from the farm to an urban or rural non farm employment. The concept of peasantisation or de-peasantisation has been associated with fluctuating populations of rural producers who are involved specifically in the peasant labour process denoted by the farm, family, class and community criteria (Bryceson 2000a:3). The contraction of the agricultural sector relative to others in the economy is attributed to the movement of labour from the peasant family farm to an urban or rural non agricultural activity, a situation that represents the convergence of de-agrarianisation and de-peasantisation (Bryceson 2000a:5). In the community this convergence may be reached in the future. This is because the subsistence base has been widely diversified to include both farm and non farm activities with the youth more into non farm than farm activities and may be said to be in the process of being de-agrarianised and eventually de-peasantised. In sum, diversification into the rural non farm economy (processing of agricultural produce and NTFPs, wine distillery, provision of services) and the use of seasonal and daily migration have offered a way out of agriculture for most of the youth who had little land or were landless. Although in this study long term migration does not appear to be strong and therefore it is not addressed, this phenomenon has been cited as important in the de-agrarianisation and de-peasantisation process within many developing countries (Chilivumbo 1985; Bryceson et al. 2000). Long term migration has been identified to contribute to the decay of fundamental social institutions such as the conjugal or domestic family and modified the role of kinship and lineages toward their members; it has provided an alternative means of obtaining wealth; created complementary social institutions, and promoted rural development (Chilivumbo 1985). Given the trend of events in the study community, long term migration may eventually become the preferred choice livelihood strategy for the youth whose land sizes were too small to make any decent living and for the landless. Focus discussions indicated that the youth were prepared to move to urban informal sector jobs on a more permanent basis in the face of land shortage and

restrictions on access to the reserve. If and when this occurs, it is plausible to suggest that the community will be deserted by the young and healthy and populated by the aged and children and this will have negative consequences for its economy.

A number of explanations at the global level have been given for the seeming drifting of peasants from the farm. These therefore are quite distinct from the local variables of schooling and apprenticeship, land shortage and consequent diversification of income sources including circulatory migration identified in the case study community. The explanations include global improvements in agriculture, urban bias development policies in developing countries, the oil shocks of the 1970's, structural adjustment policies and migration. (Bryceson 2000a, 2000b). On a global level the agricultural sector of developing countries is said to be shrinking and this poses problems for development. Synthetic materials have been developed in western countries to replace the natural fibres of cotton, jute, sisal etc that developing countries produce; while the oil booms of the 1970s have effected lifestyle and taste changes among the more health conscious affluent northern consumers. Primary exports of coffee, sugar and tobacco for example have dropped as a result in developing countries. The above factors combine with the development of precision farming techniques and biotechnological advances in production (such as genetically modified crops in northern countries) and poor economies of scale in developing countries to put rural farmers out of work. In addition, structural adjustment policies have tended to affect peasants and other rural people harshly. Economic liberalization and democratization reforms started from the 1980s through the 1990s. They included the removal of subsidies on agricultural inputs such as fertilizers, seeds and farm implements; food pricing, and cutbacks in public funding which affected social services on education, health and many others. The result was an increased peasant cash need because they were faced with declining agricultural returns and an increasing cost of basic needs. The long established safety nets for peasants that included national market regulation, social infrastructural development and input subsidies had been dismantled. Bryceson (2000b:54) argues that it was this environment of uncertainty that induced farmers to search for new, more remunerative activities outside agriculture. The social transformations discussed above have gone hand in hand with some physical transformations as well.

8.5 Community Physical Transformation

Respondents noted population increases and infrastructural development in their village among many other physical changes affecting their community. Community elders and elderly women were most emphatic about the changes that had occurred. They had lived much longer in the area and thus were well placed to compare the old with the new. The initial settler community from Ashanti was a small one even at the time of independence in 1957. Early migrant settlers relate that when they arrived there in the early 1960s, there were only a few huts and no concrete block structures or road but a few trails of timber machinery. Elderly migrant farmers indicated that their very settler portion of the community was dense forest which they cleared to erect initial shelters and later houses. They also indicated sections of the village which have been latter additions and some of which could be identified by the building material used – cement instead of red mud; corrugated iron roofing sheets instead of thatch. Apart from the increase in physical size of the village resulting from an increased population and acquisition of wealth, respondents also indicated an expansion of infrastructure. The one mud block, thatch roof primary school had seen renovation and expansion into a concrete block, tin roofed nursery, primary cum junior secondary school complex although without adequate teachers or teaching resources. They no longer fetched water from the streams around but had four bore holes which provided potable water. Another significant addition to the community had been the oil processing factory however crude and antiquated it may appear to the outsider. Other recent developments had been the establishment of drinking spots, provision shops and drug store¹ and grinding mill not to mention the proliferation of churches from many denominations. For indigenes, cropping patterns had likewise changed with the advent of the migrant cocoa farmer and the community economy had changed for the better.

It appears however that development in spatial terms has been short lived. This may be because of shortage of land and loss of soil fertility on the part of the available land. The once rich 'natural' forests have been degraded by both farming and logging activities but this is to be expected to be the trail left behind as commodity production moves not only from old frontiers to new ones but even in new frontiers (see Amanor

¹ Drug stores provide off the counter services to the community. One does not need a prescription to buy medication from them. They are licensed to sell basic medication.

1994). Fifty years of commodity production in the community has no doubt brought about rapid spatial improvements but this has also waned fast. This is because structures built during the period of economic boost have become dilapidated and some economic activities such as chop bar operations have died out.

8.6 The Paradoxes of Commoditisation

8.6.1 Gender Contradictions within Rural Households

Rural households are not only units of production, consumption and biological reproduction but also units within which a range of different activities central to livelihoods are organised. Households command both physical and human resources to secure livelihoods and reproduce themselves. The members relate to one another in different ways to access, control and use these resources to produce and earn an income. Commoditisation has brought struggles over new rights and obligations between household members. These struggles are over household labour, the labour input to cash cropping, sexual designation of tasks as well as the distribution of household income and expenditure (see Whitehead 1990). Whilst some groups of men and women have benefited or lost from commoditization, there are also winners and losers within the two groups.

Social relations between men and women generally within the organization of livelihoods have been a mixture of cooperation and interdependence on one hand and of marginalization, exploitation and domination on another hand. While some beneficiary relations exist between men and women in their cooperation in pursuit of livelihoods, relations of exploitation are also present mainly within marriage. Some women have lost out with commoditization in the sense that they have had their access to lineage land greatly diminished, a result of the land shortage created by the changing land tenancy and new land relations. This group of women continues to have use rights of their husbands' farm lands (if married) but have their labour time appropriated by the latter to increase their work burdens. The more labour hours put into cash crop farms of husbands and other male elders, the less the hours women put into their own farms. Women's labour thus tends to be exploited within the household in increased amount of house work done compared to men and on farms other than their own.

Commoditisation then has brought a loss of autonomy to women who depend solely on husbands for use rights of their land as their recruitment as family labour has taken away their earning power and made them dependent within marriage making them insecure in times of crisis.

Married men in the process of commoditization become winners as they benefit from the increased labour inputs of their wives to improve their incomes from cocoa and or oil palm cultivation. In addition, all women respondents indicated that they have had increased work burdens than their mothers before them resulting from domestic work, commoditisation and diversification of livelihoods into other non-farm activities compared to men as a result of the gender division of labour and the gender specificity of the activities involved. They become pressured for time and are overworked. Yet overworking has not paid off for some of them because women must contend with policies, institutions and processes that mediated their livelihood activities and resource access and that shaped the environmental contexts within which the activities were carried out.

Through commoditization, some women have acquired land through inheritance, gifts or share tenancies and have entered into the cash economy as cocoa or oil palm cultivators. These women have realized improved incomes, become autonomous and contributed to household expenditures. As a result of their improved socio-economic position within households these women have insisted on participating in household decisions and on having increased support from men with domestic work. Men have shown their resentment with these women's demand for a say in household management and have accused women of not according them the customary respect as heads of households. This was voiced out during focus discussion with men. Here, the men accused their wives of disagreeing with them on child training and discipline and not giving them the free hand as fathers to control the household.

8.6.2 Class and Age Contradictions within the Community

Community land is controlled and administered largely by male elders as heads of lineages. Lineage members have unequal access to the communal land and particularly with commoditization, lineage heads are making money for the family coffers by renting out portions of it. The land question in the study area has caused a lot

of frustrations among women, the youth (both indigenes and migrants) and the poor whose hopes of accessing communal land have become minimal. This is particularly so with the influx of 'outsiders' to acquire large land holdings and hire labour to work them.

Elders and well off household heads invest in social networks and engage in patron-client relations to access labour for their own farming activities. It has already been noted (chapter 5; section 8.3) that such investments entail monetary payments in order to establish or boost status and the capacity to claim access to land and the services of clients and followers. Within peasant communities, young men for instance serve elderly men by offering their labour on farms as well as running errands till such time that the elders decide that they are old enough to be given their independence. This decision culminates in the young men being set up on a farm or given a piece of land to farm (Okali 1983; Berry 1993) and getting a bride and paying the bride price on their behalf (Berry 1993). Thus a system of gate keeping into the elder status is created through which the elders have access to the best farm lands and labour either through polygyny or exploitation of younger kinsmen. It is however increasingly difficult to access labour this way because the women and youth have turned to the labour market generated by commercialization for a livelihood and would rather work for a daily wage than give free labour to an elder in anticipation of future reward of a piece of farmland. This situation gradually reduces the family labour component of peasant farm organisation. In addition, circulatory migration (particularly on a daily basis) has become more lucrative for some of the youth. While married women lose out on lineage land (they are expected to have usufructuary rights of their husband's land), their labour is exploited by husbands in similar manner in exchange for use rights of their farms. Embedded in the social structure therefore are relations of exploitation and domination based primarily on descent and patron-client interactions.

A related dimension of exploitation can be found in the hiring of labour on farms. Labour relations within share cropping tenurial arrangements provide livelihood insecurity for both indigenes and migrants. This however depends on the length of the contract and the benefit sharing arrangement entered into with the landlord. Although the land owner provides the means of production by way of land and farm inputs such as seedlings, fertilizers, chemicals and farm implements, the share of the crop

appropriated at the end of the crop season puts the labourer in a position of life long indebtedness. Commoditization then presents a janus face of beneficiary as well as exploiter of different groups of women and men through the contradictions it presents in the case study community. The existence of winners and losers affect and entrench inequality within the community. These two groups are socially differentiated by their access to livelihood resources and consequent income thresholds.

Within the community generally, there is resentment against the state and logging companies for alienating land and for destroying crops without adequate compensation respectively. There is resentment with loggers taking away wealth from the environment without giving anything back to the community. This is because royalties paid go to the stool and social responsibility agreements are made with the stool and not the community. The youth resent elders for their 'corrupt' dealings in land leases and sales and for instituting laws to share in game. Tensions may occur between the landowner and the tenant over the terms of the agreement which in most cases is orally made and the exact terms of the agreement becomes issues of dispute with time. For example a grant of a piece of land given for cocoa cultivation may exclude marshy areas which the grantor may want to lease to another tenant for rice cultivation. The grantee may on the other hand assume that the whole land has been tenanted to him/her and may decide what use to put to the areas less suited to cocoa. It is therefore apparent from the analysis of livelihoods in the community that there are fault lines which must be carefully managed to prevent overt conflict in the near future. These cleavages have been identified to be along the lines of gender, age and seniority, control and access to livelihood capitals most importantly land. With community social structures rapidly transforming, contradictions entrenching and cleavages appearing, it is only a matter of time that social degeneration will result. Within the context of this case study, social degeneration will be the inability of social institutions to maintain order as there will be a breakdown of societal morals and values. Again a lack of a sustainable livelihood will trigger permanent out migration and this will exacerbate rural economic crisis and probably turn the community into a ghost settlement. Outside intervention is urgently needed to manage conflict and deal particularly with access to land. This may have to come from civil society groups such as non-governmental organizations as well as the state. The presence of the state and its agencies in resolving conflict particularly over

livelihoods of the community may be accepted if and only if the state is willing to release reserved land back to the community. This is because the community does not trust the state or its agencies to offer any solutions.

The frustrations and resentment of the marginalized have become apparent in a number of ways. First is a diversification of income sources into the commercialization of non-timber forest resources. But their major source of resources has been legislated into a forest reserve and they are expected to acquire permits in order to harvest or collect resources in commercial quantities. In actual fact, the implementation of forestry regulations is so poor that members are not even allowed to harvest NTFPs for domestic use. In principle reserve fringe communities have annual allowable harvests of NTFPs for domestic use provided for in the management plan of the reserve (see section 5.2). The realisation of this principle depends on the interpretation of the regulations by forest officials and guards as well as the relations of community with the resident forest guards. The majority of community members who are poor and marginalized must cultivate and invest in networks that include lower rank officials of the Forest Services Division who are closer to them in the locality. Payments in this regard are made in terms of food presentations in future anticipation that they will be let off the hook when caught in the reserve. Responses from individuals and focus discussions revealed that higher level officials stifle the activities of the poor and marginalized and add to their frustrations. This leads to a stand off between the two groups – the landless poor and marginalised on the one hand and the state on the other hand. The former viewing the state and its agencies as exploitative; exploiting the rich forest resources of their environment without giving anything back in return. In particular, state officials are seen as conniving with loggers to exploit rural areas for their own benefit and for urban development.

Community members have resisted mainly by defying forestry regulations and doing brisk business with the resources of the reserve. Although they have not engaged in a conventional class action, theirs has been a non-compliance with the rules and regulations, evasion and deception. These forms of resentment and resistance applied in the community are geared towards their marginalised and uneven incorporation and are akin to local struggles to regain control of land in Zimbabwe, Sudan and Kenya; and struggles tied to exploitation of oil in the Niger Delta of Nigeria (see Bush 2007). The

nature of resistance here as in the other areas identified in Africa is localised and has not as yet assumed the proportion of social movements against globalisation in other parts of the developing or industrialised world. Other frustrated members have sought informal wage jobs in some urban areas. These are neither permanent nor seasonal but daily trips into Twifo Praso. Unfortunately women have been unable to make the daily trips to work in the informal urban sector. This is perhaps because they are also home managers. Women have substituted daily migration with diversified activities that involve the use of their home skills. These include selling cooked food and petty commodity trading. By far the greatest show of frustration has been the covert tension between young males and elderly male over access to communal land which elders have sold and leased out to migrant tenants and regulations concerning access to game.

In the light of the above discussion, the community may be differentiated in classes whose boundaries may not be very sharp. These are the rich peasants who control access to land, hire labour and who can easily access credit; the middle peasants who work small land holdings with their own labour and the poor peasants, those whose land sizes are so small as to make farming unproductive and the landless who possess only their labour for sale. The inability to categorise these economic groups into sharply defined classes is also observed by Snider (1986) in Newfoundland (discussed by Peters 2004). Snider's work on fishing observed that 'the structural inability to form neat packages is essential to give shape to the historic dynamic of what are loosely called class struggles' (Peters 2004: 285 citing Snider 1986). The reason given for the absence of 'neat packages' is that most African rural producers still have access to their own landholdings even if small in size, and to an extent are able to control their own family labour. It appears that the processes of struggle and competition between peasants as a group and external agencies overshadow those between peasants themselves probably because of the solidarity ideologies of the concept of community and its tenets of tradition and custom (Bernstein 1990). Yet such struggles within the classes/groups are as important as those between them. The struggles are 'precisely the social and cultural modes of differentiation, of the simultaneous creation of privilege and penury, wealth and poverty, political power and powerlessness that are central to class formation' (Peters 2004:285). The study community exhibits the widespread manifestations of the contradictions of capitalism in terms of its divisions, exploitation and oppression of

class and gender relations. But these contradictions are internal to the social structure and generated by its relations of production and therefore internal to the characterization of capitalism.

The discussion above has used an understanding of the dynamics of commoditisation and community-state relations (a mode of production of world capitalism) to explore community livelihoods in an attempt to unveil the processes of social exclusion- gender relations in production, changing land rights, land alienation, patron client relations and investment in networks, labour hiring and share cropping arrangements- within the study community. These characterise the new mode of production emerging from the articulation of capitalism within an agrarian community. Capitalist accumulation and expansion in industrialised countries and concomitant exploitation and underdevelopment in Third World Countries have been orchestrated through the use of administrative and political strategies. Strategies such as forced land policies, migration, inventions of chiefs, indirect rule through chiefs, taxation and the pass laws particularly in sub-Saharan Africa had been used during the imperial mode of production under world capitalism and colonisation to force a change in the customary mode of production by limiting access to the means of production- land. Hence the colonial policy shaped the way in which rights of access to land and labour were defined and transacted as well as the way resources were used to establish and defend rights of access. The dynamics of commoditisation however is not the only driver of social transformation in the case community. Other drivers of change identified in this thesis and which are internal to the country and community have been in-migration and increasing population, forestry and logging policy, rainfall intensity and reliability, soil fertility and decreasing land sizes.

The above relations of exclusion internalised in the social structure have been reinforced by a patriarchal social structure. As such it is impossible to discuss one without the other. Commodity relations are exploitative because the social structures within which they are produced have been restructured to encourage and indeed support them. The dynamics of livelihood production with its resultant changing production relations of exploitation and resentment have produced cleavages within the social structure of the community along various axes. I argue that these have been supported and encouraged by a changing patriarchal social structure in the next section.

8.7 Community Cleavages

The political economy of livelihood organization in the case study community has given rise to cleavages along a number of axes: gender, intergenerational and access and control of resources. Patriarchal control and domination within social structures and institutions has offered a context within which power relations between people could be examined. Patriarchy essentially means the rule of the father or patriarch and implies a system in which a male is considered the head of the family, controls all economic and property resources, makes all the major decisions of the family and thereby maintains ongoing control over all members of the family and those related to it. Millet (1969) however identified the two-fold principle of patriarchy: males dominate females while elder males dominate the younger.

The social organization of the family obliges women to give unremunerated labour to husbands whether through domestic service or farm work by virtue of the fact that the latter's bride wealth paid to the former's kinsmen guarantees him access to the woman's labour and reproduction. Thus the relations of exploitation have already been established and create the conditions for the commodity relations that later emerges in the society. In like manner, age and seniority are valued so much so within Ghanaian social structure that younger males must provide services for the elders (include provision of labour on farms and running errands). With commoditisation has come financial independence for some women and some young men. These have progressed from being property and propertyless to acquire their own means of production. This means that patriarchal male heads have lost control and are attempting to regain and consolidate their position. It is with these changing fortunes in mind that Nock (2000) has suggested that economic liberalisation has brought about a crisis in the patriarchal social relations. With women's increased labour and time burdens and increased expectation to provide support for the family, men gradually lose ground as patriarchs; their role as sole breadwinners and owners of the means of production shifting. This leads to resentment between the genders in housework, financial support and decision making at home. The seeming loss of control on the part of men has been identified as a crisis of the masculine identity in the literature (see Brittan 1989; Horrocks 1994). Another arena that promotes resentment is the harvesting and processing of non-timber forest products for commercial use. Here as already indicated elsewhere in this study,

women see men as competitors in an area that was hitherto regarded as female livelihood activity. In spite of the resentments and cleavages in the community, the impression any unsuspecting outsider gets is one of cordiality, cohesion and order. Close examination of livelihood organization reveals that community relations are greatly strained but have not as yet degenerated into overt conflict within the community or between them and outside agencies.

8.8 Conclusion

Commercialisation of agriculture, forestry policy and individualisation of land within the case study community, climatic and demographic changes have resulted in social relations that have transformed social structures and institutions. New land rights have emerged with a potential to marginalise women the poor and landless. The use of family labour has shifted to wage labour for some households. In spite of this women's labour time has increased as new work burdens have been imposed upon them. Networks of power, patronage and domination have operated to ensure that some individuals continue to access land and labour services of immediate family, kinsmen and friends. The marginalised and disenfranchised have shown resentment against those considered responsible for their plight. Young men in particular have resorted to day return trips to seek 'greener pastures' in nearby urban areas. Together with other diversified income generating activities, skills training and apprenticeships, urban day trips have altered the social identity of the community. Tensions, resentments and cleavages have appeared along lines of gender, age and access to means of production with a potential to disintegrate the community social structures and disrupt social order.

CHAPTER NINE

Conclusions

The literature on gender and development has created a concern for and interest in the gender division of labour. This thesis has identified the role of women in the household and production in a forest community. It has isolated the factors that mediate how these roles are played. The social and institutional contexts within which women play their roles impact on their livelihood security. This study was carried out in a forest community in western Ghana which had been incorporated into cash production of cocoa and oil palm. It has set this in the context of the incorporation of developing countries into global capitalist production systems and consequences altered for the customary mode of production and women's access to resources and community social transformation. These themes are important in the face of agrarian questions of food security and resource access (particularly land and labour). Security in land and therefore land tenure is continuously renegotiated through the manipulation of social networks of patronage.

This thesis has used qualitative methodology to generate data on community livelihood organisation. It employed a social relations framework to analyse the data within political economy to reveal general patterns and trends. It has used respondents' own voices to bring to the fore issues that are of relevance. Of particular importance has been the integration of the SLF and political economy perspective in the generation of data and analysis. Combining these two perspectives presented its own advantages and problems. These were identified to be first a better understanding of the dynamics of power at various levels that impact on livelihoods; second, tensions between maintaining or disturbing the status quo in terms of power relations; third, using and maintaining a writing style that both highlighted community strengths in terms of assets and weaknesses in terms of relations of exclusion; and finally, the problem of maintaining objectivity in the face of the urge to make value judgements about findings. A review of relevant literature led to the posing of four main questions.

First, how have livelihood activities been diversified in the face of land shortage and what other strategies have been employed to take pressure off the land? This question was answered by examining the livelihood activities of the case study

community from the 1960s (when the first migrant farmers arrived) but particularly since 1980, the start of economic restructuring. All evidence pointed to the fact that food crop production had been diversified to incorporate cash crops and into other income generating activities outside the farm. These include agricultural and forest resource processing, petty commodity trading, wine distillery, provision of services and migration. An examination of farm activities revealed that while cultivation of some crops have intensified (such as oil palm and collection of NTFPs) others have reduced (such as food crops, vegetable and rice farming) and new activities have been introduced (such as labour hiring and wine tapping). Diversification has occurred because of livelihood insecurity necessitated by shortage of land created by state policy of land alienation and individualisation or privatisation of land. The premium placed on NTFPs as an alternative livelihood source particularly by women, the poor and landless indicated that diversification appears to be distress pushed and did not reflect a growth in the community economy (cf Bryceson 2000d: 8-9).

Second, what social relations characterise the organisation of livelihood activities and how do they affect women's access to, control over and use of livelihood resources? What other axis of exclusion and marginalisation can be identified in the community? Relations over livelihoods were identified to be of two kinds in the community- formal policies and processes that operated at the community, market and state levels and informal relations that existed between individuals and groups at the household and community levels. These institutions provided a context within which livelihoods were achieved as they dictated what resources were available, who could access or control and in what quantities. They also dictated how resources accessed could be employed in various livelihood activities. The most important formal policies and processes identified in the study involved rent and toll policies of the District Assembly, infrastructural development (particularly, access roads and electricity), bank credit and state agricultural policies that support cash crop production as against food crop production in forest regions. Although these were discussed, emphasis was placed on the gender and class production relations exhibited through conjugal and kin relations, networks of patronage and exploitation, and custom and community laws. These were simultaneously relations of cooperation and exploitation yet the latter relations predominated. Power holders cultivated networks that ensured their access to

the most important livelihood resources of land and labour. Thus community elders, some household heads and those with relatively large land sizes accessed more resources. The land allocation system was dominated by male traditional leaders and extended family networks thus were key in providing context specific and negotiable opportunities for individuals to access land through kinship networks. Apart from this group of community members, those who had rented their land out or sharecrop their farms were also in a position to influence livelihood decisions and activities of the landless and renters.

The evidence on social relations and the role of institutions in mediating livelihoods generally points to the fact that these should be seen within their specific contexts. Some formal institutional policies impact directly on rural livelihoods. These come from decentralised structures that directly have oversight responsibility for local communities. In the case study, these were the District Assembly and the District Forestry Department. In particular, District Assembly policies concerning the payment of market tolls, rents for the extracting resources in the wild even in the secondary forest, poor infrastructural development of access roads and power and bye-laws to support the banning of some services such as sound system and video operators have impacted on livelihood activities. The officials and guards of the District Forestry Services division at Dunkwa-On-Offin's (mis)interpretation of the forestry laws as well as relations with loggers have also impacted on livelihood activities. The case study revealed that women, the poor and landless were hardest hit by the relations of power, influence, marginalisation and discrimination not only within the community but also between the community and other outside agencies. This situation leads us to the third research question on how community members have challenged or resisted variously.

Third, in what ways have community members employed social agency to resist or challenge their marginalisation and exclusion? The study revealed that disadvantaged members of the community had not remained passive and resigned themselves to fate in the face of the forces that make it almost impossible to earn livelihoods. These people had resented various aspects of their exploitation and had actively employed their own strategies to outwit and challenge the policies in place both at the household, community and state levels. Community members had defied forestry laws and collected NTFPs without permits even for sale, they had cultivated

their own networks based on reciprocity with resident forest guards in which illegally taken reserve resources were shared with guards in anticipation that when laws on reservation were broken they would be let off the hook. Members had also on occasions prevented loggers from felling trees within their farms or given such trees up to illegal chain saw operators for a fee in cash or in the form of plank and beams. Community members had variously resisted District Assembly policies by illegally tapping wild palm trees for wine, logging wild bamboo plants and avoiding the payment of market toll until they are found out and sanctioned accordingly. Community laws on hunting game had been challenged by some of the youth whilst the use of power within kin and family networks to overwork women in the household or use kin labour have been resisted in various ways. Whereas married women had sought to redistribute housework by leaving men to child care and manage the home as they go snail hunting in the forest reserve, the youth resist by selling their labour in the wage market and not offer free services to elderly kinsmen in anticipation of a future land reward. These and other intra-community relations such as conflict over land ownership and boundaries, tensions over the destruction of NTFPs had brought to the fore that the community is neither a passive recipient of policies that negatively mediate resource access and livelihood strategies nor should it be conceptualised as free from conflict or harmonious in nature. Within households married women had demonstrated that with increased incomes have come socio-economic empowerment and hence improved status as they insisted on help with housework and participation in decision-making. The organisation of livelihoods in the rural community and the social relations within which such livelihoods had been organised had transformed the customary mode of production; the nature of which is discussed in the next research question.

Fourth, what are the key features of social transformation within the case study community and how can these be explained? The case study revealed that in addition to the historical processes of global capital production system of incorporation, other state and community drivers of change included state forestry and logging policies, immigration and resultant local population increases, community laws and taboos and rainfall variation and reliability. These drivers led to three major changes in the case study community namely; a change in the forces of production, the relations of production and in the social structures and institutions. One aspect of the forces of

production that had been transformed is land. These drivers within the community had worked in concert and created a general land shortage through alienation of farmland, land fragmentation and smaller land sizes. For example while general demographic changes had led to an increased competition for farm land, incorporation and commoditisation had increased the value of land and triggered processes of individualisation of tenure, a reinterpretation of the land tenure prerogatives and again land disputes. Changes in land sizes had also altered the major livelihood activity that was farm based into other income earning activities but particularly one based on NTFPs. The second major community change had been within the relations of production where the customary land tenure system and customary use of family labour on farms had seen some transformation. Customarily, land was communally owned with kinsmen having access rights of tenure. This ensured that each person had a subsistence livelihood. The intervention of the various drivers of change had transformed this system significantly to the extent that communal access to land is gradually being replaced with land sales and renting or leasing. The change had meant that an increasing number of both indigenes and migrants have become landless or work on land sizes that are too small to ensure subsistence and majority of these are women and the youth. In addition to this is a change in the customary labour process. Here, three major things had occurred. First had been the change to the use of wage labour a process that had not only witnessed an influx of migrant labourers into the community but also the sale of the labour of particularly indigene males. Second had been a shift to the use of sharecroppers, based on a crop sharing arrangement. The involvement of indigene males in the wage market and as sharecroppers has meant that the bulk of family farm work has to be shouldered by women. Thus a third change in the customary labour process had been an increased use of the labour time of women on family farms, a situation that over worked them given that women with the now smaller farm sizes had to diversify livelihood activities into other non-farm sources.

The general change in the mode of production in the community had resulted in a changing of community social structure and institutions. The gradual erosion of the farm based livelihood activity into other diversified activities was transforming the agrarian and peasant character of the community, a process of deagrarianisation and depeasantisation; changing the social identity of the community as agrarian and

traditional. The great inequity in accessing farmland and other livelihood resources had differentiated community members into groups based on access to livelihood resources. Here most women and youth fall in the category of the poor and the landless.

Commoditisation of land relations and demographic changes resulting from immigration and state policies on forestry and logging are key drivers of change within the community. These processes have also created a shortage of farmland in the case study community. This has affected the tenure situation and threatens to have consequences for food security. The situation is particularly important as different generations and groups have relative access and tenure security statuses and this can become problematic where alternative livelihoods are not available. Within these processes, women's land rights and access opportunities become more vulnerable, especially for the less powerful within lineage groups. It can no longer be assumed that individuals have clearly defined rights of tenure to land in customary agrarian societies but rather that such rights are negotiable. This is because kinship relations can be manipulated. For instance women's access to land is based on their dual identities as sisters within the lineage and as wives within marriage. Evidence among matrilineal groups in Ghana suggest that women are able to utilize their positions within kinship networks to negotiate secure land rights and play active roles in commercial agricultural production (Aryeetey 2002 cited in Quan 2007: 57). There is also an erosion of the intra-familial social security function of land. This has arisen from increases in the value of land and increasing individualization of land and is linked to risks of inter-generational conflict. Intra-community relations and state policies provide a vulnerable environment within which community livelihoods are carried out and influence the choice of these activities. These have given rise to inequity in community access to livelihood resources with the result that some groups of women and men have had their customary access to land and other resources limited. There is need for civil society groups who work in development and are gender aware to work within the community. These groups should address power issues between the sexes and between age groups as well as the use of community laws and taboos. The above key drivers have also brought about changes in the land transfer mechanisms and labour usage within the traditional agricultural case society. These are seen both in the customary non-monetarised arrangements (rents, leases, sharecropping) as well as in the

emergence of monetarised arrangements such as land sales. Yet these changes operate within a customary system in which the bundle of rights over a piece of land is held by a range of different actors while management rights are usually held by a lineage group. These changes have also brought about changes in socio-political relations and new practices involving the use of oral contracts and witnesses.

There is need for effective utilisation of available farmland. This would require the use of extension services to engage the community in agricultural intensification and the provision of farm inputs at subsidised prices. It should also involve the training of more extension agents, providing the logistics and ensuring that the community is adequately served by them, meeting the needs of both women and men, cash crop and food crop producers. Farmer based organizations should be strengthened to improve members' capacity to access production inputs, credit and extension, markets and service delivery to members. The Agricultural services Sub-Sector Investment programme (AgSSIP) should open district offices to offer secretarial support to the FBOs. This service is important particularly in the light of the high illiteracy levels among farmers and the terms of reference given to the organization of FBOs i.e. to register as a cooperative, have a constitution and executive and operate a bank account. There is also need to provide the environment that promotes the provision of alternative livelihoods either as a major livelihood source for the poor and landless or as a complement to farm livelihoods. This should be based on existing livelihood activities or the available resources. Hence access to electric power to promote agricultural produce processing and feeder roads to encourage the hauling of agricultural produce from the farms to the processing sites or the markets should be improved by the district assembly. The forestry services division must safeguard encroachment of farms into the reserve or commercial harvesting of resources from it by teaming up with the district assembly to transfer knowledge on snail and mushroom farming, and grasscutter rearing to the community. They must provide the necessary logistics and market to support these activities.

Community members are unaware of the contents of the 1994 forestry and wildlife policy and the management plan of the Bonsa Ben forest reserve. The lack of awareness makes them vulnerable to the various interpretations given to the contents of the policy and plan by officials of the forestry services division. There is a need for the

forestry commission to embark on a rigorous education of its front line personnel on the contents of the policy and various management plans. This will help a proper interpretation and application of the guidelines and resolve most problems regarding the use of NTFPs of reserves. Reserve fringe communities should be educated on the rights to harvesting resources for domestic use and the annual allowable quantities. There should also be in place, a monitoring system to ensure that rights of fringe communities are not infringed upon nor the reserve over exploited.

The above suggests that policies should be geared at supporting the efforts of the rural poor, improve their access to sustainable and remunerative non-farm livelihoods to take pressure off the land, improve human capacity through education and skills training to widen choices of diversified non-farm income sources and redress the distribution of power that shapes the way in which livelihoods are organized.

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APPENDIX A

List of Field Participants

A Interview Participants

1. Pilot Interview Participants (held on 9/08/05 at Bimpongso, fringing the Bimpong Forest Reserve in the Central Region)

No	Name	Age	Marital Status
1	Agnes Attobrah	50	Married
2	Susana Dankwa	40	Married
3	Ama Donkoh	52	Married
4	Ama Nyame	65	Married
5	Sister Akua	50	Widow
6	Adwowa Aseye	60	Widow
7	Maame Abena	21	Single
8	Mary Adofo	35	Married
9	Nana Fowa	19	Single
10	Auntie Ama Bema	46	Widow

2. Household Interview Participants

No	Name	Age (Yrs.)	Marital Status	Date of Interview
1	Esther Opoku	38	Married	19/08/05
2	Rose Arhin	42	Married	-
3	Adjoa Yeboah	50	Married	-
4	Gladys Inkoom	29	Married	-
5	Abena Teibua	30	Single	-
6	Yaa Boafo	35	Married	-
7	Gladys Opoku	20	Married	-
8	Effia Gyamfua	26	Married	-
9	Ekua Ahinmaa	-	Widow	-
10	Hajia Amoakwando	20	Married	23/08/05 -
11	Auntie Kaya	52	Married	-
12	Esther Anakwa	30	Married	-
13	Adjoa Fordjour	32	Married	-
14	Susan Adarkwa	45	Married	-
15	Akosua Afi	25	Married	-
16	Ekua Mantebea	55	Widow	-
17	Ekua Kitiwa	23	Married	-
18	Ekua Esaawa	28	Married	-
19	Maame Ekua	25	Married	-

Table 6.2 Estimated Incomes for 2004

Respondent	Income Source	Estimated Income (GHC) ⁵ (Exchange Rate; £1=18,000)	Total Estimated Income (GHC)
Esther	Forest resources: Snails, <i>awedeaba</i> , pestles	1.5M	1.5M
Hajia	Foodcrops Petty commodity trading	100,000 150,000	250,000
Gladys	Cassava Tomatoes Maize, snails	200,000 200,000 200,000	600,000
Adjoa	Cocoa Cassava Forest resources	100,000 200,000 200,000	500,000
Fosuaa	Snails Palm oil Grasscutter	2M 500,000 500,000	3M
Janet	Cassava Cocoa Mortar/Pestles	200,000 200,000 150,000	550,000

Source: Case study data, 2005

Incomes were distributed to meet social commitments, household obligations, invested in the livelihood activities and used to acquire more capital assets. Household obligations included the care and maintenance of the members – food, clothes, schooling, health, shelter, transport and many others. Social commitments or payments included payment of community levies, funeral and wedding contributions, market tolls, rents to land owners and the District Assembly and the payment of basic rates (locally known as *lampool*). Basic rates used to be called the land poll tax under the colonial administration. The current designation has also gone with changes in its definition and administration.

⁵ GHC is an abbreviation for Ghana cedis.

4. Key Elderly Community History Respondents

No	Name	Position	Date of Interview
1	Kweku Asuku	Odokro (Nyamebekyere)	16/09/05
2	Kwabena Dutuah	Ebusuapanyin	-

5. Key Community Respondents

No	Name	Position	Date of Interview
1	Teacher Daniels	Gyantuahene	20/09/05
2	Egya Larbi	Migrant Settler	-
3	Egya Odey	Abakomahene	-
4	Nana Opoku Tuahene	Chief	-

6. State Officials/Loggers

	Name	Position	Date of Interview
1		THLD Assembly Planning Officer	25/10/05
2	Baidoo	THLD Assembly Revenue Collector	-
3.	Dr. Ankugah	MWEDA District Agricultural Officer	01/11/05
4	Sulemana Alhassan	MWEDA Deputy Co-ordinating Director	-
5	Addai	Dunkwa-On-Offin District Forestry Officer	09/11/05
6	Kwasi Tawiah	Forest Guard	12/11/05
7	Martin	Forest Guard	-
8	Ohene Djan	Forest Guard	-
9	Alhassan Yakubu	Forestry Technical Officer	19/11/05
10	Kwadwo Larbi	George Kwame Larbi Timbers	25/11/05
11	Kofi Larbi	George Kwame Larbi Timbers	-

7. Personal Communicators

No	Name	Date of Communication
1	Mr. Arhinful	19/08/05
2	Eric Asuku	23/08/05
3	Egya Ayisi	23/08/05
4	Gyasi	26/08/05

8 Focus Discussion Participants

1. Female Group (held on October 7th 2005)

1. Christiana Amponsah
2. Dora Opoku
3. Ama Ahima
4. Yaa Antwiwa
5. Akua Serwa
6. Adjoa Manu
7. Mary Atuah

2. Male Group (held on the 11th October, 2005)

1. Joshua Darko
2. Kwabena Acquah
3. Kwaku Amoako
4. Ayisi Attah
5. Kwabena Koranteng
6. Isaac Maama
7. Moses Chartel
8. Kwesi Nyamekye

3. Community Leaders' Group (held on the 14th October, 2007)

1. Cudjoe
2. Kwame Gyasi
3. Twumasi Ankrah
4. Teacher Kwesi
5. Egya Larbi
6. Nana Gyantuahene
7. Youth leader

Appendix B

1. Interview Guide for Households (Women)

- A Demographic characteristics of household
- B Livelihood strategies
- C Resources
- D Household changes

A Demographic Characteristics

Type of household: monogamous vs. polygamous/matrilineal vs. patrilineal/
nuclear vs. extended

Number of people/ Sex and ages

Head of household: male or female

Highest level of education attained within household/highest attained by respondent

Religious orientation of household

Marital status of respondent

Has any member of household migrated/how many/sex/where to/why?

B Livelihood Strategies

What do women do for a livelihood?

What do men do for a livelihood?

Which of these activities bring in income?

Which forest resources do women and men depend on for a living?

Which resources are used at home?

Which are sold and where?

Which are seasonal resources?

Which are obtained all year round?

Do they use the same resources and in what amounts?

Do they both have equal access to the forest resources for a living?

Are there any resources in the forest that any group of community members is prohibited by custom not to use?

What are the reasons given?

Do you own/ rent/or have access to land?

If so, how much?

If not, why not?

How did you gain access to land?

Is access guaranteed after a husband's death?

Have you grown the same crops since you started farming?

Have you used the same techniques to farm?

How long have you farmed/How many farm plots do you have?

Do you ever experience times that it is just difficult to make ends meet?

What do you do?

Can you say that your various livelihood sources meet your expectations in terms of ensuring that you do not lack or want anything?

What benefits is your household getting from the logging activities in your area?
Are you generally satisfied with the activities of the logging companies in your area?

Is there conflict between the activities of loggers and your activities?

Would you support the suggestion that the loggers should log in your environment for another five years?

C Other Resources

Apart from the forest and land what other things/resources do you use to make living?

Are these things/resources the same for men and women?

Is it easy for both men and women to have the needed input for their farms?

Is it easy for men and women to go in for loans from whatever source to start or expand their farms and businesses?

Is it easy for the two to be employed to do the same work?

If yes, how easy?

If no, what are the difficulties?

Are there any self help groups in the community to support men and women earn their livelihoods?

What are these and how do they operate?

Do you sometimes rely on the support of friends and relatives for your livelihood?

What kind of support do you sometimes receive from them?

Are you a member of any social group in the community?

If yes, do you receive any help from this group for your livelihood?

What kind of help do you receive?

Where do you sell your goods?

How do you get to the market?

Do men and women use the same means to get to the market? How much do you pay to transport your self and goods to the market?

Do you have sufficient information concerning your livelihood activities e.g sources of credit/inputs/technology/markets?

If yes where do you get it/who gives it?

If not, why not?

What resource(s) do you most use for your livelihood activities?

What resource(s) do you least use for your livelihood activities?

What resources do you most need for your livelihood activities?

What resources do you least need for your livelihood activities?

D Household Changes

Are you pursuing the livelihood activities that your grandmother/grandfather pursued in her/his days?

What has changed since her/his day?

Did they rely on the same forest resources and land?

Is the pursuit of livelihood activities more difficult now than it was in your grandparent's days?

Why are they more difficult?

What are the main difficulties facing the women/men in the household?

Would you recommend any changes in the organization of household and work and why?

What changes would you recommend?

2. Themes for Focus Group Discussions

- A Household Organisation
- B Gender Relations
- C Environment Understanding
- D Role of Institutions
- E Rural Change

A Household/Community Organisation

What are women's rights in the household/community?

What are men's rights in the household/community?

Do they enjoy the same rights?

Do they have the same obligations in the household /community?

Do the rights and responsibilities of women differ/change according to age /status? Why?

Who does what in the household/community?

What work do children do at home?

Who fetches water/firewood?

Do you have taps in this village?

How far is it to the nearest well or river?

How long does it take to collect firewood for a day's cooking?

When do women and men wake up respectively?

When do children wake up?

What is a typical day for a woman/man/child?

When do they retire to bed respectively?

Are there any special roles for women and men in the community?

What are these roles and when are they performed?

Are they paid in cash or in kind?

What do they get?

What is the highest community position for a woman/man?

How do they get into such positions?

B. Gender Relations

Do men and women currently engage in the same livelihood activities?

What are these?

Have these activities intensified or reduced in intensity since the last drought in 1983?

Which community members migrate and for what reasons?

Where do they usually go?

What is the impact of migration on the workloads of the non-migrant members?

Do migrant household heads still run their households from their new stations?

Do they allow non-migrant spouses to take charge?

What is the average length of time that migrants stay away?

- Do men and women depend on the same forest resources?
- Is there sometimes conflict between them over the use of forest resources?
- Is one group sometimes expected to help the other out in the course of their activities?
- Who helps who and how is this call for help taken?
- Are there occasions when community elders have to settle disputes over the use of forest resources/land?
- What happens in such instances/how is the arbitration done?
- Do parties involved in conflict go home satisfied after arbitration?

C Environment Understanding

- What other use is the forest to this community apart from its resources?
- Is there any history between this community and the forest?
- Do you have sacred places and where can they be found?
- How long has the community lived here?
- Has it always enjoyed the bounty of the forest?
- How do you ensure that the forest continues to give you what you need?
- What trees and plants in the forest are beneficial to you?
- Name them. How are they important?
- What animals are important to you?
- Name them. How are they important?
- Are there any tree and plant or animal species that women know and use rather than men?
- Are there any tree and plant or animal species that men know and use rather than women?
- How do they get to know them?
- Do you know every corner of your forest?
- How far can you travel through it? How many days will that take on the average?

D Institutions

- Are there any taboos concerning the use of the forest?
- What are they and how do they work?
- Are there any specific taboos for women?
- Does custom guarantee defacto rights to land ownership?
- Who owns land?
- Do people have tenure rights? What is the relationship between landlord and tenant?
- Which tenancy agreements operate in this community?
- What proportion of produce is retained by the tenant and what proportion goes to the landlord?
- Apart from mediating in conflict, what other role if any does chieftaincy play in regards to the forest?
- Are there any traditional groups here whose activities are related to the forest?
- What do they do?
- Where is the nearest market?
- Which days are market days?
- How do you get to the market? Is the market far from this village?

What is the road like?

Do you get fair prices for your goods? How much produce can you carry? What do you sell?

What vehicle do you use to the market and how much does it charge per load?

How do you find the fares charged?

Do you pay any taxes on your goods?

Who charges the tax and how do you find it?

Do forest guards live in the community?

What relationship do you have with them?

Are you aware of forestry laws and do you keep them?

If you don't, why don't you?

Do forestry officials visit your community?

What do they discuss with you?

How do you find the logging activities in your area?

E Rural Change

What changes have occurred in this village since the drought of 1983?

What changes have occurred in the forest?

Do you encounter the same wild animals in the forest?

Which game was common in your grand parents day and which are common today?

What are the major changes in your livelihoods activities and strategies?

Do you have the same forest resources as in your grandparent's day?

Do the resources available have the same quality and found in similar quantity?

Are there any specific problems with a livelihood on forest resources today than it was in your grandparent's day?

What are these problems?

Do you have more or less people migrating from the village today than it was in your grandparent's time?

Why is this so?

Have relationships to land remained the same?

Did your parents and grandparents have the same land sizes?

Did they own their land or were tenants?

Were tenure arrangements the same or have changed?

Have relations between men and women remained the same, improved or deteriorated since your grandparent's day?

Have household relations improved?

Are men/women doing what is expected of them by custom at home?

Are men, supporting and maintaining their families?

Has logging brought in more jobs for you/does it pay well?

Are there any 'chopbars' in this village?

Which people are the principal customers?

When were they established?

Have 'chopbars' expanded their operations since they were established?

Is there more or less conflict in the household than it was in your grandparent's day?

What so you think has brought this about?

Have social relations generally improved, deteriorated or remained the same since your grandparent's day?
 Have there been changes in customs and community administration to take care of changes you have experienced?
 What are these changes?
 What changes have been done at the village level to take care of changes in the forest?
 Do you see the forest differently and thus relate to it differently?

3. Interview Guide for Key Community Leaders

- A Personal/Community details
- B Resource Conflicts
 - Intra-community/Inter-community
 - Stakeholder consultations/conflicts
- C Role of Traditional Institutions
 - Cheifaincy
 - Culture
 - Land Tenure

A Personal/Community Details

Please state your name
 What leadership position do you occupy in this community and what does it entail?
 How long has this village been in this part of the country?
 Where did you migrate from/ who founded the village?
 Do you own forestland as ancestral land? Where is it located?
 Which stool is the community under and how is stool land different from community/village land?
 Do you have sacred groves in the forest? Is there a school in this community?
 Where is it located?
 Which group of children usually completes primary/Junior Secondary school?
 What happens to children when they complete basic education level?
 Is there prostitution in this community? When did it start and why?

B Resource Conflicts

Intra-community/Inter-community Conflicts

Can any member of the village use forest resources as and when necessary?
 Are there frequent conflicts between community members over the use of the forest for whatever purpose?
 What is the nature of such conflicts?
 What about land and game?
 Are there peculiar conflicts between women and men over who uses a particular resource from the forest?
 What about how a resource is used?
 How are such conflicts usually settled?
 Do you think there are more or less resource conflicts today than in the past?

Has your community had any conflicts over use of secondary and reserve forest resources with its neighbours?

What resources were at stake here and how was this resolved?

Stakeholder Consultations/Conflicts

Have you had meetings with forestry officials over the use of this forest?

What did you discuss?

Were your ancestors consulted before the reserve was created?

Were you consulted before a logging concessions were given out?

How many logging companies have worked in the forest in recent memory? Which company is currently logging and how long has it worked here?

Do forest guards and logging company operatives prevent you from using the reserve forest?

If yes, what happens when they try to prevent you?

If no, are you then free to freely use the forest for your activities?

How would you describe the activities of loggers and chainsaw operators in terms of their impact on the community?

How can forest policies be made to benefit local communities? What inputs can this community make?

What are the identified effects of the policy on logging on your community?

What can your community do to minimize the costs and maximize the benefits?

What can logging companies do to minimize the costs to your community?

What can the state do to minimize the costs and maximize the benefits of logging to your community? What has been done to date?

What support can the state offer to improve livelihoods in this community?

C Traditional Institutions

Chieftaincy

What is the role of chieftaincy in the village?

Which people can use village land? Do households have free access to village land?

Do elders have anything to do with the use and /or management of the forest reserve?

Have there been any problems with logging activities in this community?

What are they and how were they resolved?

Customs/Laws

Are there any customs and taboos regarding use of the secondary forest?

What are they?

Are there any customs and taboos for women regarding the use of the secondary forest?

What are they?

Why are there special taboos for women?

What happens if such laws are broken?

Land Tenure

What are the customary rights of access to land in this community? Have these changed and how?

Who fixes land tenure benefit sharing proportions for the village?
 Do both land owners and tenants obey the rules of tenure?
 How do rules of tenure impact on livelihoods?
 Do you think that chieftaincy, customs and taboos and tenure arrangements help members to have sustained livelihoods?

4. Interview Guide for Key Community Elders (Community History)

- A Community founding/Social organisation
 - Founder/clan/chieftaincy structure/role
 - Kinship system
 - Settlement conflicts with neighbouring communities
 - Family/lineage organization
 - Worldviews
 - Land rights and economic structure
- B Forest resource changes
- C Traditional forest management systems

A Village Founding/Social Organisation

Can you tell me the story of the founding of this village?
 Are members here matrilineal or patrilineal in kinship terms?
 How were families/lineages organized?
 What about households?
 How were children brought up in the family and society?
 Do extended families own land?
 Do they own portions of the forest?
 Which is the royal family?
 What is the structure of chieftaincy?
 What role is chieftaincy expected to play?
 How was the village organized?
 Did you have warrior groups?
 Did they fight any village?
 What was the fight about?
 What can you tell me about your way of worship in the days of your ancestors?
 How did they relate to the earth?
 How did they relate to the forestland, trees and streams?
 How did they relate to the wild animals in the forest?
 What other beliefs did community ancestors have?
 What were their principal occupations? How did they access land?
 What did women/men do?

B Forest Resource Changes

Have there been any changes in the forest since the days of the early settlers?
 Have forest resources remained the same in quantity, reduced or increased?
 What about the quality of the resources?

What has been the impact of logging on the both the secondary and reserve forests?
 How has the village managed to date to keep the forest to serve their needs?
 Is there any special knowledge and practices about forest management that the ancestors have passed on to the present generation?
 Who is the community are the custodians of such knowledge and practices?

5. Interview Guide for District Agricultural Director

Please state your name and position/role

Please describe the organizational structure of this department in the district?

What is the agricultural potential of the district and what are the problems?

Are there extension agents working in all agricultural zoned out areas of the district

Most farmers in the Osenso community have indicated that they have not had contact with your extension workers before. How do you explain this?

Which groups of people do extension agents work with?

What percentage is male/female?

What are their age groups?

What are their major sources of livelihood?

How big are the farms your agents deal with?

Do farmers own multiple farms?

Which are the traditional crops grown?

Has your department introduced any new/improved crops?

What are they and have they been accepted by farmers?

When were the new/improved crops introduced?

How have they fared since their introduction?

Are they subsistence crops?

Can they be marketed?

What about new farming techniques and inputs?

Do farmers get them at subsidized prices?

Why has it become necessary to visit farms in the district?

What is the future for farming in this district?

What has been the impact of forest reservation on agriculture in the district?

What has been the impact of mining on agriculture in the district?

6. Interview Guide for District Forestry Officer

A Logging Policy

B Desired Impact

A Logging Policy

Has the state a policy on logging?

When was this implemented?

What is the background for such a policy?

What are the aims of this policy?

What is the content of the policy?

How was it drafted and who were involved in the drafting?

Were fringe communities consulted during the drafting of the policy?

If yes, what was their input and were they taken on board?
 Were there any specific inputs sought from community women?
 If no, why were they not consulted?
 What specific sections of the policy directly concerns fringe communities?
 Do they have complete access to forest resources?
 What are their obligations in respect of the forest?
 Have community members cooperated with the policy/Do they seem to resist and in what ways?
 What has been their reaction to date concerning the operation of the policy?
 In the face of the operation of the forestry policy, has there been the provision of an alternative sources of livelihood for communities?
 Have gender concerns been factored in the provision of alternative livelihood?

B Desired Impact

Which logging companies are currently operating in the Bosa Ben forest reserve?
 Are they local or foreign companies?
 What is /are the size(s) of their concession(s) and how long have they been logging there?
 What are the benefits of logging for fringe communities?
 What are the constraints for fringe communities?
 Have the policy aims of logging been met with logging in the Bosa Ben?
 If yes, how have they been met?
 If no, why not?

7. Interview Guide for Forest Guards

A. Work and Community Conflict

What is your name and your position/role?
 How long have you worked in this community?
 What does your work entail?
 What forest rules do you work with?
 What is most interesting about your work?
 What are the challenges?
 Do you sometimes confront trespassers?
 Where do they come from? Are they young/old/men/women/migrants?
 What excuses do they give?
 What happens in such situations?
 Where do you live?
 Please sum up the effect of our work on community/women's livelihoods

8. Interview Guide for Management of Logging Companies

A Impact of Logging

What is your name/What is your company name?

What position do you hold in this company?

Where is your concession?

How big is your concession?

Is this your only concession or you work elsewhere in the country?

How old is your company?

When did you start work in this area?

Do you have people from the communities working here?

What exactly do you do here?

Can you fell any log?

Which ones are you permitted by law to fell?

Which types do you get in this forest?

Where do you take your logs?

Are they processed in the country or outside?

What has been the impact of your activities on the NTFPs of the reserve?

What has been the impact of your activities on fringe communities?

What has been the positive impact?

What has been the negative impact?

Have you had any problems with communities in this area concerning your activities?

What is the nature of such problems?

What has been your social responsibility towards communities in this area?

9. Interview Guide for District Assembly Officials

A Livelihood environment

Vulnerabilities

Decentralisation

A Livelihood Environment

Vulnerabilities

What are the advantages of this district?

What about the disadvantages?

Are these advantages and disadvantages the same for all communities in the district?

Why and why not?

Are there any particular problems that limit communities in terms of their livelihoods?

What about communities that fringe the Bonsa Ben reserve?

Decentralisation

Do you have any bye-laws on the use of the secondary forest?

If yes, what are these?

If no, does it mean that any body can use the secondary forest for whatever purpose?

Are there any specific bye-laws that relate to communities within the fringes of the Bonsa Ben reserve?

If yes, what are these?

How do you see the bye-laws generally in terms of their impact on livelihood activities of fringe communities?

Have communities within the reserve approached the Assembly over the use of the forest reserve?

Which communities have approached you to date and what happened?

In what major ways do you generate income internally for the running of the district?

Do you levy various communities?

If yes, how much and do they all pay?

Do reserve/fringe communities operate weekly markets?

Do you have market tolls both for everyday markets and weekly markets?

What are your rates per load of food items for the weekly markets?

Do people complain about these rates?

What about transportation to such markets?

Are the roads in good condition?

What about fares. Do drivers charge approved fares?

Please sum up the impact of forest bye-laws, tax regimes and transport fares on the livelihood strategies and incomes of forest communities?

Other items probed (issues from community discussions)

Payments of land rents to the District Assembly

Payment of rent on wild palm trees tapped for wine

Ban on wake keeping/video shows in the community

Use of District Assembly's share of timber royalties

Appendix C – Field Pictures



Plate 1: The research team. The researcher is pictured below standing between the field assistants.



Plate 2: A section of the community



Plate 3: A migrant tenant family

Plate 3: Some women in the community



Plate 4: Community Youth



Plate 5: Some women in the community



Plate 6: A respondent interacting with an interviewer



Plate 7: Female focus discussion group



Plate 8:

Members of the female discussion group at work.



Plate 9: Male focus discussion group

Plate 11: Harvested cocoa pods



Plate 12: Site dried cocoa beans

Plate 10: Members of male focus discussion group at work



Plate 11: Harvested cocoa pods



12: Sun dried cocoa beans



Plate 13: At work at the palm oil factory