

Full Length Research Paper

The effectiveness of decentralization policy in Ghana

Godwin Ramous Kwame Egbenya

Department of Sociology, University of Cape Coast, Cape Coast, Ghana. E-mail: godwinegbenya2000@yahoo.com.

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This research aims at assessing the effectiveness of decentralization policies in Ghana with a case study conducted at Komenda–Edina–Eguafo–Abaim (KEEA) and Abura–Asebu–Kwamankese (AAK) districts in the Central Region of Ghana, the formulation and implementation of the policies and how they relate to the health, education and water sectors in the country. An interview guide was used to obtain answers from respondents numbering fifty-six. The population for the study comprised all stakeholders concerned with decentralization in the education, health and water sectors in the Central Region of Ghana. They included the Head, Policy Planning, Development partners, Co-ordination Unit - Ministry of Education, Director General - Ghana Education Service, Deputy Director Administration, Ghana Health Service, Managing Director of the Community Water and Sanitation Unit. Frequencies, percentage, and tests of independence were used to analyze the data. From the study, majority of respondents were males who were 40 years and above with high educational background, reflecting males' dominance over females in influential positions in the country. Some respondents had gone through secondary education or higher. In addition, most of them had been working in the communities and the Sectors for a long time. In sum, responses on the research questions indicate that the decentralization exercise in the two districts has been effective and secondly, the level of integration of the three sectors at the district level has been quite high and met the decentralization objectives.

Key words: Effectiveness, integration, implementation, improvement, resources.

INTRODUCTION

The term 'governance' is referred to as 'the manner in which political power is exercised in the management of a country's economic and social resources for development (World Bank, 1992). Rondinelli (1981) on the other hand define decentralization as the transfer of authority in public planning, management and decision making from the national level to sub national levels.

Decentralization is a vital tool in governance and because of this the government of Ghana in 1988 introduced a decentralization programme based on governmental values such as empowerment, equity, stability, accountability and checking of rural-urban drift (Aryee, 1994a) . This programme was designed to accelerate growth and equitable spread of development in rural communities as well as urge these communities to participate in decision making that relate to the overall

management of development in their districts (Republic of Ghana, 1993).

Based on its establishment, the decentralization programme revived the support of voluntarism and community efforts. Both government and non-governmental agencies and so on undertook most projects such as rural electrification and construction of markets. This is because most district assemblies (DAs) lacked the financial resources, thus doubting the competence of the programme.

Moreso, the Auditor General's reports from 1992 - 1994 revealed widespread embezzlement of funds and the extent to which decentralization was able to reduce congestion and over concentration of power in the nation's capital is worth debating.

Therefore, if we go by the statement that, objectives of

decentralization policies are long term, then one would like to find out what the situation is like after nineteen years of its introduction. This study sought to evaluate the formulation and implementation of the policies and how they relate to education, health and water sectors in the country.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Decentralization defined

Most people misinterpret the term 'decentralization' and because of its global importance political economists have devoted increasing attention to the causes and consequences of this concept. Many people see decentralization as having either a static or dynamic interpretation as well as its usages, implying that the systems are either 'centralized' or 'decentralized' among others. Decentralization can therefore be seen as a system, that is to say, in a governmental system the legislative, executive and judicial bodies together accomplish the task of governing (Tresiman, 2002: 3).

Various attributes are distributed across different tiers in a compound political system and Treisman focuses on five of these attributes: decision-making authority, appointment authority, elections, fiscal resources government and personnel. Based on these six (6) concepts, decentralization is specified. These concepts focus on all possible meanings of the term but especially on a few that come up commonly in the political sphere.

The six concepts of decentralization

The first concept, vertical decentralization simply means the number of tiers a government contains. A state with about five levels of tiers has a more vertically decentralized governmental system than one which has only a simple tier. Vertical decentralization is close to Thomas Jefferson's idea of Americans dividing their republic into smaller units where officials will have the appropriate competences (Thomas Jefferson quoted by Treisman, 2002:5).

Secondly, with decision-making decentralization, Bird (2000) quoted by Treisman argues that the central question with respect to political decentralization is 'who decides?' Here, the authority to make political decisions is distributed among different tiers and if the right to make political decisions is assigned to one tier of government or another it would not be clear to add up and compare the rights assigned to each to arrive at a composite measure of decentralization.

Thirdly, appointed decentralization is concerned with the level which officials are appointed and dismissed. The more appointments are made from above, the lower the appointed decentralization becomes and sometimes the

authority to appoint is not congruent to dismissal. Furthermore, electoral decentralization also functions mostly within democratic systems. Here, local officials can be either popularly elected or appointed by higher-level elected officials.

In addition, fiscal decentralization concerns the way tax revenue and public expenditure are distributed among the different tiers. Tax revenue decentralization is greater if the share of total tax revenue received by sub national tiers is large.

The last concept, personnel decentralization also focuses on how administrative resources are distributed. Personnel decentralization is greater if the share of administrative personnel employed at lower tiers is greater.

Types of decentralization

Decentralization can be in the form of political, administrative, fiscal, and market decentralization. There is clearly an overlap in defining these terms. So the precise definitions are not as important as the need for a comprehensive approach in applying them in our countries. In Ghana, political decentralization took the form of creating District Assemblies and sub-district structures such as urban, town, area councils and unit committees which provided a platform at the local level for the people to deliberate, legislate and execute actions necessary for the development of their areas (Owusu et al., 2005).

Administrative decentralization deals with the transfer of responsibility for the planning, financing and management of certain public functions from the central government and its agencies to field units of government agencies, subordinate units or levels of government. In practice in Ghana this was carried out by decentralizing twenty-two central government agencies to the district level and the district staffs of the sector departments take up the functions previously performed by the twenty-two central government agencies.

The three major forms of administrative decentralization are deconcentration, delegation, and devolution. While deconcentration is the redistribution of decision making authority and financial management responsibilities among different levels of the central government, delegation, is a more extensive form of decentralization in which the central government transfers responsibility for decision-making and administration of public functions to semi-autonomous organizations not wholly controlled by the central government, but ultimately accountable to the government. Devolution is a situation in which the government transfers responsibilities for services to municipalities that elect their own mayors and councils, raise their own revenues, and have independent authority to make investment decisions (<http://www.ciesin.org/decentralization>. retrieved on 06/09/09).

Fiscal decentralization is the situation in which decisions about expenditures of revenues raised locally or trans-

ferred from the central government are done by the local authority. In many developing countries local governments or administrative units possess the legal authority to impose taxes, but the tax base is so weak.

The Economic or Market Decentralization is the most complete form of decentralization from a government's perspective as there is a shift of responsibility for functions from the public to the private sector. Its main two types are privatization and deregulation. Privatization is the provision of goods and services entirely to the free operation of the market to "public-private partnerships" in which government and the private sector cooperate to provide services or infrastructure and deregulation allows competition among private suppliers for services that in the past had been provided by the government or by regulated monopolies.

Under appropriate conditions, all of these forms of decentralization can play important roles in broadening participation in political, economic and social activities in developing countries. Where it works effectively, decentralization helps alleviate the bottlenecks in decision making that are often caused by central government planning and control of important economic and social activities. Decentralization may not always be efficient, especially for standardized, routine, network-based services. It can result in the loss of economies of scale and control over scarce financial resources by the central government. Weak administrative or technical capacity at local levels may result in services being delivered less efficiently and effectively in some areas of the country. Administrative responsibilities may be transferred to local levels without adequate financial resources and make equitable distribution or provision of services more difficult. Centralization and decentralization are not "either-or" conditions. In most countries an appropriate balance of centralization and decentralization is essential to the effective and efficient functioning of government. The success of decentralization frequently depends heavily on training for both national and local officials in decentralized administration. Technical assistance is often required for local governments, private enterprises and local non-governmental groups in the planning, financing, and management of decentralized functions (<http://www.ciesin.org/decentralization>. retrieved on 06/09/09).

According to Owusu et al. (2005), the analysis of the achievements and challenges of decentralization in strengthening local governance in Ghana in terms of its various forms discussed, a 'reasonable success has been chalked'. However, a lot remains to be done with respect to integrating the sectors at the district level to provide the required technical expertise to the local governments. Rivalry between the various sectors was noted. There is also the question of recruiting and retaining adequate personnel at the district level. Good infrastructural and basic services were not available in the districts. The sectors at the district levels still look up to

their national offices for budgetary funds.

An overview of decentralization in some African countries

Until the mid 1980s in Africa, there was not any clear cut distinction between the State (the various sectors that constitute it) and its political structure. The deterioration of public utilities especially in the areas of health, water, education and transport exposed the limitations of the centralized form of government. The redistribution of public monies was done in the urban centres to the neglect of the rural areas which were deprived of the national resources and foreign support (Adamolekun et al., 1988).

Community participation approaches developed in the areas of health, water and education incited the creation of numerous civil associations which champions the grassroots initiative. Villages began to constitute territorial and socio-economic labour units. External partners invested at the local level and the most popular discourse dwelt on direct development at the grassroots without passing through the State. A typical example is the rapid development of community schools as far as the education the strategic repositioning of external partners are concerned (Bossert, 2002).

Decentralization, since the middle of the 1980's is transforming the structure of governance in Africa since most countries have started transforming power, resources and responsibilities to their sub national governments. The introduction of decentralization democracy is the most important determinant of decentralization in Africa. Most citizens and donor organizations consider decentralization a practical way of hiring services to neglected peripheries, obtaining more equitable distribution of public services and increasing popular participation.

Traces of decentralization in Nigeria dates back to a long time before independence in 1960 but it was in 1999 that the federal constitution decentralized and distributed power among the federal, 36 states and 774 local governments. Under the decentralized arrangement the federal government allocates 24 and 20% of its gross revenue to the states and local government respectively. Despite this demarcation of powers among the federal, states and the local areas the federal government still influences operational and institutional arrangements in the states and local governments. A major problem noticed with the Nigerian decentralization was the overlapping of responsibilities which creates policy conflicts, duplication of efforts and inefficient use of resources. There was also the lack of decentralization of management. Project planning and implementation decisions are headquarters-based without adequate consultation with the local communities. In addition there is serious resource constraints which make it impossible for the local governments to fulfill their responsibilities

(Cheema (1993) <ftp://ftp.fao.org/sd/SDA/SDAR/Nig-eria.pdf>. retrieved on 10/09/09).

With respect to decentralization in Zimbabwe, started in the 1980s, it is on record that some important improvements have been achieved in rural communal areas in particular the extension of services and increases in local revenues and popular participation. The problem of continued financial dependence of the district councils on the central government is still noticed with decentralization in Zimbabwe (Mutizwa- Mangiza, 2009).

In Ethiopia, decentralization took the form of the devolution of power and fiscal resources from the federal and regional governments to the local areas (woredas) in 2002 - 2003 appear to have improved the delivery of basic services in education, water and health. According to surveys carried out decentralization in Ethiopia narrowed the gap in educational outcomes between disadvantaged and better-off woredas, especially in the south (Rajkumar, 2008).

The decentralization in Nigeria, Zimbabwe and Ethiopia discussed so far shows an impressive institutional creativity in Africa. Rural areas on the other hand are receiving priority over urban ones in the current decentralization trends in Africa (Borosio, 2000).

Decentralization and poverty alleviation in Ghana

Most government and some proponents of decentralization in Africa are of the view that local governments may be responsible for poverty alleviation policies, such as distribution of basic food and implementing growth-inducing policies. Decentralization exercises superiority over a centralized system because from superior information and increased participation decision making, local information makes identification of more effective ways easier and increases government awareness of local needs. It would also be of much help if local monitoring ensures that officials perform their work well. This view on decentralization is supported by Owusu et al. (2005) who indicated that there is a close correlation between decentralization and poverty reduction as the local people are empowered and given the resources and capacity to perform the function of developing their localities.

A number of poverty reduction projects like the Program of Actions to Mitigate the Social Cost of Adjustment (PAMSCAD), Strengthening Community Management of Programs (SCMP), Enhancing Opportunities for Women in Development (ENOWID) and The Social Investment Fund (SIF) have been implemented through the decentralized local government structures over the years (Owusu et al., 2005).

More so, the institution of Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRS) and the debt collation agreements initiated by Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) have opened the way of sector-based policies to benefit the less privileged populace. The GPRS focused on the reduction of poverty and creation of wealth. It involves

among other things the rehabilitation of feeder roads, rural markets, and primary education, provision of rural micro finance, provision of water and sanitation facilities, provision of health centres and health insurance. According to Owusu et al. (2005), the GPRS does not sufficiently take into account what the poor themselves see or define as poverty. So the National Decentralization Action Plan (NDAP) has been drawn up to systematically harmonise and coordinate the process of implementing decentralization.

Policies and practices of decentralization in Ghana

Ghana's form of decentralization has the characteristics of all the types described earlier-political, administrative, fiscal, and market decentralization. In Ghana, the urban population is about 50% and its annual rate of growth is above 4% (NDPC, 2000). Decentralization reforms despite several years of its existence have substantial challenges confronting it. Between 1957 and 1988, attempts were made by successive governments to decentralize authorities to the local level in the form of regional devolution and districts focusing on public administration. The result was a four-tier structure consisting of Regional, District, local councils and towns and villages development committees.

However, in 1988, the Local Government Law was enacted and major features of the policy included the shift from command approach to consultative processes. District Assemblies were given more responsibilities and power as the higher political administration. Eighty-seven (87) personnel were delegated. This also led to the promulgation of the PNDC Law 207, which gave legal backing to the creation of district assemblies.

The main objectives of decentralization in this vine include empowerment, participation, accountability, effectiveness inter-alia and the stemming of rural-urban drift. (1992 Constitution). The Constitution showed specifically that decentralization sought to promote participatory democracy empower district assemblies introduce an effective system create access to the resources of the country and promote transparency and accountability. Under the District Assemblies Common Fund Act of 1993, 5 % of the national budget was allocated to Districts in quarterly installments and the Ministry of Local Government and Rural development to provide each district with a range of amenities including telephone and electricity.

Programmes and policies: Status and effectiveness in Ghana

The appointment of the Regional and District executive by the President of the country tend to undermine accountability since the appointees are more towards responding to central governments request than to local demands. This makes political support for local plans

implementation non-reliable.

Although fiscal decentralization has seen some progress over time, it is limited to capital projects in restricted areas. Some major ministries disburse their respective departments at the local level and this holt budgets for the delivery of basic services. Report from the World Bank (1989) also indicates that planning at the local level is difficult because of scarcity of staff and skills as well as low wages of civil servants.

On the contrary, Owusu (2005) argues that increased transfer of resources to the districts have contributed to the growth of these districts. Two districts planners of Upper Denkyira and Twifo Henang Lower Denkyira confirmed this assertion. The district capital according to the District Planning Officer of Twifo Henang, 'has changes quite significantly'. In the case of Twifo Praso, the programme has rapidly turned a once rural settlement into a fast expanding and growing urban settlement (Owusu, 2005: 9).

Owusu (2005) added that the positive results have been marginal which would be attributed to the limited resources of District Assemblies. According to Razin and Obiri Yeboah, local governments in small towns have not fared any better because financial allocations from the government did not favour them. The idea being expressed here is that though decentralization has improved, the level of flow of resources from the government to all districts has failed and hence growth has retarded (Razin and Obiri Yeboah as quoted by Owusu, 2005).

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The study was guided by the following research questions;

Question 1: Is the decentralization policy effective from the point of view of stakeholders at both the national and local levels?

Question 2: Does the level of integration of the education, health and water sections at the local or district levels ensure an effective realization of the decentralization objectives?

Question 3: Are the resource distribution modalities effective and efficient enough to ensure equitable access to the resources in the sectors?

Question 4: Does the relation between the suppliers of the services and the local managers of those social services ensure improvement in quality of the services provided?

METHODOLOGY

Research design

The descriptive case study method was employed in this study. This approach appeared the most suitable regarding the objectives of the study. The case study method involves procedures and techniques of investigation based on intensive interviewing. Its aim is to

enable the investigator to understand an individual, group, community or an issue in order to take decisions. It is a method of careful and critical inquiry and examination seeking the facts of a case, problem or an issue and following events from beginning through to the end (Kumekpor, 2002).

Instrument used

An interview guide was used to obtain answers from the respondents, which enabled answers to be obtained instantly. It was also appropriate because the respondents had varied educational backgrounds. The interview enabled the researcher to ask probing questions and obtained reliable answers to questions. The respondents also had the chance of explaining themselves to the investigator.

Participants

The population used comprised all stakeholders concerned with decentralization in the educational, health and water sectors in the Central Region of Ghana. The accessible population was the stakeholders in two districts in the region, namely, Abura-Asebu-Kwamankese (AAK) and Komenda-Edina-Eguafo- Abirem (KEEA) districts. These districts were chosen because they were within the same region and share similar characteristics with the other districts in the region.

Sample

The sample, which was purposively selected included Head, Policy Planning and Development Partner Co-ordination Unit of the Ministry of Education, Director General of the Ghana Education Service and Deputy Director Administration of the Ghana Health Service. The others are the Managing Director of the Community Water and Sanitation Unit, Head of Public Relations of the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development and the District Chief Executives of the two Districts. The sample also included two District Directors of the Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Unit of the Ministry of Health committee of the District Assembly, twenty Assembly members and twenty opinion leaders at the local levels. This gave a sample size of fifty-six.

FINDINGS

Out of 56 subjects, 49 (87.5%) were males while 7 (12.5%) were females. This reflects the dominance of males over females in influential positions in the country. The data indicates that majority of the respondents were 40 years and above (54, representing 96.1%) with their educational background being quite high. The majority had secondary education or higher and could be assumed to be aware of government policies being implemented. It was found out that most of the respondents had been working in the communities and sectors for considerable lengths of time.

Research question 1

Is the decentralization policy effective from the point of view of stakeholders at both the national and local levels? The data analysis indicates that 33 (58.9%) of the res-

pondents agreed that experts were transferred from the national to district areas to manage the decentralization programme and 32 (57%) accepted that the experts transferred had the needed skills and knowledge with which to operate in the educational sector.

Forty one (73.2%) respondents agreed that funds were transferred from national to district office to facilitate implementation of water projects. Thirty eight (67.8%) also said funds were put to good use in the water sector while 69.6% representing 39 respondents agreed that materials that were transferred were also put to good use in the health sector. Meanwhile 35 (62.5%) respondents in the education sector confirmed that materials were transferred to facilitate the implementation of the projects.

The responses from the respondents reveal that the decentralization exercise in the two districts has been effective. Experts with needed skills and knowledge were transferred to facilitate the implementation of projects in the three sectors. Non-cash materials had also been transferred to the local level. This finding confirms the argument made by Owusu (2005) that increased transfer of resources to districts have contributed to the growth of district capital and other settlements within the district. He buttresses this with the result from an interview with two district planners in the Central Region (Upper Denkyira and Twifo Henang Lower Denkyira Districts). In the interview, both planners noted the improvement in the flow of resources to the districts. The district planning officer for Twifo Henang lower Denkyira stated

“The district capital, Twifo Praso has changed quite significantly. When I first came here, the capital was a rural settlement. However, with the declaration of Twifo Praso as a district capital, the extension of electricity to the town, the rehabilitation of the road to Cape Coast and improvement and accelerated increase in infrastructure from the districts share of the common fund and other resources of the District Assembly have opened the whole district and Twifo Praso in particular..... In case of Twifo Praso, the programme has rapidly turned a rural settlement into a fast expanding and growing urban settlement” (Owusu 2005:9).

There is a consensus among analysts of Ghana’s decentralization both from interview in the field and from the literature that the programme has led to the improvement in the flow of resources and increased access of people living in previously neglected areas to central government resources and institutions. A similar situation was noted with the decentralization process in Nigeria, Zimbabwe and Ethiopia discussed earlier.

Research question 2

Does the level of integration of the education, health and water sections at the local or district levels ensure an

effective realization of the decentralization objectives? As

to whether mechanisms were put in place for the integration of the three sectors (education, health, and water) within the framework of the central government policies, as many as 37 (66.1%) of the respondents agreed that mechanisms were put in place to ensure that development of the education health and water sectors took place together. Among these mechanisms were joint planning 34 (27.4%), joint implementation 35 (28.2%) and joint evaluation 31 (25.0%) were done more often than the other mechanisms.

From the analysis and interpretation of data on this section, it is plausible to conclude that the level of integration of the education, health and water sectors at the local level has been effective for the realization of the decentralization objectives.

In sum, the respondents indicated that the level of integration of the three sectors has been quite high and mechanisms put in place for higher integration according to policy guidelines. Stakeholders such as women groups, the youth and religious organizations were involved in the implementation of projects in the various sectors. Most respondents testified of positive change in their lives because of development in the three sectors just as it has happened in Ethiopia recorded earlier in the review of literature.

Research question 3

Are the resource distribution modalities effective and efficient enough to ensure equitable access to the resources in the sector?

The respondents identified various forms in which resources or funds were transferred to the Districts. Fifty four (22.0%) identified the District Assemblies Common Fund; 52 (21.1%) the MPs Common Fund; and 46 (18.7%), levies. Others were tolls, 44 (17.9%); and grants 23 (9.3%), BMC allocation 21 (8.5%); internally generated funds, 2 (0.8%); donor pool funds 1 (0.4%); earmarked funds from health partners 1 (0.4%). HIPC funds 1 (0.4%); and Social Infrastructure 1 (0.4%). Fifty 86.6% of the respondents agreed that, to some extent funds transferred from the centre to the districts are equitably distributed across the education, health and water sectors.

In sum, the respondents indicated that the distribution has been equitable in reducing inequality and poverty. Resources transferred had also been used for the intended purposes. The debt cancellation agreements initiated by highly indebted poor Countries (HIPC) have opened the way for the re-definition of sector-based policies to the benefit of the less privileged population. The institution of Poverty Reduction Strategy plans (PRSP) explains the political intentions of states to take and put in place measures aimed at ensuring a significant improvement in the quality of life of the population. This attracted the attention of technical and financial partners.

Table 1. Percentage distribution of positive responses on various items on effectiveness of decentralization in the education sector, by district.

| Statements of the effectiveness of decentralization in the education sector | Abura-Asebu-Kwamankese (AAK) (% of +ve responses) | Komenda – Edian-Eguafo Abirem (% of -ve responses) |
|--|--|---|
| Education | | |
| The extent to which experts have the needed skills and knowledge | 44.0 | 69.6 |
| The extent to which experts are being put into good use. | 56.0 | 69.6 |
| The extent to which funds are being put into good use | 72.0 | 91.3 |
| The extent to which other materials are being put into good use | 44.0 | 95.7 |
| Mean values | 54.0 | 81.6 |
| N = 51 | | |

Source: Field work.

National reforms and modalities of decentralization can only be meaningful in the context of an improved implementation of sector-based policies and in a quest for improved results for each sector in line with the PRSP. Transferring power to local leaders calls for corresponding local policies to the socio-economic realities, a better consideration of socio-economic disparities and a possible coherence of the provision of basic social services in these three sectors.

Research question 4

Does the relation between the suppliers of the services and the local managers of those social services ensure improvement in quality of the services provided?

As many as 51 (56.0%) respondents accepted that the integration of sector based projects were planned and executed at the District Assembly level, while 22 (24.2%) acknowledged that it was at the local level. Seventeen others (18.7%) said it was carried out at the central government level. These results of the study suggest that the decentralization exercise involving the three sectors is doing well in the two districts and has brought about improvement in the quality of the services provided. Such a conclusion could have its limitations with respect to revelations from the study.

A more elaborate data analysis could be made to address differences in perception between respondents in the two districts. The decentralization exercise could be evaluated differently from the way it is done at the grassroots.

In view of this, an elaboration on the data analysis was done by first computing the number of respondents from each district who gave positive evaluation of the items (variables) under consideration. Mean percentage scores were computed for the two districts. The distribution of the proportions of respondents who responded positively

to the various items across the two districts is presented in Tables 1 - 6.

The data in Tables 1-3 indicate the evaluation of the effectiveness of the decentralization process on sector bases (Education, Health and water) in the two districts, AAK and KEEA. A close look at the data in Table 1 indicates that respondents in the KEEA district perceived developments in the education sector more positively than those in AAK district. Thus, decentralization in the education sector is perceived to be more effective in KEEA than in AAK (mean values: 81.6 > 54%).

The data in Table 2 also indicate that the decentralization process in the health sector is evaluated more positively in KEEA than in AAK (mean values: 82.6 > 62.0%). Still Table 3 shows that respondents in KEEA evaluated developments in the water sector more positively than those in AAK did. This suggests that the decentralization process in the water sector is perceived to have been more effective in KEEA than it has been in AAK (Mean values: 78.3 > 56.0%).

By percentage distribution, the decentralization exercise in all the three sectors is perceived to be making progress but more so in KEEA than in AAK.

Tables 4 - 6 also depict the percentage distribution of the positive responses on the various items evaluating the effectiveness of the decentralization process as perceived by policy makers and implementers on the one hand, and the grassroots members.

Tables 4, 5 and 6 indicate that developments in the education, health and water sectors are viewed more positively by the grassroots members than policy makers and implementers (mean %: 65.6 > 61.0), (mean %: 68.1 > 59.4) and (mean % 64.4 > 54.7) respectively.

To this end, t-tests were run to examine the significance of the mean differences between the two districts and between the policy makers and implementers on the one hand and the grassroots members on the other. Tables 7 - 9 present the results of the t-tests on the various

Table 2. Percentage distribution of positive responses on various items on effectiveness of decentralization in the health sector, by district.

| Statements on the effectiveness of decentralization in the education sector | Abura-Asebu-Kwamankese (AAK) [% of +ve responses] | Komenda –Edina-Eguafo-Abirem [%of =ve responses] |
|--|--|---|
| Health | | |
| The extent to which experts have the needed skills and knowledge | 44.0 | 69.6 |
| The extent to which experts are being put into good use. | 64.0 | 60.8 |
| The extent to which funds are being put into good use | 56.0 | 100.0 |
| The extent to which other materials are being put into good use | 44.0 | 100.0 |
| Mean values | 52.0 | 82.6 |
| N = 51 | | |

Source: Field work.

Table 4. Percentage distribution of positive responses on various items on effectiveness of decentralization by Policy Makers and Implementers versus Grassroot members in the education sector.

| Statements on the effectiveness of decentralization sector basis | Policy Makers/ Implementers [% of +ve responses] | Grassroot [%of =ve responses] |
|---|---|--------------------------------------|
| Education | | |
| The extent to which experts have the needed skills and knowledge | 68.8 | 52.5 |
| The extent to which experts are being put into good use. | 62.6 | 57.5 |
| The extent to which funds are being put into good use | 62.5 | 82.5 |
| The extent to which other materials are being put into good use | 50.1 | 70.0 |
| Mean values | 61.0 | 65.6 |
| N = 51 | | |

Source: Field work.

Table 5. Percentage distribution of positive responses on various items on effectiveness of decentralization by policy makers and implementers vs. Grassroot members in the health sector.

| Statements on the effectiveness of decentralization sector basis | Policy makers/ Implementers [% of +ve responses] | Grassroot [%of =ve responses] |
|---|---|--------------------------------------|
| Health | | |
| The extent to which experts have the needed skills and knowledge | 56.3 | 62.5 |
| The extent to which experts are being put into good use. | 56.3 | 60.0 |
| The extent to which funds are being put into good use | 62.6 | 77.5 |
| The extent to which other materials are being put into good use | 62.5 | 72.5 |
| Mean values | 59.4 | 68.1 |
| N = 51 | | |

Source: Field work.

Table 6. Percentage distribution of positive responses on various items on effectiveness of decentralization by Policy Makers and Implementers vs. grassroot members in the water sector.

| Statements on the effectiveness of decentralization sector basis | Policy makers/Implementers [% of +ve responses] | Grassroot (% of -ve responses) |
|--|--|--------------------------------|
| Water | | |
| The extent to which experts have the needed skills and knowledge | 50.0 | 52.5 |
| The extent to which experts are being put into good use. | 56.3 | 60.0 |
| The extent to which funds are being put into good use | 56.3 | 72.5 |
| The extent to which other materials are being put into good use | 56.3 | 72.5 |
| Mean values | 54.7 | 64.4 |
| N = 51 | | |

Source: Field work.

Table 7. Results of the t-tests on hypothesis 1 (Education).

| | q74.Indicate the district in which the data was collected | N | Mean | Std. deviation | Std. error mean | t | df | Sig. (2-tailed) | Mean difference | Std. error difference |
|--|---|----|--------|----------------|-----------------|--------|----|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------------|
| To what extent would you say the experts have the needed skills and knowledge with which to operate in the education sector? | Abura-Asebu-Kwamankese | 12 | 3.3333 | .65134 | .18803 | -1.342 | 26 | .191 | -.2917 | .21728 |
| | Komenda-Edina-Eguafo-Abirem | 16 | 3.6250 | .50000 | .12500 | | | | | |
| To what extent are the experts being put into good use in the education sector? | Abura-Asebu-Kwamankese | 14 | 3.4286 | .51355 | .13725 | -1.833 | 28 | .077 | -.3214 | .17535 |
| | Komenda-Edina-Eguafo-Abirem | 16 | 3.7500 | .44721 | .11180 | | | | | |
| To what extent are the funds being put into good use in the education sector? | Abura-Asebu-Kwamankese | 18 | 3.6667 | .48507 | .11433 | -.492 | 39 | .626 | -.1159 | .23589 |
| | Komenda-Edina-Eguafo-Abirem | 23 | 3.7826 | .90235 | .18815 | | | | | |

Table 7. Contd.

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|-----------------------------|----|--------|--------|--------|------|----|------|-------|--------|
| To what extent are the other materials (e.g. machinery, office equipment, earth moving equipment, drugs, vehicles) being put into good use in the education sector? | Abura-Asebu-Kwamankese | 11 | 3.5455 | .52223 | .15746 | .450 | 32 | .655 | .1107 | .24574 |
| | Komenda-Edina-Eguafo-Abirem | 23 | 3.4348 | .72777 | .15175 | | | | | |

Source: Field work. Note: $p < 0.05$.

Table 8. Results of the t-tests on hypothesis 1 (Health).

| | q74.Indicate the district in which the data was collected | N | Mean | Std. deviation | Std. error mean | t | df | Sig. (2-tailed) | Mean difference | Std. error difference |
|---|--|----------|-------------|-----------------------|------------------------|----------|-----------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------------|
| To what extent would you say the experts have the needed skills and knowledge with which to operate in the health sector? | Abura-Asebu-Kwamankese | 11 | 3.2727 | .46710 | .14084 | -2.677 | 25 | *013 | -.4773 | .17832 |
| | Komenda-Edina-Eguafo-Abirem | 16 | 3.7500 | .44721 | .11180 | | | | | |
| To what extent are the experts being put into good use in the health sector? | Abura-Asebu-Kwamankese | 16 | 3.6250 | .50000 | .12500 | .488 | 30 | .629 | .1250 | .25617 |
| | Komenda-Edina-Eguafo-Abirem | 16 | 3.5000 | .89443 | .22361 | | | | | |
| To what extent are the funds being put into good use in the health sector? | Abura-Asebu-Kwamankese | 14 | 3.7143 | .46881 | .12529 | .892 | 35 | .379 | .1491 | .16714 |
| | Komenda-Edina-Eguafo-Abirem | 23 | 3.5652 | .50687 | .10569 | | | | | |

Table 8. Contd.

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|-----------------------------|----|--------|--------|--------|------|----|------|-------|--------|
| To what extent are the other materials (e.g. machinery, office equipment, earth moving equipment, drugs, vehicles) being put into good use in the health sector? | Abura-Asebu-Kwamankese | 11 | 3.5455 | .52223 | .15746 | .126 | 32 | .901 | .0237 | .18856 |
| | Komenda Edina-Eguafo-Abirem | 23 | 3.5217 | .51075 | .10650 | | | | | |

Source: Field work. Note: $p < 0.05$.

Table 9. Results of the t-tests on hypothesis 1 (Water).

| | q74.Indicate the District in which the data was collected | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean | t | df | Sig. (2-tailed) | Mean Difference | Std. Error Difference | |
|--|---|----|--------|----------------|-----------------|------|----|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------------|--------|
| To what extent would you say the experts have the needed skills and knowledge with which to operate in the water sector? | Abura-Asebu-Kwamankese | 11 | 3.4545 | .52223 | .15746 | .730 | 25 | .472 | .1420 | .19450 | |
| | Komenda-Edina-Eguafo-Abirem | 16 | 3.3125 | .47871 | .11968 | | | | | | |
| To what extent are the experts being put into good use in the water sector? | Abura-Asebu-Kwamankese | 17 | 3.7059 | .46967 | .11391 | | | 31 | *.032 | .4559 | .20300 |
| | Komenda-Edina-Eguafo-Abirem | 16 | 3.2500 | .68313 | .17078 | | | | | | |
| To what extent are the funds being put into good use in the water sector? | Abura-Asebu-Kwamankese | 15 | 3.4667 | .63994 | .16523 | | | 36 | .051 | .3797 | .18806 |
| | Komenda-Edina-Eguafo-Abirem | 23 | 3.0870 | .51461 | .10730 | | | | | | |

various items by district. The hypothesis tested here was that:

Ho: there are no significant differences in the evaluation

of developments in the two districts.

The results of the series of t- tests (Tables 7 - 9) indicate that it is only in the case of 3 out of the 12 items that the differences are significant. The item, "The experts

Table 9. Contd.

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|-----------------------------|----|--------|--------|--------|-------|----|------|-------|--------|
| To what extent are the other materials (e.g. machinery, office equipments, earth moving equipments, drugs, vehicles) being put into good use in the water sector? | Abura-Asebu-Kwamankese | 14 | 3.2857 | .46881 | .12529 | 1.177 | 35 | .247 | .1988 | .16884 |
| | Komenda-Edina-Eguafo-Abirem | 23 | 3.0870 | .51461 | .10730 | | | | | |

Source: Field work. Note: $p < 0.05$.

Table 10. Results of the t-tests on hypothesis 1 (Education).

| | Policy makers | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean | t | df | Sig. (2-tailed) | Mean Difference | Std. Error Difference |
|---|---------------|----|--------|----------------|-----------------|-------|--------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------------|
| To what extent would you say the experts have the needed skills and knowledge with which to operate in the education sector? | Policy makers | 11 | 3.6364 | .50452 | .15212 | .867 | 31 | .393 | .1818 | .20973 |
| | Grassroots | 22 | 3.4545 | .59580 | .12703 | .917 | 23.392 | .368 | .1818 | .19818 |
| To what extent are the experts being put into good use in the education sector? | Policy makers | 10 | 3.5000 | .52705 | .16667 | -.566 | 31 | .576 | -.1087 | .19216 |
| | Grassroots | 23 | 3.6087 | .49901 | .10405 | -.553 | 16.366 | .588 | -.1087 | .19648 |
| To what extent are the funds being put into good use in the education sector? | Policy makers | 10 | 3.8000 | .42164 | .13333 | .329 | 43 | .744 | .0857 | .26077 |
| | Grassroots | 35 | 3.7143 | .78857 | .13329 | .455 | 28.455 | .653 | .0857 | .18853 |
| To what extent are the other materials (e.g. machinery, office equipment, earth moving equipment, drugs, vehicles) being put into good use in the education sector? | Policy makers | 8 | 3.8750 | .35355 | .12500 | 1.984 | 35 | .055 | .4957 | .24988 |
| | Grassroots | 29 | 3.3793 | .67685 | .12569 | 2.796 | 22.548 | .010 | .4957 | .17726 |

Source: Field work. Note: $p < 0.05$.

Table 11. Results of the t-tests on hypothesis 1 (Health).

| | Policy makers | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean | t | df | Sig. (2-tailed) | Mean Difference | Std. Error Difference |
|---|---------------|----|--------|----------------|-----------------|-------|--------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------------|
| To what extent would you say the experts have the needed skills and knowledge with which to operate in the health sector? | Policy makers | 9 | 3.6667 | .50000 | .16667 | .705 | 28 | .486 | .1429 | .20256 |
| | Grassroots | 21 | 3.5238 | .51177 | .11168 | .712 | 15.543 | .487 | .1429 | .20062 |
| To what extent are the experts being put into good use in the health sector? | Policy makers | 9 | 3.8889 | .33333 | .11111 | 1.620 | 33 | .115 | .4274 | .26377 |
| | Grassroots | 26 | 3.4615 | .76057 | .14916 | 2.298 | 30.803 | .029 | .4274 | .18600 |
| To what extent are the funds being put into good use in the health sector? | Policy makers | 10 | 3.9000 | .31623 | .10000 | 1.887 | 39 | .067 | .3194 | .16926 |
| | Grassroots | 31 | 3.5806 | .50161 | .09009 | 2.373 | 24.664 | .026 | .3194 | .13460 |
| To what extent are the other materials(e.g. machinery, office equipment, earth moving equipment, drugs, vehicles) being put into good use in the health sector? | Policy makers | 10 | 3.8000 | .42164 | .13333 | 1.770 | 37 | .085 | .3172 | .17926 |
| | Grassroots | 29 | 3.4828 | .50855 | .09443 | 1.942 | 18.776 | .067 | .3172 | .16339 |

Source: Field Work, $p < 0.05$

experts have the needed skills and knowledge with which to operate in the health sector” (significant at 0.05 level) suggests that even though respondents perceive the experts in the health sector to have the requisite knowledge and skills the evaluation is higher or more positive in KEEA. The other item “The experts being put into good use in the water sector” (significant at 0.05 level) means that in both districts the experts in the water sector are seen to have been put to good use. The third item “the funds are being put into good use in the water sector” (significant at 0.05 level) means that in both districts the funds in the funds in the water sector are seen to have been put to good use. However, respondents in the AAK district appeared to perceive this in more positive terms.

Considering all the items, the data suggest that respondents in the two districts do not differ very much in their evaluation of the decentralization process in the three sectors, hence decentralization is progressing in the two districts.

Tables 10 - 12 in present the results of the t- tests on the views of policy makers/implementers and grassroots members. The hypothesis tested in this case was that:

Ho: there are no significant differences between policy makers/implementers and grassroots regarding the evaluation of the decentralization process.

The results of the t-tests shown in Tables 10 – 12 indicated that the percentage differences between the policy makers/implementers and the grassroots members are not significant in any of the 12 cases. Both policy makers/implementers and the grassroots members accept that the decentralization process in the three sectors is high.

The focus of the study was on the integration of the 3 sectors in the decentralization process. Therefore the views of respondents in the two districts as well as the

Table 12. Results of the t-tests on hypothesis 1 (Water).

| | Policy makers | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean | t | df | Sig. (2-tailed) | Mean Difference | Std. Error Difference |
|---|---------------|----|--------|----------------|-----------------|-------|--------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------------|
| To what extent would you say the experts have the needed skills and knowledge with which to operate in the water sector? | Policy makers | 8 | 3.2500 | .46291 | .16366 | -.867 | 27 | .394 | -.1786 | .20608 |
| | Grassroots | 21 | 3.4286 | .50709 | .11066 | -.904 | 13.850 | .382 | -.1786 | .19756 |
| To what extent are the experts being put into good use in the water sector? | Policy makers | 9 | 3.4444 | .52705 | .17568 | -.231 | 33 | .818 | -.0556 | .24013 |
| | Grassroots | 26 | 3.5000 | .64807 | .12710 | -.256 | 17.069 | .801 | -.0556 | .21684 |
| To what extent are the funds being put into good use in the water sector? | Policy makers | 9 | 3.5556 | .52705 | .17568 | 1.874 | 39 | .068 | .3993 | .21310 |
| | Grassroots | 32 | 3.1563 | .57414 | .10149 | 1.968 | 13.834 | .069 | .3993 | .20289 |
| To what extent are the other materials (e.g. machinery, office equipments, earth moving equipments, drugs, vehicles) being put into good use in the water sector? | Policy makers | 9 | 3.3333 | .50000 | .16667 | 1.305 | 38 | .200 | .2366 | .18127 |
| | Grassroots | 31 | 3.0968 | .47292 | .08494 | 1.265 | 12.471 | .229 | .2366 | .18706 |

Source: Field work. Note: $p < 0.05$.

views of policy makers/implementers and grassroots members regarding the success of the integration effort had to be compared.

To this end chi-square tests of independence were run to determine the significance of the differences between districts and between policy makers/implementers and grassroots members. The results are presented in Tables 13 and 14.

The data in Table 13, indicate that large number of the respondents in each district perceived the integration of the three sectors to be successful (KEEA = 69.9%; AAK = 64.0%). However, the respondents in KEEA evaluated the integration exercise more positively than those in AAK. ($X^2 = 12.338$; $df = 2$; $p < 0.05$). Table 14 suggests that both groups perceived development in the three sectors to be well integrated ($X^2 = 2.060$; $df = 2$; $p = 0.357$).

Conclusion

Responses from respondents on the first question indicate that the decentralization exercise in the two districts has been effective and has brought about positive change in the lives of the people. This implies that experts with the needed skills and knowledge who were transferred to the district/ local offices to facilitate the implementation of the projects in the three sectors have been of great help. Similarly, funds and non-cash materials provided have been put to good use.

Secondly, the respondents indicated that the level of integration of the three sectors at the local or district levels had been quite high and met the decentralization objectives. Meanwhile measures had been put in place, which had changed the quality of education, water and health provision. Stakeholders, such as women's groups,

Table 13. Differences between districts with respect to the integration of the 3 Sectors.

| Mechanisms are put in place for the integration of the three sectors (education, health and water) within the framework of the central government policies | Districts | | | |
|---|------------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|
| | AAK | | KEEA | |
| | N | % | N | % |
| Yes | 16 | 64.0 | 16 | 69.6 |
| No | 9 | 36.0 | 1 | 4.3 |
| No response | 0 | 0.0 | 6 | 26.1 |
| Total | 25 | 100.0 | 23 | 100.0 |
| χ^2 | 12.338 | | | |
| Df | 2 | | | |

Source: Field work.

Table 14. Differences between policy makers/implementers and grassroot members with respect to their perception of the integration of the 3 sectors

| Mechanisms are put in place for the integration of the three sectors (education, health and water) within the framework of the central government policies | Policy makers/Grassroots | | | |
|---|---------------------------------|--------------|-------------------|--------------|
| | Policy makers | | Grassroots | |
| | N | % | N | % |
| Yes | 12 | 75.0 | 25 | 64.5 |
| No | 1 | 6.3 | 9 | 22.5 |
| No response | 3 | 18.8 | 6 | 15.0 |
| Total | 16 | 100.0 | 40 | 100.0 |
| χ^2 | 2.060 | | | |
| Df | 2 | | | |
| Significant level | 0.357 | | | |

Source: Field work.

the youth, and religious organizations contributed to the success of the projects.

To third question, the respondents indicated that the distribution had been equitably done. This implies that the modalities for distribution of projects in the districts had been highly effective and efficient in reducing inequality and poverty. Resources transferred had been used appropriately. The fourth research question was answered in the affirmative.

Other findings were made aside those yielded by the research questions. First, it was found that the decentralization and the integration exercises were dominant more in the KEEA district than in the AAK district. Secondly, the grassroot members were more positive that the decentralization exercise was on course than the policy makers. Both groups of stakeholders however shared equal views on the integration process not being influenced by power.

The respondents identified many problems encountered in the implementation of the decentralization policy in their areas. Among these problems were: inadequate

equipment and funds at the district level, inadequate qualified personnel in rural or deprived areas and late release of funds. Others were human resource constraints at the local level, high illiteracy rate, and lack of commitment of assembly members due to non-payment of remuneration for the services they render.

Yet other problems include ineffective co-ordination between the sub-committees of the assembly, disparity in sharing PAF, leading to division among members, lack of official and residential places making people unwilling to accept posting to places leading to lack of adequate personnel and poor accountability. The decentralization in Nigeria, Zimbabwe and Ethiopia has also encountered some of these problems as stated earlier.

THE WAY FORWARD

Suggestions should be implemented in order to realize the full benefits of the decentralization policy in the two districts. The key ones are that:

1. Availability of adequate funds for the implementation of projects in the local communities.
2. Posting of more qualified personnel to the rural areas. Provision of residential accommodation for the personnel posted there.
3. The adoption of more effective revenue mobilization strategies and
4. Regular remuneration to motivate assembly members.

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