

Rural Women and Micro-credit Schemes: Cases from the Lawra District of Ghana.



Gilbert Ansoglenang

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of Social Science,
University of Tromsø, in Partial Fulfilment of the
Requirements for the Award of Master of Philosophy Degree
in Indigenous Studies

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GILBERT ANSOGLNANG

DEDICATION

To Thelma and Tracy, not forgetting my parents whose prayers and support saw me this far.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This study owes much to other people. Thus, I thank the various writers whose work supplemented this study. I am most grateful to my supervisor, Percy Oware, for his constructive criticisms and guidance throughout the study.

To the Centre for Environment and Development (SEMUT), I will say a very big thank you for the thesis grant offered to support my thesis. Not only that, but also providing me with an office to facilitate my studies. Mention must also be made of Sámi Center for providing me with travel grant for the fieldwork in Ghana.

I would also acknowledge the Nordic African Institute, for providing me one-month study grant to travel to Uppsala-Sweden to study in their library. And to the team of researchers at the institute, I say thanks very much for the constructive criticisms offered to me during my one-month stay in the institute.

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Finally, to the staff of Faculty of Social Science-UITØ, more especially Hildegunn Bruland, I say bravo. Nevertheless, all errors of omissions and commission found in this thesis are entirely mine.

ABSTRACT

In an attempt to alleviate poverty and empower poor people, many NGOs and government line agencies have been providing credit and social services to rural women in the Lawra District of Ghana. The essence of these credit schemes is to help the rural poor, especially women, earn a decent living through their on-going income generating activities (IGA).

The study emphasized that rural women play an important role in the provision of domestic welfare. Many women resort to multiple occupations in order to satisfy the welfare needs of their household members. While these women are engaged in several paid activities simultaneously, they still perform their unpaid and gendered domestic activities. It was realized that women have assumed certain household responsibilities, which were formerly men's gender roles, such as providing money and other material resources for house keeping. These added responsibilities have afforded rural women a rare voice in household decision-making processes. A derived benefit of empowered women was that they spoke for their men folks; women advocated for jobs and credit schemes for men in their communities. The study concluded that micro-credit schemes help reduce rural poverty and empower women.

Despite the enhanced and visible roles assumed by these women due to the credit schemes, there were serious operational lapses: the loans given to the women were inadequate to start and run any viable IGA, leading these social actors to refer to the loans as 'chop money' and not 'business money' (money sufficient to start with a viable business). Lack of formal education, time, improved technology and ready market for products, which often run down rural enterprises, still persisted and thereby reducing the women's current productivity relative to their evident potentials.

In the light of this, *inter alia*, the study made the following recommendation towards the empowerment of women: an appreciable increase in the loans, prioritizing girl-child education, developing and encouraging the use of appropriate technology, and engendering the loan scheme or helping rural women side-by-side their men folk.

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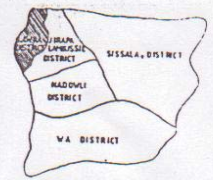
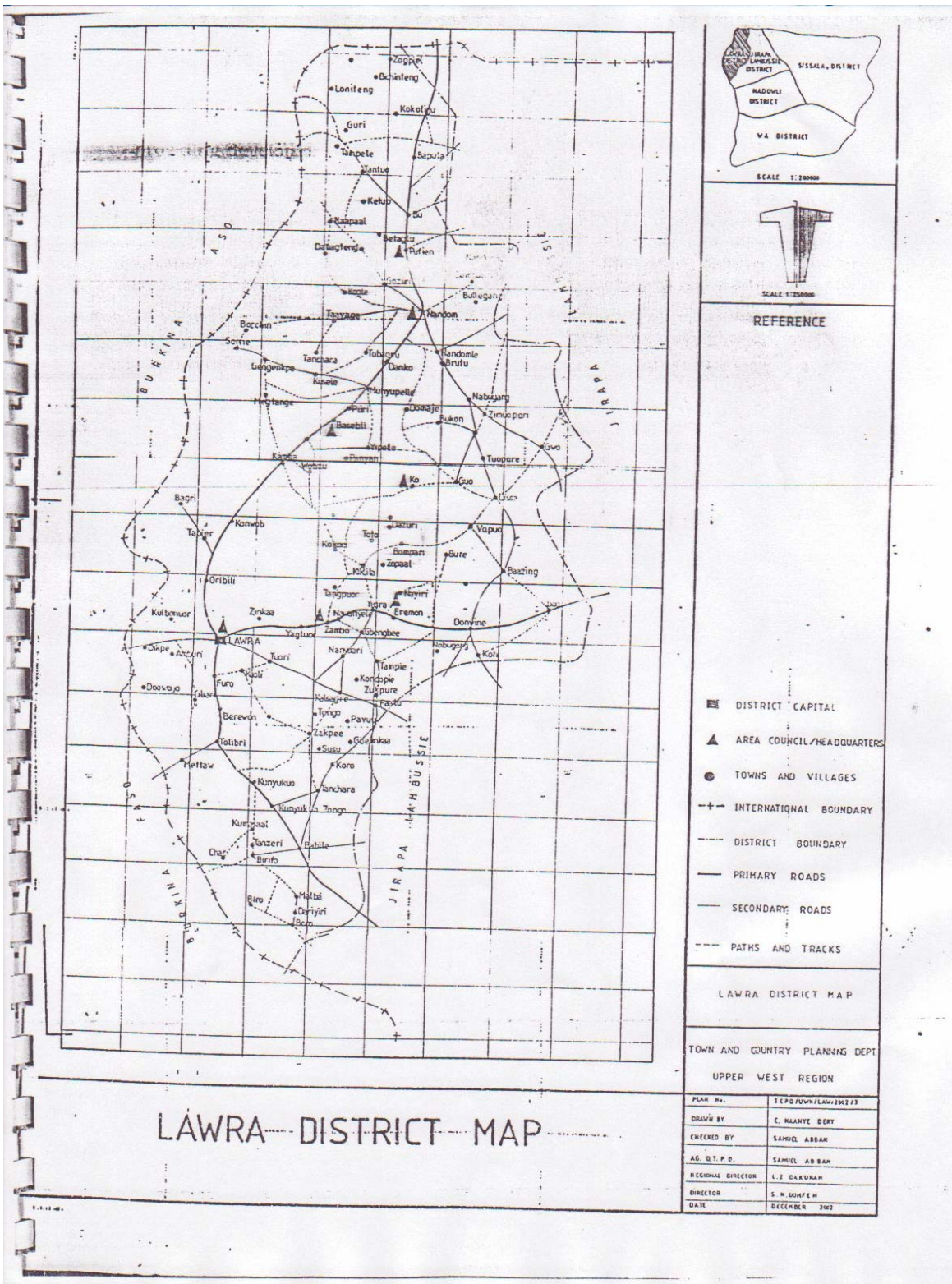
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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

CARE	Co-operative Agency for Relief Everywhere
FfH	Freedom from Hunger
GPRS	Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy
GRO	Grassroots Organization
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
IGA	Income Generating Activities
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INGOs	International Non-governmental Organizations
JSS	Junior Secondary School
MAPRONET	Market Access Promotion Network
MPF	Multi-Purpose Food
NGOs	Non-governmental Organizations
OXFAM	Oxford Committee for Famine Relief
SEND	Social Enterprise Development
US	United States

DISTRICT MAP OF GHANA





SCALE 1:20000



SCALE 1:20000

REFERENCE

- DISTRICT CAPITAL
- ▲ AREA COUNCIL/HEADQUARTERS
- TOWNS AND VILLAGES
- + INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARY
- DISTRICT BOUNDARY
- PRIMARY ROADS
- SECONDARY ROADS
- - - PATHS AND TRACKS

LAWRA DISTRICT MAP

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING DEPT.
UPPER WEST REGION

PLAN No.	TCPOJUN/FLAW/262/73
DRAWN BY	C. NAKYE DEBT
CHECKED BY	SAMUEL ABBAH
AG. Q.T. P.O.	SAMUEL ABBAH
REGIONAL DIRECTOR	L. J. EAKURAH
DIRECTOR	S. M. SOFFE E.H.
DATE	DECEMBER 1962

LAWRA DISTRICT MAP

CHAPTER ONE

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

This study center of attention is primarily on women associated groups. It is about rural women who form associated groups in order to qualify for micro-credit assistance from government line agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The micro-credit is use as a tool in reducing poverty in rural Ghana. The main target NGO and/or government line agency was the Nandom Rural Bank –Freedom from Hunger Project and the Lawra-Nandom District Assembly which more or less tries to replicate the idea of the Grameen Bank of Bangladesh.

The issue of poverty has attracted a global concern in recent times, and many efforts are made in managing it. This is promoted in public policies of many developing countries, necessitated by the adverse effects of absolute poverty, which are manifested in hunger, illiteracy, ill health, total deprivation, and many others, among millions of people in the world. And according to Khandker (1998:19), “...arresting poverty...means slowing poverty growth and reducing illiteracy, malnutrition, and poor health, which hurt the productivity of the poor”.

In recent times, donor communities, NGOs and government line agencies have adopted the concept of micro-credit schemes as a means of poverty reduction. Micro-credit is seen as a major tool of development; for providing poor people with credit for income generating activities can help them work their way out of poverty (Fisher et.al. 2002).

1.2 Poverty Trends in Ghana

Over the past ten years, Ghana has experienced a growing and deepening poverty in rural areas, especially in the three Northern Savannah Regions. The vast majority of the population is rural, and depends on subsistence farming as a source of livelihood. In 1986, 43 percent of the population was classified as being poor. This further increased to 54 percent in 1986 and 55 percent in 1987. Interesting among these figures presented are that, there were even variations in

these figures. These variations are realized when you look at it in terms of regional, district as well as rural-urban. For instance, poverty in the national capital, Accra, tripled from 7 percent in 1988 to 21 percent in 1992 (World Bank, 1995). Also, a poverty profile of Ghana concluded that in 1990 Northern Ghana, which constituted about 22 percent of the total population of Ghana accounted for 28 percent of the poor (using the higher poverty line) and 31 percent of the very poor (using the lower poverty line) (Boateng et al., 1990). Further work by Asenso-Okyere et al. (1997) concluded that Northern Ghana, which covers the entire Savannah Agro-ecological zone, and constitutes 11.8 percent of the total population of Ghana, has 55.9 percent of its total population living below the poverty line. Meanwhile, it is on records that the worst poverty stricken regions are the three northern savannah regions. While food crop farmers constitute about 58 percent of the rural poor in Ghana, the Upper West Region has 8 out of every 10 of the population being poor in 1999. The Upper East and Northern Regions have 9 and 7 out of every 10 being poor respectively (GPRS, 2003-5). Meanwhile, experience has shown that rural women are always the most affected people, so far as poverty is concerned.

Based on the increasing numbers of the poor in Ghana and for that matter Sub-Saharan Africa, it was compelling for nations to address the phenomena. Appropriate measures are therefore being put in place to reduce poverty levels. In recent years, some measures adopted by policy makers and NGOs in many low income countries as a means of alleviating poverty in rural areas, is encouraging women to go into enterprise development. This they do by making available to them credit facilities with education. Pitt et al. (2003) reiterated that these programmes specifically target women because they are more credit constraint than men. Also women have restricted access to wage labor market and have inequitable share of power in decision-making process. They argued that the Grameen Bank of Bangladesh is perhaps one of the well known small-scale credit programs for the poor, and more than 90 percent of its beneficiaries are women.

Evidence also suggests that the credit given to these women have high yield value in terms of welfare benefits. These rural women upon receiving the credit go into the informal sector and engaged in non-farm activities. It is in this light that the study seeks to examine whether these credits are able to empower the women economically and socially to be able to meet their domestic welfare needs such as buying kerosene, food ingredients, paying children school fees, etcetera. Their ability to meet their gender needs empower them to be able to take part in the household

decision-making process. As it is usually envisaged, "...participating in micro-credit programs is an empowering experience for women whose life choices are otherwise restricted through poverty, patriarchy, and societal or religious norms" (Pitt et al., 2003:3).

1.3 Problem Statement

Most people in rural Ghana depend on agriculture as a source of livelihood. The people of the Upper West Region of Ghana and for that matter Nandom for example depend primarily on rain fed agriculture for their subsistence. Meanwhile, land holdings are small, coupled with infertile soils covering almost the whole area due to population increases, compelling them to work on small holdings of land continuously. The extreme pressure on land has necessitated many people to migrate to nearby towns and villages or to Southern Ghana in their search for productive lands. Low agricultural production and incomes, especially among the vulnerable group therefore contribute to seasonal hunger that characterizes the lives of the people.

Culturally, women do not have authority as compared to their men folk/husbands. They cannot take decisions on their own without the consultation of their husbands neither do they have control over household productive activity such as farming. But these women usually contribute to farming activities such as harvesting and storage of farm produce, which are control by men. Meanwhile, these rural women have multiple household welfare needs such as buying of kerosene, paying children school fees, clothing the children, buying drugs, household provisions, among others to provide. Once these women are married, have no financial independence but have a duty to find the resources for the upkeep of the family. This therefore means that depending on the good will of their husbands to be able to fulfill their household welfare needs likewise their gendered-based responsibilities. In sub-Sahara Africa and for that matter Ghana, the husbands are tied with the responsibility of providing certain household necessities such as, foodstuff, meat, cloth and paying school fees (women with cash income helps with this expense). They may also save part of their income to make capital expenditures for items such as cement and roofing sheets for housing, and probably bride wealth payments. Such expenses often require that men save for a longer time in order to amass the necessary funds (Nelson, 1981). Women on their part perform most of the domestic and child care duties. They provide a substantial portion of their own and children livelihoods. It is evident in most anthropological literature such as Lemire et al. (2001) and Nelson

(1981) that women are mostly engaged in productive activities such as trading. Incomes generated through these activities are use immediately on household needs (Nelson, 1981). Meanwhile, an increase in women's income often leads to improved living conditions of their children and the household members, which is often seen as an integral part of good mothering. No wonder that women's earnings are said to correlate positively with better living standards for their families (ibid).

Further more, in this area women have been marginalized and discriminated against in terms of resource allocation. At the individual family household level, women do not have the opportunity to play a major role in decision-making process with respect to agricultural production (what to grow, when to harvest and how to manage the foodstuff after harvest), which serve as the main source of livelihood. Women are also excluded from land ownership which constitutes a major source of rural work and collateral for loan. This turn of events is as a result of gender perception among the local people, where land is passed on from fathers to sons. On the whole, women have less command over, and less access to resources such as goods and time as a result of patriarchy. As beautifully defined by Ellis (1993:176) patriarchy “describes the power relationship of men over women when, socially, men control the property, resources, and income of the household. [He continued], other common features of patriarchy are control over the labor time of women, over their freedom of movement and over their level of consumption”. This implies in simple terms that women are usually in an inferior or subordinated position to their male counterparts.

It is evident from the above analysis that local cultural practices have contributed to the high incidence of poverty among women in the Lawra District. To free themselves from such predicaments and also to contribute to meet domestic expenditure requirements, a good number of women have engaged in income generating activities as a source of income to be able to pay children school fees, buy cloth and everyday household provisions for the family. This has not been without problems. For instance, many of them are not able to mobilize the seed capital in order to begin with. Also, most of them are some what inexperienced or lack business skills thus their inability to manage the little capital that they have at their disposal. Others too operate in a hostile socio-economic environment where there is no ready market in the type of income generating venture that they have gone into.

Various NGO's and government institutions such as the district assemblies have therefore taken it upon themselves as a challenge to help these vulnerable groups overcome these obstacles confronting them in their non-farm activities. Support is therefore given to them in the form of loans by the concern institutions to help address the needs of these women in their non-farm activities. But before these women can be given the support, they would have to form an associated group. Let me add that, even though these women come together as an association, go into individual income generating ventures after receiving the credit. The essence of the group formation is to enable the credit officers have access to them collectively and also ensure group liability. "...Creation of joint liability is viewed to act as a mutual guarantee mechanism with a particular structure of incentives to ensure high repayment without demanding physical collateral assets to back up loans. It is seen effective in mitigating the problem of strategic default in particular" (Nissanke, 2002: 5). In other words, it serves as social collateral that usually encourages these women in repaying the loans. Therefore women who go bankrupt are compelled to sell household assets in order to repay the loans because of the joint liability of the group. It also becomes necessary for these women to sell their assets in order not to incur the displeasure of other members of the group. This is because failure on the part of a group member to repay the loan means depriving other members from accessing the next chunk of loan since it is a condition. As indicated by Nissanke (p.12), " Rahaman (1999) and Goetz and Gupta (1996) reports that, borrowers from the Grameen Bank have had to sell household assets or their own food supplies, or have had to leave their homes in search for wage labour in an urban area to repay their loan". In spite of the institutional support given to these women, evidence on the ground suggests that rural women still remain somewhat poor, because they are not able to meet their gendered needs satisfactorily.

Despite the efforts of government and NGOs to help rural women to access credit and business advisory services there seems to be a limited considerable changes, due to the persistent levels of poverty in Ghana and for that matter Nandom. As people who have much interest in the eradication of poverty and thus leading to the development of Nandom and Ghana as a whole, there is the need to delve into the myriads of problems that are confronting these women, which makes it impossible for them to progress in their income generation drives successfully.

1.4 Hypothesis

This study hypothesizes that micro-credit schemes are good for poverty reduction and women empowerment.

1.5 Objectives of the Study

The following are the objectives of the study:

- To examine the characteristics of rural women and the sort of enterprises that they are engaged in.
- To assess the impact of local custom on women income generating activities.
- To examine the level of support women entrepreneurs have received from NGO's and government agencies and the effect of it to enterprise development.
- To determine the accessibility of micro-credit to rural women.
- To assess the impact of micro-credit schemes to poverty reduction.

1.6 Potential Relevance of the Study

In the past a number of policies have been formulated, which is geared towards addressing poverty among the women folk through enterprise development. Ghana Vision 2020 policy document, for instance, called for the creation of an enabling environment for the support of women to be employed, create income and have their poverty condition reduce to an appreciable level through micro enterprise activities, and thus leads to rural development. The renewed interest in poverty reduction at the moment is also witnessed in the implementation of the Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRS) document. In this light, the study will measure how far the various policies on poverty, especially GPRS have helped in addressing the needs of rural women. The evaluation of these credit schemes would unravel the strengths and weaknesses of it as a tool for reducing poverty (Khandker, 1998). The findings of this study will help in informing policy makers towards the rational allocation of resources.

1.7 The Scope and Organization of the Study

Basically, this study is limited to the Nandom Traditional Area in the Lawra District of Ghana. The focus of the study is on rural women and micro-credit schemes as a tool for poverty alleviation.

For analytical purposes and easy understanding of issues raised, the work is divided into six chapters. Each chapter focused on a series of themes.

Chapter one is an introductory part of the thesis. It provides information on the main theme of the study which highlights on the statement of the problem, objectives, hypothesis, and relevance of the study. The research limitations are raised in this chapter.

Chapter two deals with the methodological framework, and is divided into two sections. Section I provides background information on the nature of the study district with much emphasis on Nandom. It touched on the geographical setting, socio-economic, cultural, political profile of Nandom and other characteristics of the study area. These elements described above in one way or the other influence the Nandom Rural Bank-Freedom from Hunger Project micro-credit programme and women. Section II delved into the methodology of the study.

Chapter three discusses Non-governmental organizations and poverty reduction initiatives.

Chapter four looks at the theoretical framework of the study.

Chapter five is devoted for the data presentation and analysis of the research findings. The information is presented theme by theme.

Finally, chapter six concludes the write-up with a summary of the principal findings, and conclusions drawn for planning purposes.

1.8 Limitations to the Study

One major problem faced was the difficulties in getting the respondents to be interviewed. This was due to the fact that the respondents were busy on farm work, since the research coincided with the raining season. The most suitable time was therefore in the evenings after they have returned

from their farms. This did not even solve the problem since most of them were always busy preparing evening meals after they have returned from the farm. This calls for rescheduling of interviews. Some too were not just willing to disclose their own-account, which they considered as women private issues to a man or an outsider like me. Other women also did not wish to be interviewed due to their previous experience with both the 2000 and 2004 population and election officers.

Almost all the respondents were illiterates. The research student had to do the reading of questionnaire and the translations as well with the help of key informants in some cases, to enable the women provide answers to the questions.

One limitation that must not be lost sight of is the time constraint. Three months was allocated initially for the work. And this was in accordance with the university's academic calendar. It however proved after the three months stay to be inadequate, for one to collect data for a master's thesis of this sort within such a limited time frame.

None of the two institutions I visited was able to make available to me materials and documentations which had links with disbursement of funds to the women. Banks for instance, are considered as private institutions, and therefore their documents are treated confidential and should not be disclose to outsiders. That might have led to their inability to make available to me materials and documents related to the disbursement of funds to the women.

Notwithstanding the above limitations however, it did not in anyway create doubts about the credibility of the field materials presented.

The next chapter looks at the methodological framework of the study.

CHAPTER TWO

METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

2.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter is in two sections. The first section will focus on the geographical setting as well as the demographic characteristics of the study area. The socio-political and the socio-economic infrastructure shall be dealt with in this area as well. The second section shall deal with the methodology, highlighting on the techniques/or data collection methods used. The purpose of this chapter is to determine the location of Nandom, the economic, not forgetting the socio-political organization of the area, and how they helped in contributing to poverty. The need for the methodology is to explain how the fieldwork was organized and why adopting such a perspective.

The social organization of Nandom has made it impossible for women to inherit land from their parents. This has rendered them very poor as compared to their men folk. Rural women are therefore marginalized in terms of resource allocation, and they do have limited say when it comes to household decision-making process. This helps in contributing to their being poor.

2.1 Section I: Geographical Setting of the Area

2.1.0 Location

Nandom, which is a sub-district of the Lawra District, lies within the Savannah high plains. It is bounded between latitudes 2° 25'' W and 2° 45'' W and longitudes 10° 20'' N and 11° 00''N approximately. It's bounded to the North and West by the Republic of Burkina Faso and to the East and South by the Jirapa/Lambussie District (Lawra District Medium Term Development Plan, 2002-2004). Its location makes it possible for the inhabitants to move into nearby Francophone towns in Burkina Faso in search of better economic activities or opportunities.

2.1.1 Relief and Drainage

The community has few hills and it is drained by one main river, the Black Volta, to the West making a boundary between Nandom and Burkina Faso. This main river has tributaries such as

Puffien-Baa, Bu-Baa, Kokoligu-Baa and Nandomle-Baa (Lawra District Assembly Medium Term Development Plan, 1996-2000).

2.1.2 Geology, Topography and Soil

The Upper West Region in general is underlain by three solid geological formations. These are: the lower Birimian Phylites and Schists, the upper Birimian granites and gneisses, and Amphibolites and Hornblende Schists. Almost the whole region lies below 500 metres and over half is less than 150 metres (Bates, 1951 cited in Nsiah-Gyabaah, 1994). The rock formation in the Lawra District where Nandom is located is essentially birimian with dotted outcrops of granite. It stretches along the Wa to Lawra mineral belt but its mineral potential has never been exploited (Lawra District Assembly Medium Term Development Plan, 2002-2004). Nsiah-Gyabaah (1994) stated that according to Bates (Ibid), the dominant rock is grey phillite whose structure is apparently a steeply dipping and anti-cline and lies north to north-north-west.

Brammaer (1956:62), cited in Nsiah-Gyabaah indicated that two principal types of soil dominate in the region. These generally range in texture from Coarse to Sandy loam to clay. He went further to indicate that there is also a little bit of alluvial soils along the valleys, and that the soils are classified as Savannah Ochrosols and Groundwater integrates.

The Lawra District consists mostly of lateritic soils. These are developed from the birimian and granitic rocks which underlie the area. Strips of alluvial soils are also found along the flood plains of the Black Volta as well as sandy loams along some of its tributaries. Crops grown on these soils are beans, millet, guinea corn, maize, bambara groundnuts, soya beans, cowpea, as well as vegetables. However, due to the high population pressure and long period of intensive farming activities, the soil fertility has reduced and its water holding capacity is also low. Due to the area's low soil fertility and the people inability to afford organic manure in their farms, has resulted in the reduction of annual farm yields. Mention must also be made of the erratic nature of rainfall pattern in the area. These might have been contributory factors to the persistent food insecurity in the area.

Analysis of the physical characteristics of the Lawra District indicates a situation of unfavourable natural conditions as well as the lack of technological expertise to tap natural resources for the benefit of the people. There is therefore a wide spread of poverty in the District. Meanwhile, it is

estimated that 70% of the people are living below the poverty line of ₦900,000.00 (about US \$100) per adult per year (Lawra District Assembly Medium Term Development Plan, 2002-2004). This accounts for people moving into non-farm income generating activity as a second source of livelihood.

2.1.3 Climate

The climate of Nandom is the tropical continental type with Mean Annual Temperatures ranging between 27°C and 36°C. The period between February and April is the hottest part of the year. Between April and October, the Tropical Maritime Air-Mass blowing over the area gives it the only wet season in the year. From November to January, the area experiences the harmattan, a cold but dry wind which comes with the North-East Trade winds blowing over the Sahara desert (Lawra District Assembly Medium Term Development Plan, 1996-2000).

2.1.4 Vegetation

The Lawra District lies within the Guinea Savannah Zone which is characterized by short grasses and a few woody plants. Common trees in Nandom include baobab, *dawadawa*, sheanut, ebony, nim, among others. The vegetation was in the past years very conducive for livestock production, which contributes significantly to household incomes. But the activities of man such as continuous cropping, fuel wood fetching, bush burning, over grazing, sand/or gravel winning, among others have affected the vegetation (Medium Term Development Plan 1996-2000). The prolonged dry season have also influence the vegetation greatly. During this period, the grasses dries up and the subsequent bush burning leaves the vegetation patchy and mostly bare. Meanwhile, it is a well known fact that bush burning has the effect of reducing the vegetative cover and affect negatively on the pattern of rainfall.

2.1.5 Environmental Factors

The environment is very important in the lives of the people of Nandom, for they rely on it for their welfare needs. Farming is their major occupation, which demands the clearing of the environment. This in a way contributes to soil erosion and deforestation in the area. Soil water is

usually lost through evaporation. The soil organisms too are destroyed by the high intensity of heat in the area. Thus agricultural productivity is always low.

Bush fire that is seasonal is a usual phenomenon in Nandom during the dry season. There are no organized fire volunteer fighters, and so the act of bush burning has always led to the destruction of the environment and farm produce. As a result of soil erosion, lost of soil water, soil organisms and deforestation, agricultural productivity is always low. This compels the inhabitants to diversify their source of livelihood.

2.2 Socio-Economic and Demographic Characteristics

2.2.1 Population Size

The 2000 National Population and Housing Census results put the Lawra District population at 87,525. This is made up of 41,137 males and 46,388 females, representing 47% and 53% respectively. Meanwhile, a District Database conducted in 2002 through the sponsorship of Danish Government under the Danish Support to District Assemblies Phase II Programme gave the population as 97,544. This figure comprised of 49,532 males and 48,012 females (Lawra District Assembly Medium Term Development Plan, 2002-2004). Further more, the distribution of the District population into rural and urban is 75,484 and 12,041 respectively. It has about one hundred and fifty-three (153) settlements. The District has only twenty (20) larger localities, with eight (8) of them having a population above one thousand (1000). And Nandom being one of the largest has a population of 6,526, followed by Lawra (District capital) with a population of 5,763 (Ibid). The area of the District stands as 1,051.2 square kilometers and its population density works up to 83 persons per square kilometer. This is a clear indication that there is intense pressure on natural resources particularly land for agricultural production (Ibid). This justifies the reason why there is growing poverty in the District and Nandom particularly.

2.2.2 Economic Activities

The main economic activities in the area are agriculture, manufacturing/processing, banking and commerce (Medium Term Development Plan, 1996-2000).

Agriculture is the major economic activity in Northern Ghana, and the success of it depends on rainfall. They have one rainy season in the area, making it a matter of livelihood concern to the people. This in fact, made it incumbent on most people to resort to non-farm activities as a source of income and livelihood. This justifies why the people had to go into non-farm activities. Even though women contribute by way of helping their husbands on farm activities, they do not have control over the farm produce when harvested and brought to the house. Food crops grown in Nandom are millet, maize, groundnuts, bambara groundnuts, guinea corn, groundnuts, rice, and etcetera. Both men and women engage in the rearing of animals for both domestic consumption and the market. The people of Nandom engage mostly in subsistence agriculture for the up-keep of their families. The main source of their farm labour is household family labour (that is, husband, wife, children and dependants). Non-farm activities are practiced as their second source of livelihood strategy because of the low agricultural yield that is mostly realized every year. This may be due to the low fertility of the soil. Therefore men usually focus on wood carving, blacksmithing, poultry keeping, petty trading and bicycle repairs while the women engage in basketry, *pito*¹ brewing, sheabutter extraction, and *dawadawa* processing. Mention must be made that, there are a few of them who are employed in the secondary and tertiary sectors such as teachers, security service, health workers and banking. The revenue generated from these works, especially those at the primary sector are also low, thus compelling most families to engage in multiple occupations.

Manufacturing or processing industries in the area are small-scale and employ less than ten (10) persons; usually, family labors are employed and are mostly located at homes (Ibid). Such small-scale industries include:

- ❖ Shea-butter production or processing
- ❖ *Pito* brewing
- ❖ Groundnut oil extraction
- ❖ Weaving and dressmaking

¹ *Pito* is a local drink brewed from guinea corn or maize.

- ❖ Pottery and basketry
- ❖ Carpentry and Masonry
- ❖ Blacksmithing
- ❖ Corn milling and
- ❖ Vehicle repairs

There is also a rural bank at Nandom. Commercial activities in Nandom are mostly in farm produce and manufactured goods brought in from outside. The market linkages are very strong between Nandom and other major market centres such as *Wa, Tumu, Lawra, Babile, Hamile, Fielmuo, Piina and Samuo*. In short, the markets are opened and one can move in and out at any time without any hindrance.

2.2.3 Social Organization

Christianity is the main dominant religion in Nandom with Catholicism being predominant. Others in the minority group include Muslims, traditionalists, and other forms of Christian worship such as Deeper life. The autochthonous people are *Dagara* with other settler ethnic groups such as the *Dagomba, Hausa, Moshi* and *Akan*. Historically, the people of Nandom are into African traditional religion where sacrifices are made to God through the smaller gods. And it's believed among the indigenes that the sacrifices are meant for the Almighty God. These smaller gods are only performing an intermediary role between man and the Almighty God. But due to the advent of Christianity, the traditional religion is practiced in the area just by a very few. Respect for the elders/aged and parents are something to write home about. Incest and adultery are serious taboos in the area and offenders are punished accordingly. Individual clans also have their totems.

In practice is also the payment of bride-price for marriage as a tradition. The payment is made by the family of the husband to that of the wife. This bride-price can be described as being expensive, on the average two cows, three fowls and a guinea fowl. Cowries are also included depending on the clan or family background of the bride. The cowries symbolize tradition, that is, it was a form of traditional currency to the *Dagara* since time immemorial. So, those families who are still deep

into the *Dagara* custom still demands for it. The collection of the cowries seals the marriage. This has often been converted into cedis these days, which is the Ghanaian currency.

Inheritance system in Nandom traditional area is patrilineal whereby inheritance is recognized paternally. Unfortunately, women do not have the authority to inherit from their father's, so therefore land which is a productive resource as far as agricultural activity is concerned is pass on from fathers to sons. In this light, women who want to go into farming would have to beg for land in order to accomplish their aim. Quite apart from this, women do not become chiefs neither could they be made a *tengansob* (the custodian of land) in Nandom. They could therefore not take part actively or directly when it comes to the enskinement of chiefs in Northern Ghana. All these goes to buttress the point that women do not take part actively in household decision-making processes.

Kakube is the main festival that is celebrated by the people, and the period of this festival is around late November every year. It's celebrated as a sacrifice of thanksgiving to the gods and ancestors. Mention must also be made that, it serves as an acknowledgement of a bumper harvest.

2.3 Socio-Political Organization

2.3.1 Traditional Political System

The Nandom Traditional Area is headed by a Paramount Chief. The current reigning Paramount Chief is *Naa Puore Puobe Chiir VII*. He is assisted in his role with regards to decision-making and all policies pertaining to traditional issues by a Council of Elders. The Paramount Chief's Council of Elders is drawn from Elders of the Royal Household and the Divisional Chiefs under the paramountcy. Meanwhile, the paramountcy is made up of seventeen (17) Divisions. These are *Kokoligu, Ko, Tom, Goziir, Baselbi, Guo, Kogle, Tantuo, Puffien, Vapuo, Kuselle, Gengenke, Monyupelle, Ketuo, Panyaan, Tuopari and Bu*.

Mention must also be made of the *Tengansob* as far as the traditional festival and sacrifices are concerned. He is the custodian of the land and has the right to give out land for house construction and other development purposes. He sees to it that there is safety during national festivals through the pouring of libation. He invites the wrath of the gods of the land and the ancestral spirits on people who are evil minded. According to Der (1995), "the *Tengansob* performed first-fruit

ceremonies, administered land issues and made sacrifices when outbreaks of diseases and disaster showed that such sacrifices were necessary”. Unfortunately, no mention was made of women in the traditional set up. This signifies that women do not matter as far as the traditional political system is concerned.

2.3.2 Modern Political System

Nandom is a sub-district of the Lawra District with the capital at Lawra. It has twenty-three (23) District Assembly members. Four Area Councils fall under the Nandom Traditional Area, namely *Ko*, Nandom, *Baselbi* and *Puffien*. These Area Councils are essentially the rallying points of local enthusiasm in support of the development objectives of the District Assembly (Ghana-The New Local Government System, 1996). Development will never be realized if Chiefs, Assembly Members and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) do not collaborate.

2.4 Communication System

The modern form of communication system in Nandom is through the telephone and local FM station. There is also a postal agency. They have quite a number of traditional forms of communication. These include the gun (*malphal*), xylophone (*gyil*), drum (*kuor*) and oral forms of communication which is used during both joyful and sorrowful occasions.

2.5 Socio-economic Infrastructure

Social amenities such as community centers, sporting materials and recreational centers as a whole are indicators of development. The presence of these amenities in the rural areas is very important. Basic social facilities in Nandom are inadequate from my own observation.

The role of education in our development endeavor cannot be over-emphasized. In spite of the late development of education in northern Ghana, the first Secondary School in Nandom was established in 1968. The second Senior Secondary School at *Ko* was established in about fifteen (15) years ago. In addition, there are three Vocational Schools and one Secretarial School in the study area. The Vocational Schools are Oscar Morin Women Development centre at *Ko*, St. Anne’s and Nandom Vocational Schools. There are also about twenty three (23) primary and

eighteen (18) Junior Secondary Schools in the Nandom Traditional Area (Aasoglenang, 2000). There are a few Day Nurseries located in some of the localities, but let me add that they are not functioning properly especially those which are community based. Meanwhile, there is no teacher training college or a tertiary institution in Nandom.

One hospital is located at Nandom, that is, St. Theresa's Hospital, which is available to both the residents and nearby Burkina Faso nationals. Apart from the hospital, there are clinics located at *Piiri*, *Ko*, *Ketuo* and *Gengenkpe* respectively. There is also Primary Health Clinics (P.H.C.) in some communities such as *Puffien*.

There is a Semi-Industrial Complex located at *Segru* where the owners engage in blacksmithing, mechanics, construction and carpentry.

The major road linking Nandom to the District Capital is about 28.8 kilometers. It is very uncomfortable traveling on it especially during the rainy season because it is untarred. "The road network in the district can be described as poor not in terms of distribution or linkages but maintenance" (Lawra District Assembly Medium Term Development Plan, 2002-2004:9).

In a nutshell, the geographical setting, socio-demographic characteristics, socio-political organization and socio-economic infrastructure of the area are of utmost importance to this study. It helps in the identification of potential resources for development in the area as well as environmental issues hindering its development (Aasoglenang, 2000).

2.6 Section II: Methodology

2.6.0 Methodology of the Study

It is a well known fact that employing various suitable methods of data collection helps a researcher evaluate his/her data source and to detect inconsistent answers. Following a suitable methodology enabled a researcher to collect valuable data for his/her study, analyze and present them in a chronological manner. In the light of this, various sources of data collection methods were adopted in order to obtain a reliable data and achieve the stated objectives of this study. This entailed primary and secondary sources of data collection.

2.6.1 Primary Sources of Data

This technique of data collection was employed through the use of open-ended semi-structured interview guide, focus group discussion, direct observation and informal discussions. The purpose of these techniques was to allow probing to ascertain the impact of the micro-credits to poverty reduction in the study area. This also allowed open discussion, which enabled me, obtained information about women income generating activities. This might not have come up if I had used closed questionnaire. Furthermore, the high rate of illiteracy among my respondents calls for the need for the open ended semi-structured interview guide. In short, both quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection were employed in order to gather the data. But the qualitative method was the main focus in the presentation and analysis process of the data collected.

2.6.1 0 Quantitative and Qualitative sets of Research Approach

According to Derbile (2003), there has been the polarization along the lines of qualitative and quantitative methods in the field of research in any discipline, either in natural or social sciences. This therefore poses the problem of choice among the appropriate research approach to be adopted in conducting social science research.

Bacho (2001) as cited in Derbile (2003) indicated that proponents of quantitative research argued that human behavior in the social sciences, like the physical phenomenon in the natural sciences can be quantified in attributes. It can therefore be subjected to generalizations that have universal applicability. Rist (1975:18) as cited in Osuala (2001:170) postulated that “the epistemological underpinnings of the quantitative motif hold that there exist definable and quantifiable ‘social facts’ ”. Osuala (2000:170) concluded that “this viewpoint stands in opposition to the qualitative position that reality cannot be subsumed within numerical classification”.

Straus and Corbin (1990) as cited in Haque (2000) defined qualitative research methodology as the type of research that generate findings not arrived at by statistical procedures or other means of quantification... . They clarified that some of the data could be quantifiable but the analysis is qualitative. Derbile (2003) explained vividly that Kunfaa (1996) cited Miles (1979), who perceived “qualitative data as an attractive nuisance”. Meanwhile, that Patton (1987), Campbell (1988), Gunta (1990) and their colleagues holds a positive view about qualitative research. Derbile further

went to indicate how Kuufaa (1996), has explained that Patton was said to have criticized the quantitative approach for providing a much narrowed lens in the field of research by focusing on specific set of variables. He rather have a positive view for the qualitative method, which he described as providing a very wide lens in examining the relationships between previously unspecified concepts. Osuala (2001) emphasized that qualitative research stresses on the validity of multiple meaning, structures and holistic analysis, as opposed to the criteria of reliability and statistical compartmentalization of quantitative research.

There emerged by the end of the 1970s wherein scholars began to realized that both methods are required in the field of research, since no one method can answer all questions and provide insights on all issues (Ibid). Osuala concludes that, both qualitative and quantitative methods may appear to be opposites, derived from different philosophies. But both methods conform to accepted standard tools of research and can supplement each other, and providing alternative insights into human behaviour.

This study seeks to deal with rural women and micro-credit as a tool in alleviating poverty. There is therefore the need for me to consider the current debates about micro-credit schemes, which is a concept first developed and started by the Grameen Bank of Bangladesh. The issue of women and household relations would also be taken care of. But Haque (2000) cited Wadel (1991) as saying that it is important to use the qualitative method to be able to describe social relations. The quantitative method on the other hand is most important if only the researcher intend to collect having-data, for example on resources, income or doing-data for example on what you do with your resources or activities. This therefore explained the reason why I have to combine both methods in carrying out this research.

2.6.2 Secondary Sources of Data

Information was seeked from documentary sources such as books, journals, newspapers, reports, articles and other research related to this study. The essence is to review literature about actor-perspective, poverty, women empowerment and micro-credits. The literature reviewed served as both theoretical and empirical base for the analysis of the data collected. It also supplemented the information gathered during the fieldwork.

2.6.3 Sampling Procedure

The study required a focus on a targeted sample of women who are direct beneficiaries of the micro-credit schemes instituted by government and NGOs. The purposive sampling technique was therefore used for this study. The purposive sampling allowed the picking of interview objects that fit the focus of the study (Osuala, 2001). Also, according to Kumekpor (1989) cited in Mensah (1997), with the purposive sampling, the sample units are selected not base on random procedure but intentionally selected for the study. This is based on the fact that they have certain characteristics that suit the study or because of certain qualities they posses, which are not randomly distributed in the universe but necessary for the study. Respondents were therefore selected based on the fact that they were all women who are into non-farm activities, but were not randomly distributed in the study area. This sampling procedure was applied in selecting women who are beneficiaries of the credit schemes, local project officers of the credit institutions, official of the District Assembly, and key personalities for interview purposes. There was therefore some kind of subjectivity on the part of the research student since the chance that a particular person would be selected depended on him. But I was very much conscious in the selection procedure in order to come out with a sample population that is more representative of the target population. This did not satisfy the probability sampling requirement since the subjectivity of the researcher was brought to bear in some cases, in picking the respondents.

2.7 Selection of Study Area

The Lawra District and for that matter Nandom was selected for this study. One of the reasons for selecting Nandom is that, Northern Ghana is one of the areas where the incidence of poverty is very high. As stipulated in the Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy (2003-5) document, 9 out of 10 is poor in the Upper East Region, 8 and 7 out of 10 are poor in the Upper West and Northern Regions respectively. Quite apart from that, women have been marginalized in terms of resource allocation and household decision making process in the study area. It was therefore interesting for one to conduct research into the issue of women marginalization and how it affects women income generating activities. Secondly, the research student hails from the District and therefore has a fair knowledge of the historical background of the area. Mention must also be made of the fact that Nandom is one of the first if not the only area in northern Ghana where the Freedom from Hunger

Project is in operation. It was therefore compelling on my part to conduct interviews with a limited number of women in the study community who are beneficiaries of the micro-credit schemes, and searched for secondary data along side in order to complete the fieldwork within schedule. This also explains the reason why I interviewed few women.

2.8 Summary

This chapter gave an overview of the geographical features of the Savannah Region of Ghana with particular focus on the study area. The location of Nandom is at the north western corner of Ghana. The geographical setting of the area is of utmost importance to this study. It assists in the identification of development potential as well as environmental and sanitation issues hindering its development. Farming is the main economic activity in the area, which success depends on rainfall. In terms of the socio-political organization, it was realized that there exists a dual political system where traditional politics co-exist with modern political system. Both the District Assembly and the Unit Committees represents the modern political system in Nandom, and are therefore responsible for the general development of the area. The Paramount Chief assisted by the Council of Elders and divisional chief's head the traditional political system.

It was observed that communities in Nandom are lagging behind in terms of development when compared to other areas or communities. Their road network is very poor. Even though they had a number of clinics and health posts, the personnel were lacking to manage them. The provision of portable water and sanitary services are inadequate. In fact, the inadequate availability of physical assets for production, poor command over natural resources and low level of human resource development as well as lack of socio-economic infrastructure have promoted the recent trend in poverty levels in the study area.

The methodology also indicates that various method of data collection were adopted, varying from primary and secondary level. Various tools and techniques adopted in the collection of various types of data were not left out in the discussion.

The next chapter is devoted for Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and poverty initiatives.

CHAPTER THREE

NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS (NGOs) AND POVERTY INITIATIVES.

3.0 INTRODUCTION

“If the 1960s was the development decade of growth with trickle-down, and the 1970s the development decade of basic needs, the 1980s may be known as the development decade of Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs)” (Fowler, 1988:1).

Poverty reduction and its eventual elimination take the center stage of official development arena today. Most governments have therefore taken bold steps in recent times in putting up certain measures in their bid to reducing poverty if not eliminating it in totality. Poverty remains a pervasive problem in most developing countries, much particularly in the rural areas. In the early 1970s it was assumed that the benefits of sustained economic growth would definitely have a ‘trickle down effect’ on the poor. Growth with equity therefore became the overriding objectives of many national governments and international donors. Less effort was therefore made in giving greater attention to programmes which targeted the poor. Riddell et al. (1995) continue to observe that the absence of direct programmes of assistance to the poor implies that poverty is going to persist. Growth in itself is not going to produce significant reduction in poverty levels if the poor are not directly catered for. This situation further worsens in the 1980s in most developing countries and Ghana for that matter, as a result of the economic recession or structural adjustment policies which led to cutbacks in public expenditure. Therefore, the restructuring policies of the World Bank and other donor institutions led to a reduction of the role (roll back) of the state and increased space for NGOs (Hossain et al., 1998).

It has always been the prerogative of national governments to design and implement policies which could enhance the economic status of poor people. These policies were in a way influenced by international agencies and donors (Ibid). The ineffectiveness on the part of government and donors in implementing policies which could effectively enhance the economic status of the poor, explained the reason why the NGOs have to come in to take up the fight in reducing if not alleviating poverty. This started in the late 1970s, and flourished in the 1980s and continued up to date. These include local, foreign and church based NGOs. Their activities are geared towards

community development, relief work, credit provision, environmental protection, just to mention but a few. In fact, the NGOs as it is claimed are perceived to be more effective in reaching the poor than donors and government. The reason being that these NGOs adopts the bottom-up approach in drawing and implementing their policies. This thus gives the beneficiaries the opportunity to put in inputs. And this explains the reason why there have been the polarizations of Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) especially in the developing world, in the past twenty (20) or so years. Bull et al., (1996) as cited in Mensah (1997) indicated that the scope of work of these NGOs have widened to such an extent that they are now involved in every aspect of human life. Whiles the benefits of some of these NGOs accrue to individuals and communities, others have global impact and significance. There is therefore the documentation in both qualitative and quantitative change in the NGOs involvement in Third World development (opcit).

Put differently, in the past decades development has been viewed in line with the top-down approach where government does everything for the development of a community or the country as a whole. But of late, there has been a paradigm shift from the top-down to bottom-up approach in development which is the direct opposite. This was the time that private businesses and market forces were allowed to operate without government intervention. NGOs were therefore seen as important partners in development by both civil society and government. In this light, it was recognized in the 1980s that civil society, private businesses, government and NGOs, all played vital roles as far as development is concerned.

3.1 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The history of NGOs could be traced from two historical roots, that is, for (a) **Care and welfare**, and (b) **change and development**. Mensah (1997) indicated that NGOs are involved in care and welfare activities, a charitable work which flourished in industrialized countries from the 19th century onwards. This type of work led to the formation of wealthy classes in providing relief and welfare services to the poor and vulnerable groups, for them to meet their material needs. This was one way of transferring resources from the rich to the poor. This Mensah said is termed as “voluntary action” and has contributed to the development of NGOs known as charitable organisations, or welfare organizations.

Most of these charitable organisations in the 19th century realized the need to adopt different approaches for the development of society. Advocacy and political action were some of the activities other NGOs decided to do. The efforts of these NGOs brought about many changes in society, including the abolition of slavery and child labour. They advocated for change and the raising of public awareness about issues (Ibid). This forms the second historical development of today's NGOs, and they were more or less into **change and development**. This complemented the care and welfare activities in order to help people to help themselves. That is, they work with people to bring about development in society.

Bull et al. (1996) as cited in Mensah (1997) emphasized that NGOs, which were concern with care and welfare activities went into fields that government did not or was not able to operate effectively. That most of the universalized and specialized public services taken for granted today were originally pioneered by concerned individuals acting individually. The funds and human resources were donated by individuals, public or agencies in order to satisfy the identified needs. They continued that NGOs would often seek to get government to take over programmes they have initiated. This is to widen the scope and impact of the initiative, and it is only government that could do that. Accordingly, this was how one aspect of care and welfare could be linked to change and development.

Government became the inevitable dominant partner in public services provision. Never the less, most government still recognized that NGOs were still better placed in terms of service delivery, in particular reference to the situation where there is the need for fast tracking of issues/or additional resources. They are seen as agents that do things government could not do. For instance, NGOs could attract funds from agencies which are not accessible to governments. In addition, the private sector in most countries has become actively involved in supporting NGOs by providing them with both financial support and human resources (Mensah, 1997).

3.1.1 Changing roles of NGOs

Many changes have taken place in the past, especially in the 1970s, 80s and 90s and that have really shown the need to involve NGOs in development. New global trends have moved them onto the center stage, often according them a major role in dealing with social, economic, political and

environmental issues. The roles played by NGOs in the Rio Earth Summit, Cairo Population Summit, the Copenhagen Social Summit and the Beijing Conference on Women all gave credence to the important roles being played by them. They have been actively promoting issues about women and development, and in recent times, gender and development (Ibid).

There has been growing concern of late about the environment, population, civil and human rights, the effects of global economics and trade, poverty, unemployment, gender issues, the rights of indigenous peoples and the HIV/AIDS pandemic just to mention but a few. And this has contributed to the springing up of a new crop of NGOs which are mostly into dealing with such issues.

The role played by NGOs in working with and supporting governments has come to be complemented by questioning and challenging them. The emerging relationship between government and NGOs is broad. In one way or the other, and on some issues, there is open hostility. Furthermore, in some places, and on other issues, recognition of NGOs achievements is hampered by resistance in giving them the chance to take part in affairs which are seen as the preserve of governments. In any case, there have been accommodation and understanding between the two organisations as far as development is concerned. As far as NGOs operate within the confines of the laws that establish them, and their activities are legitimate, will eventually gain them recognition from many governments (Bull et al. (Eds.), 1996: NGO guidelines. Chapter 2) as cited in Mensah, (1997).

Berg (1987) has shown that tracing the history of Southern NGOs is difficult for one to do. “In part, NGOs have been inspired by the charitable example of missionaries now manifest in a number of religious institutions started or fostered by the religious INGOs (International Non-Governmental Organizations)” (Ibid: 4). The root structure is more complicated, and in great many cases there have been heritages of communal self-help which local leaders and community organizers have been able to draw upon. Berg indicated that the Sarvodaya movement in Sri Lanka reminds Buddhist priests that development was fostered by Buddhist activists during the 10th century. And that in Africa, it is common to find local savings clubs springing out of a tradition of communal, tribal, or clan self-help.

Political liberation and the rise of public education as well as the increase access to communication led to the “pre-conditions necessary for the widespread of NGOs in the South; but so did the influences of Ghandi, Marx, and the democratic ideal; the frustration from living with numerous officially sponsored development failures; the rise of cooperatives in the Third World; the emergence of local public administration not tied to traditional elites; and the examples of success provided by a number of INGOs and NGOs throughout the world” (Ibid: 4-5). Meanwhile, Berg made it clear that one could argue out that these NGOs have had a significant impact on Third World development than the rise of INGOs.

3.2 Definition/Characteristics of Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs)

There are considerable numbers of misunderstanding about the term NGOs. Various definitions have been given depending on its usage in a particular context. Two approaches have been adopted in order to define the term NGOs: one is broad and the other narrow according to Mensah (1997). Every organization in society that is not part of government and which operate within a community is an NGO. These organizations include labour and trade unions, religious bodies and institutions, sports clubs, arts and cultural societies, trade associations, professional associations, small and large businesses, and what have you he said. This seems to create problems because it seems to embrace a large number of diverse organizations.

Mensah went further to indicate that the narrow definition of NGOs, which is derived from current usage refers to organizations that are working in the field of development. They work with people to help them over come their social as well as their economic predicaments. This definition seems to be problematic also in the sense that it is both broad and restrictive. The term development is relative, so when development is seen in terms of welfare then it's restrictive. But when it is looked at holistically, that is, socially, economically, environmentally, and the many variables you can think of, then it makes it so broad. In any case, the term NGO is an organization that has characteristics such as voluntary, independent, not-for-profit and not self-serving in aim and other related characteristics (Ibid). Non-governmental organizations refer to registered, private, independent, and non-profit organizations. This definition excludes unregistered or informal associations and groups, which may be referred to as grassroots organizations (GROs). But both

NGO and GRO are usually mentioned when you talk about the voluntary sector (Wellard et al., 1993). This therefore implies that NGOs and GROs are mostly into voluntary service.

Non-governmental organizations comprises of a wide array of agencies within and across different countries of the world. In the broadest sense, they are agencies or groups which are different from government line agencies. NGOs are voluntary bodies and they do not operate for profit. They are usually seen in light of development by providing development assistance to the beneficiary communities in which they operate. Riddell et al. (1995) has shown that the word NGO as used in the development parlance encompassed a host of organizations, which differs in size, function, and geographical location. Accordingly, the word could be used in describing small, locally based, loosely established voluntary and largely grass-roots types of associations with formal constitutions, employing various number of staffs. Even transnational voluntary associations also fall into such category (Ibid). Their activities are mostly into relief, emergency, or long-term development work, and in some cases a mixture of the three they said.

3.3 Types of Non-governmental Organizations

A distinction is usually made between these NGOs depending on where they originated from. We have those which originated in and have a home-base in the developed world. They are called the 'northern' or 'international' NGOs, with the vision of promoting development projects. Critical examples of such are Church based NGOs, Freedom from Hunger Project, Save the Children Fund, Oxfam, CARE (Co-operative Agency for Relief Everywhere), Plan International, World Vision International, Action Aid, and etcetera. Mostly, the funds of these 'northern' NGOs are channeled to indigenous NGOs in the south, since they often register as charities. These indigenous NGOs are mostly the representatives of the 'northern' NGOs in the south.

Riddell et al. (1995) have indicated that northern NGOs are principally into funding of development projects and providing food and other logistics for disasters and emergencies. Those NGOs in this category are further divided into operational and non-operational agencies. The operational agencies implement projects in developing countries with the use of their own staff and resources. Examples of such are CARE, Plan International, Save the Children Fund, World Vision, Action Aid, among others. In the case of Africa, northern NGOs are mostly working there as

interventionist, and so therefore acting as operational NGOs. On the other hand, the non-operational ones finance projects from their headquarters or regional offices, mostly channeling funds through partner organizations. CAFOD (Catholic Fund for Overseas Development) and Christian Aid are examples of such NGOs (Ibid). The non-operational approach is favored in Latin America and South Asia. But let me add that, of late the trend is on moving from hands-on involvement towards working in collaboration with indigenous NGOs (Ibid).

The 'southern' NGOs on the other hand, are those which originated in and operated within developing countries (Ibid). There has been an explosion of southern NGOs in the 1980s. This growth has been spurred by the more positive attitude on the part of government and donors towards the NGO sector. Another factor is the increased availability of funds from donors, NGOs and governments (Ibid). There has been a retreat in provisions on the part of government in developing countries, which has manifested in a much reduced role in welfare service provision. This came largely as a result of public expenditure cutbacks introduced as a result of economic recession or structural adjustment programmes. And that is why there was the need for the increase in the number of NGOs in the south. Examples of southern NGOs are the Grameen Bank in Bangladesh, SEND Foundation, MAPRONET, Integrated Social Development Centre (ISODEC), Rural Action Aid Project (RAAP), and Management Aid (MAID), all in Ghana. They are mostly engaged in self-help activities, community organization, service provision, and poverty alleviation with funding from northern NGOs, donors and in some few cases government sources.

3.4 Non-governmental Organizations in Ghana

The first NGOs in Ghana were church-based, and they were mostly carrying out social and educational work alongside evangelism (Amanor et al., 1993). NGOs activities in Ghana began to expand in the 1960s and 1970s. But this started to flourish in the 1980s. They continued that the roots of these non-governmental organizations involvement in development programmes came as a result of the social inequalities within Ghana and the marginalization of communities outside the cocoa growing areas, most especially the savannah areas. Also, that the vacuum created in terms of welfare provision for the rural and urban poor gingered the increase in NGO activity from the late 1960s to the 1980s. They became increasingly active and developing social services such as wells, boreholes, health facilities, and educational facilities for the poor and marginalized in society. This

increase in number came as a result of the public sector response to budgetary crisis and structural adjustment policies. The NGOs were therefore seen as important agents in rural development at the time government was grappling with problems of rural regeneration. But let me add that of late, there are many of the NGOs whose target groups are based in the urban areas. Fowler et al. (1991) and Annorbah-Sarpei (1990) as cited in Amanor et al. (Ibid) stated categorically that ten (10) NGOs were registered in Ghana as at 1960 but this number rose to three hundred and fifty (350) in 1991. Meanwhile, this number included local town, village community development associations, development-oriented NGOs, religious NGOs doing relief work, credit providing groups and associations, environmental NGOs, and international NGOs.

3.5 Freedom from Hunger (FFH)

Freedom from Hunger is an NGO, which was founded from the organization called ‘Meals for Millions’. It was established to realize the vision of Clifford Clinton. As a successful entrepreneur, Clifford Clinton first ventured into taking action against hunger in his neighborhood and subsequently saw the dimensions of that neighborhood expand to include the world.

Station in China as a missionary, Clinton saw people starved to death. These people had no resources and no options to prevent their families perished, even though they tried all possible means in order to sustain them. Due to this, Clinton was compelled to establish a cafeteria known as Clifton’s Cafeterias in Southern California. Since he wanted to do more, he never closes his doors on any one who could not pay for a meal².

In 1944, Dr. Henry Borsook, a Cal Tech biochemist was tasked by Clifford to develop a food supplement that would provide good nutritional values, which would cost not more than five(5) cents per meal. The research was financed with an amount of about five thousand dollars (\$ 5,000) from Clifford’s private pocket. This challenge was met within a year by Borsook by bringing forth a Multi-Purpose Food (MPF). It was a very high protein food which could be met with just only two (2) cents, and which production started immediately (Ibid). MPF was first heard through a Reader’s Digest article entitled “How We Can Feed Europe’s Hungry”, and that was in September 1945. This article gingered contributions from many readers who were ready to help. But

² <http://www.mealsformillions.org/>

unfortunately, no agency was in existence at that time to distribute the MPF to the world's hungry people, therefore the money was returned (Ibid). This compelled Clifford to approach many government institutions, relief and welfare organizations in order to convince them to accept the task of distributing the MPF, but he was unsuccessful. Clifford, Dr. Borsook and other business associates in California accepted the challenge to incorporate their own non-profit as a venture. Multi-Purpose Food was massively produced by General Mills, and that gave birth to the Meals for Millions Foundation on July 5, 1946. Its mission includes relief and prevention of starvation, and its tool was Multi-Purpose Food, the "Friendship for a Hungry World" (Ibid: 2).

Countries that were experiencing chronic malnutrition and famine received the product of MPF. And within the next ten years, about six million five hundred thousand (6.5 million) pounds of it had been distributed to relief agencies in one hundred and twenty nine (129) countries, with the United States inclusive. But by the mid-1950s when famine starts to make less strong impact, Clifford Clinton also decided changing the focus of his organization towards the prevention of chronic hunger. According to him, while he was sure that food relief was essential as a stop-gap measure to fight starvation, chronic hunger and malnutrition required something more like self-help. As the concept of self-help began to take the centre stage, the MPF start to go into transition, and that gave birth to another organization called The American Freedom from Hunger Foundation. This came at the leadership of President John F. Kennedy. He succeeded in the formation of this foundation through the mobilization of Americans to get involved in the Food Agricultural Organization (FAO) campaign for global Freedom from Hunger, with its mission as educating the American public about famine issues while encouraging volunteerism in them (Ibid).

In 1968, the organization organized a walk which was term "Walk for Development", which attracted more than three thousand (3,000) participants. This walk covered a distance of thirty-three (33) miles, and passing through the streets of Fargo, North Dakota and Moorhead, Minnesota. More than hundred (100) 'walks' was able to raised them an amount of eight hundred thousand dollars (\$ 800,000) within a year (Ibid).

In 1979, Meals for Millions which was one of the early beneficiaries of "walk for development" began to merge with the American Freedom from Hunger Foundation. The aftermath of this

merger resulted in the formation of a new organization that dedicated itself to serving the poorest of the poor in rural areas. In 1987, Meals for Millions was dropped and the name Freedom from Hunger (FfH) was adopted to reflect the new focus of the organization which was the creation of a world without hunger. This explains why today, Freedom from Hunger concentrates on using sound nutritional science to guide its programmes. They make use of scarce resources and most especially, giving people credit to go into business, and thus helping themselves to a future, free from hunger. In short, FfH try to bring about innovation and sustainable self-help solutions which is geared towards fighting chronic hunger and poverty. All these, were the visions of the founder (Ibid).

3.6 Freedom from Hunger in Ghana.

Freedom from Hunger (FfH) is a non profit, non-governmental and non-sectarian organization. Donations received by FfH are fully tax deductible. It works through Rural Banks in Ghana. Money is given to selected Rural Banks, with the Nandom Rural Bank inclusive to disburse to poor women who have come together to form joint liability borrower groups, as a working capital loan. Group liability serves as an alternative to formal loan collateral requirements, which poor women rarely fulfill. The group receives a group loan from FfH through the Rural Bank, but the group on-lends to its members as individual working capital loan. The women invest the loans into small businesses, which they are already 'skilled', such as *pito* brewing, food products, basketry, and shea butter extraction, among others. It is a common assumption that such money given to women will automatically lead to increase in household food security, improve the family health status and nutrition, increase women's incomes and savings and thus empower them economically and socially.

Loans given out are supposed to be repaid within a maximum of sixteen weeks of installments at an interest rate of thirteen (13) percent. And repayments starts a week after the money is given out. The women also make saving deposits at weekly meetings, which is given back to them after a period of time to buy valuable items of their choice. The amount deposited as savings is done according to individual member strength and not according to lay down principles. But it is compulsory doing the weekly savings deposits. The group qualifies for the next loan after successful completion of repayment from individual members. This implies that, default on the

part of a group member delays the collection of the next chunk of money by others, even though they might have finished with their loan repayment. This is as a result of joint group liability.

Apart from the working capital given to these poor women to finance their income generating activities, they also receive education on how to manage the credit given to them and proper business development skills during the weekly meetings. This is usually delivered to the women through the project field officers who work directly with the women. Other important aspects of education that are also covered during the meetings include malaria and diarrhea management and prevention, family planning, child feeding, HIV/AIDS, and exclusive breast feeding. These topics are chosen in some cases by the women themselves. Training sessions are at times organized for various group leaders/executives who may intend train their respective group members. The education aspect is designed to complement the credit component by empowering women with the information, skills and confidence they need to better manage their own and their families' health and nutrition(MkNelly et al ,1998).This explains why the Freedom from Hunger project is termed as credit with education.

3.7 Summary

This chapter in effect, tries to outline the historical development of NGOs, its definition or characteristics, types of NGOs as well as the activities they are really into. It is realized that the activities of NGOs began in the 1960s and went into the 1970s at a slow pace but picked vigorously in the 1980s due to economic recession or structural adjustment policies of the IMF/World Bank which led to cutbacks in public expenditure. Most of them began as charitable organizations or philanthropies providing relief and welfare services to the poor and the underprivileged. Their focus changed from care and welfare provisions to change and development in later years.

The historical background of FfH was not left out in this chapter. The main focus of FfH was identified as credit with education. In this case, credit were advanced to women groups which intend on-lends to individual group members for their income generating activities. The education aspect dealt with giving the women education on how to manage their loans, diarrhea and malaria management/prevention, child care, HIV/AIDS, and savings.

The next chapter is about the theoretical framework of the study.

Chapter Four

Theoretical Framework

4.0 INTRODUCTION

Traditionally, agriculture is the mainstay of Ghana's fragile economy. The major source of livelihood in the savannah regions is rain fed agriculture, which is unreliable. Land holdings too are small, coupled with infertile soil in the area. This has always contributed to low agricultural production and incomes in the region. The effect is seasonal hunger, which characterize the lives of the people especially women. Women have also remained poor due to local culture that denied them access to productive farm resources. Non-farm activities have therefore been adopted by these women as a source of income, which could help them acquire their own resources in the face of these local cultures. An understanding of local culture and poverty reduction needs to come to grips with a complex picture of different actors each pursuing their concerns in a situation providing some opportunities and ruling out others in an unequal manner (Engberg-Perdersen, 1998).

It is truism that theories in the field of development sociology have advanced and improved tremendously in the past few years under the influence of the actor-oriented approach. These new theories are emerging due to the demise of the grand theories, that is, modernization and dependency theories, which dominated in the field of development up to the 1980s. Neither of the grand theories has survived intact as a viable paradigm for understanding change and transformation, or processes of poverty and inequality in time and space (Gardner et al. 1996). The argumentation of these theories were so abstract, which meant that they failed to reflect the complexity of the real world situation and thus ended up with circular statements (Seppälä, 1998). This means that they could not be use in explaining realistically, the problems of global processes (ibid). The approach which has been adopted by both sociologists and anthropologists re-asserts the importance of the agency of individuals in the face of structural constraints. The work of Norman Long and the Wageningen Schools 'actor-oriented' approach is an illustrative example to cite (McGregor, 1998). This explains why the recourse to practice theory.

4.1 Practice Theory

4.1.1 Actor, Agency and Structure

The actor-oriented approach paints a picture of poor people having power and agency, although subordinate, and underestimating the importance of the societal structures within which people are located. The actor theory therefore seeks to explain development outcomes in ethnographic terms, in which there are processes of negotiation between clients, local structures and institutions (ibid).

Generally, the individual actor has the capacity to process social experience and strategize ways of coping with situations, even if under extreme coercion. No matter whatever uncertainty or constraints he/she might have faced with, social actors are 'knowledgeable' and 'capable'. This implies that, despite the situation that actors may find themselves, exercise some kind of 'power', leverage or room to manoeuvre. They learn how to intervene in the flow of social events around them, and in one way or the other monitor the reactions of others to their behaviors (Giddens, 1984 cited in Long, 2001). Indeed the actor-oriented approach assumes that actors are capable when even under restricted situations, in formulating decisions and act upon them (Long, 1989). Hindess (1986) cited in Long (1989) explained that reaching of decisions involves the explicit and implicit use of dialogue in the formulation of objectives and in presenting arguments for the decisions taken. That, this discursive means vary and are not simply inherent features of actors themselves but forms part of the different pack of knowledge and resources available to them. And since the social world is never as unitary as to be built upon one single type of discourse, it follows that however restricted actors choices may be, they always have alternative choices with regards to objective formulation and deployment of specific mode of action (ibid).

Long et al. (1992) cited in Gardner et al. (1996) refers to the notion of the human agency as the ability of people to actively engaged in shaping their own worlds, rather than their actions being determine beforehand by capital or the intervention of the state or any external body. They went further to emphasized that, the stress on the perspectives of actors rather than the 'systems' of which they are part, has always been central part of anthropologists. And that, these ideas have widely been taken up within development studies in recent times, partly perhaps because they point to constructive changes, which can be made into policies. Further explanations also suggest

that “because the ‘developmental’ message is essentially optimistic: people are not wholly constrained by exploitative superstructures or the ‘world systems’; they are active agents and, if there is to be intervention, merely need to be ‘helped to help themselves’” (motto of the British Overseas Development Administration in Gardner et al., 1996:59-60).

Derek Layder (1985) cited in Rubinstein (2001:6) defines structure as “an ongoing set of reproduced relations between particular social groups”. Social groups in this sense could be the rich and poor, men and women, ethnic minorities and majorities, indigenous and non-indigenous groups, etcetera. Structure can therefore, be referred to as the pattern of distribution of wealth and power in society, which constraint room of manoeuvre of poor and disadvantaged people. “Social resources are not ever present and ‘owned’, but must be appealed to in times of need” (McGregor, 1998:6), thus constraining the efforts of poor people.

4.1.2 The Poor as an Actor

The poor are seen as actors always manoeuvring to cope with their situation as they perceive it. They are always victims of natural calamities or an unjust social world. As a result, many of them try to make the best out of the opportunities that emerge and respond either negatively or positively towards changing situations. The acknowledgement of the agency of the poor is crucial in relation to the study of processes of poverty creation, [credit facilities being use as a tool in] poverty reduction, since the poor influence these processes and the character of their results (Engberg-Pedersen, 1998). He went further to illustrate that, one could not approach the investigation of the changes of poverty as the product of economic and political structures. It is therefore necessary in understanding how the activities of NGOs, local organizations and government institutions interact with the efforts of the poor in the bid to analyze the relationship between these institutions and the poor.

4.2 Women and Empowerment

Poverty manifests itself as a material deprivation, and its causes could be attributed to unequal power attribute, which characterize domestic relations. These relations position women as subordinate, and dependent on their men folks who have control over the resources (Kabeer

2003,). Women lack power, therefore empowerment of women is an issue that is emphasized on in the field of development these days.

Kabeer (2003: 170) defines empowerment as “the processes by which those who have been denied the ability to make choices acquire such ability. In other words, empowerment entails a process of change”. She further went to indicate that empowerment could be explored closely through the following inter-related pathways: agency, resources and achievements. Agency in relation to empowerment implies the ability to actively exercise choice, which challenges power relations. Despite the fact that beliefs and values legitimate inequality, the process of empowerment can begin within (ibid). The ability of women to initiate their own non-farm activities will enable them to decide for themselves, since they will have their own income which will give them the capacity to take decisions, protest, negotiate and bargain. Meanwhile, agency is exercise not in the abstract but through the mobilization of resources, which are the medium of power (ibid). Men have authority over women in so far as institutional rules, norms and conventions are concern. Therefore, women’s ability to gain access to resources is as important in processes of empowerment as the resources themselves. Empowerment requires a change in the conditions on which resources are acquired likewise an increase in access to resources (Kabeer, 2001). The ability to have access to non-farm activities might improve women agency within the family. The reason being that, the non-farm activities would serve as an independent source of income for the family livelihood and hence a stronger ‘fall-back’ position to bargain/or negotiate from (opcit). Women’s capabilities and their potential for living the lives they want, comes as a result of their access to resources and agency. This will give them the capability to build their livelihoods. Achievement in this case refers to the extent to which women potentials in terms of resources and agency are realized or fail to be realized. In other words, it is the outcome of their effort (ibid). Therefore women non-farm activities are seen as evidence of progress in women empowerment, especially in situations where it is seen as contributing to their sense of independent (ibid) and not only serving as a livelihood strategy.

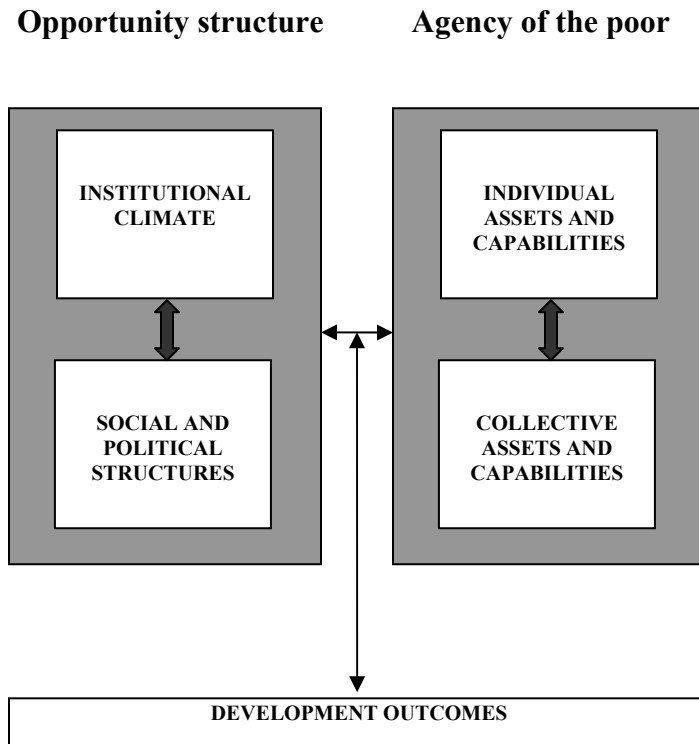
The household is complex, culturally varied, and guided by dynamic set of institutional arrangements. Rural households are therefore shaped by several factors. In Ghana and especially Nandom, culture plays a major role in the organization of domestic activities. Women do not take part in the decision-making process. But the ability of a woman to provide for the family

economically may give her the opportunity to influence household's decisions. To gain the chance to have a say in decision-making, a good number engaged themselves in non-farm activities as a source of income to be able to contribute to the household welfare needs. In other words, their ability to contribute to the household welfare needs would afford them a minimum control and power in family decision-making process, which would lead to their empowerment. "Advocates of resource theory have ... suggested that when women make substantial economic contributions to the household, power and control in decision-making will shift in their favour"(Blood and Wolfe 1996; Blumstein and Schwartz 1983; Green and Cunningham 1976, all cited in Commuri et al., 2005:185). The ingenuity in these women to be able to negotiate with the existing cultural factors in order to contribute to household decision-making process enables them to play the role of social actors. Other factors that have greater influence on rural household decisions are: control and access to human, natural, productive ... and social factors (Bebbington; de Hann; Valdivia, 2001b in Valdivia et al., 2001), markets, institutions and the political environment (Ellis, 1993 ... in Valdivia et al. 2001). Despite the existence of the aforementioned obstacles which may be confronting rural women, they still manoeuvre their way through provided they have differing varieties and densities of networks. They develop various ways and means to be able to exploit available opportunities. This implies that, even though rural women are denied the opportunity in taking part in household decisions, regain it when they are able to contribute to the household welfare needs.

Narayan (2005) explained empowerment to mean the expansion of freedom of choice and action to shape one's life, that is, the control over resources and decisions. Unfortunately, women freedom is mostly always curtailed by factors such as local culture, which positioned them in a subordinate position in relation to their men folks. Subordination is often embedded in a culture of unequal institutional relations. So therefore an institutional definition of "empowerment is the expansion of assets and capabilities of ... [women] to participate in, negotiate with, influence, control, and hold accountable institutions that affect their lives" (ibid: 5). From the above definition, it could be deduced that women are usually found in a subordinate position within society as a whole or even in the household. Narayan concluded that this definition places more emphasis on institutions and interaction between poor women and more powerful actors. There is therefore the need to adopt a

theoretical framework as shown below which clearly outlines the key factors that facilitate or constrain poor women efforts to improve their own well-being and thus leads to development.

Figure 1: An overview of the theoretical framework



Source: Narayan (2005:5)

The first block represents the opportunity structure that poor women face, while the second block depicts the capacity for agency of poor women. Thirdly is the development outcomes block which comes as a result of the combination of the first two blocks. Narayan explained the opportunity structure to mean the institutional or social rules and norms within which women pursue their interest. These institutional rules and norms could be local culture which positioned both men and women at different levels. Therefore the removal of both formal and informal institutional barriers which hinder poor women from taking actions in order to improve their well-being is necessary. Social and political structures, which perpetuate unequal power relations also needs to be changed (ibid). Ellis (2000) alludes that institutions are the formal rules, conventions, and informal codes of behavior, which constraints on human interaction. Agency on the other hand, Narayan said is the

capacity of actors (poor women) to take purposeful action, which is a function of both individual and collective assets and capabilities. Therefore the empowerment of poor women is a product of the interaction between the agency of these women and the opportunity structure in which this agency is exercised (ibid). Empowerment is fundamentally a relational concept, coming into view out of the interaction between women and men and the environment. This takes place through the rules, resources, norms and processes governing the interaction between poor women and powerful actors (ibid). The empowerment of poor women therefore calls for changes in institutional and organizational processes which seek to position women differently from men.

Poor women's assets and capabilities are usually conceptualized as individual attributes, and that the collective capabilities and organizations are often necessary in helping poor women break through constraints of powerlessness (ibid). Embedded in a culture of inequality, poor women need a range of assets and capabilities to negotiate and influence the men folks in order to increase their own well-being. Assets in this case, refer to material assets, both physical and financial. They are the basic building blocks upon which individuals/households are able to undertake production, engage in labor market, and participate in reciprocal exchanges with other individuals/households. These may be described as stocks of capital that are able to generate the means of survival of the individual/household when used either directly or indirectly (Ellis, 2000). Examples are land, livestock, housing etcetera, which enable poor women to withstand shocks and expand their horizon of choices. Capabilities on the hand are inherent characteristics which enable an individual to use his/her assets differently to increase their well-being. These capabilities could either be human (good health, education, etc), social (social belonging, leadership, relations of trust, etc), psychological (self-esteem, ability to imagine and aspire, etc) or political (necessity to represent oneself/others, access information, form associations, etc) (opcit).

The next chapter is about data presentation and analysis.

Chapter Five

Data Presentation and Analysis

5.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter entails a presentation and analysis of data collected from the study area, Lawra-Nandom District. It begins with a presentation of the general characteristics of rural women who are engaged in income generating activities (IGAs), with support from NGOs and government line agencies. With this approach, I looked at IGAs of these rural women, their product marketing strategies and the problems they encounter. I further looked at the training programmes offered these rural women; how much is given to them as credit, and the other poverty alleviating packages. Meanwhile, all the respondents for this study are women.

This chapter is structured as such: while section I looks at the socio-demographic characteristics of the women respondents, section II is on the specifics of the enterprise activities.

SECTION I

5.1 Socio-Demographic Characteristics

The frequency distribution of women respondents by age, marital status, educational status, and household size are presented here.

5.1.1 Age Distribution

The age of a woman has a great influence on her ability to partake in economic activities and, of course, chances of benefiting from the ongoing micro-enterprise in the survey area. The age of the respondent is very important because it gives an idea of the different age groups who are benefiting from the micro-credit institutions in Nandom. It gives a rough idea as to whether one is in the child bearing cohort or not, which has implication on women participation in economic activities (Nung, 1996). It's argued that, the limited time and erratic participation of younger women, that is, women with the burden of heavy childcare and household provisioning responsibilities, usually yields insufficient individual benefits to guarantee their programme

involvement (Steele et al. 1998 cited in Haque, 2000). But this is different for the women in the study area. All the women in the study area have household provisioning responsibilities, which have compelled them to combine both productive and reproductive roles. The informal sector has therefore become a “safe haven” for these women due to its easy entry and low capital requirement. Also, formal education is not a requirement in securing a job in the sector, so these women are able to fit in well easily. Alternatively, these women are able to combine child bearing with their non-farm activities due to child fostering, which allows family members especially grandmothers, to take care of children while their mothers work.

The age of the respondent is also a factor which influences the choice of activity of these women. Economic activity such as the sale of ‘*dawadawa*³’ is associated with the aged, because it demands sitting at one place. It also has a certain stink that attracts houseflies. And due to its very unpleasant smell, the young ones would not like to go into it even though it gives an added taste to soup. The age of a woman can also offer her the opportunity in taking part in family decisions; elderly women are sometimes consulted for account of past events.

Table 1: Age Distribution of Women Respondents

Age Group	Absolute Figure	Percentage (%)
20-45	28	70
46-60	7	17.5
61 and above	5	12.5
Total	40	100

Source: Field survey, 2005

The data generated from the survey shows that 70 percent of the women respondents are within the age bracket of 20-45 years, which represent the economically active population. Most of the women economic activity involves the use of ‘manpower’, and that might have explained the reason why the active age group forms the majority. Perhaps, it could also be the period that these women welfare needs are high, since that is the reproductive age group. The needs of their growing children could also call for additional resources.

³ *Dawadawa* is an ingredient (‘*maggi*’) made from the seeds of a *dawadawa* tree. It gives an added taste to soup.

It is also succinctly clear from the table that 17.5 percent of women are in the cohort of 46-60, and 12.5 percent of them are within the age group of 61 and above, which is even the retiring age of people in the formal sector employment. One possible reason behind the small numbers in the age group of 61 and above is that, most of them have grown up children who are catering for their welfare needs. Nung (1996) noted that so far as the informal sector employment is concerned, it is not age but physical strength or weakness of one that determines the age of retirement. This goes to explain the reason why some women are above the retiring age but still engage in income generating activities. Here is a remark by one of the women when I asked why she still had to work to meet her needs at this old age, “do you expect me to chew grass? I have nobody to take care of me, and since I am still strong, then it is better to do something for myself instead of begging”. This seems to suggest that since there is no social security or guaranteed pension in the informal sector, its workers are often forced to work as long as their health allow.

5.1.2 Marital Status

Marriage is a social institution. It re-organizes society, leading to the formation of kinship ties and membership in descent groups. In other words, marriage leads to the creation of new and entrenchment of old social relationships. When a man and a woman are joined in marriage, their respective families become affinal relatives automatically. It is therefore an institution through which kinship ties are both established and extended (Nukunya, 1992).

In the Nandom traditional area, women do not own productive resources like land. It is only men who have primary ownership of land. Women only have secondary ownership of land through marriage. Manuh (1998: 4) argued that, “it is as mothers that women secure claims in their marital homes and to their husband’s assets”. This implies that there are intra-household differences in resource use and control between men and women in Nandom. Despite the inhibitions associated with the cultural system, as actors capable of processing social experiences and devising coping strategies, women marry to increase access to productive resources. They are knowledgeable and capable, no matter whatever uncertainty or constraint they might find themselves in. This means that, no matter the situation these women find themselves, exercise some kind of ‘power’, leverage or room to manoeuvre (Giddens, 1984 cited in Long, 2001).

High economic value has also been attached to children, thus necessitating women to marry and get children. Married women with children are more respected than those who are not. And to gain prestige in society, most women have to marry. Horn (1994:70) cited Robertson who posits for Ghana that, “marriage is not a choice but a social necessity”. Similarly, children’s labor especially girls is more crucial both inside and outside the home in times of old age. For they usually take over responsibilities of the household chores when the mother is sick or old. Weinrich (1982) cited in Horn (1994) reiterated that in Zimbabwe, a traditional family needs to be large in order to guarantee the material well-being of all its members, of children, the old, and the sick. And since this required continuity over time, everybody has the moral obligation to marry and to contribute to the social or biological reproduction of his/her kinship group. Child bearing is a basic value instilled in members of a society from childhood onwards and shirking such a responsibility is usually shunned, and compliance is ensured through social pressure.

Table 2: Marital Status of Respondents

Status	Absolute Figure	Percentage (%)
Single	4	10
Married	28	70
Widowed	6	15
Divorced	2	5
Total	40	100

Source: field survey, 2005

From the data trend in table 2, 10 percent of the respondents are never married and 70 percent were married and still with their husbands. Meanwhile, 15 percent of them were widows and the remaining 5 percent have been divorced by their husbands. Marriage in Nandom tradition is a social institution and highly cherished for social, economic and sociological reasons. So girls who get to the age of 20 are mostly required to marry in order to fulfill their reproductive roles. In this cultural community, the unmarried are often shunned, making marriage looks as if it is compulsory. It is only women who choose to join the Catholic religious vocation as Reverend Sisters who are spared this community pressure.

The table suggests that widows come next in terms of numbers, after married women who are into non-farm enterprises. This is as a result of them rarely getting support from family members, especially those without grown-up children. They see non-farm enterprise as a secured way of making money in order to take care of themselves and their dependants. “My trade is serving as both my husband and parent”, remarked a widow. Those who are still young, at times, remarry and this further buttresses the reason for the high incidence of married women in the non-farm enterprises. This could further be attributed to women’s ability in claiming secondary ownership to productive resources of their husbands when married.

The last 5 percent represent divorcees. It is uncommon for women to divorce their husbands because of the high bride price associated with marriage in Nandom as explained in chapter two. A woman who divorces the husband will be compelled to pay the bride price back to the husband’s family. Even on the part of a man, it will be very unwise for him to divorce the wife and remarry unless on exceptional cases such as the woman inability to have children or infidelity, since that will mean making extra expenses. This explains the reason why the divorcees are very few as indicated in the above table.

5.1.3 Education and Work

Education affords the individual the opportunity to access formal, government or white color jobs. It equips the individual with the skills to read, write, record, receive training and seek information. The mentioned skills are very necessary when seeking a formal job. The formal sector is regulated and it has assured public pension. Admission into the sector depends on one’s skills and qualification. On the contrary, those without education had to be content with employment offered by the informal sector. The informal sector covers a wide range of enterprises including individual home-based processing and manufacturing, petty trading, and street merchants. In comparison with the formal sector, the informal sector enterprises are very small, labour intensive and make up apparently a large proportion of women (Macdonald, 1999). It is survival oriented, labor-intensive operations with fluid avenues for entry and exit. The family remains the locus of activity and trust. Women in the informal sector have no access and if even at all, very little access to official sources of credit or information. They do not benefit from minimum wage and social security and have to provide for their own and family health needs (Manuh, 1998). Workers in the informal sector often hold multiple jobs in different sectors to

minimize risk. This goes to confirm Long’s (1989) assertion that actors are capable when even under restricted situations, in formulating decisions and act upon them. Lastly, the informal sector has no public pension, so one could engage in the sector till he/she is weak and could no longer work.

Formal education is an important way in which parents invest in the future. Both boys and girls are sent to school where possible. Horn (1994: 69) stated that a vendor estimated that, “educating boys seemed very important: Long ago, only boys went to school. If a woman was educated it was only to teach her how to write. Boys are more educated. Only men were working long back, so the boys were sent to school so they could get work. Girls didn’t know they could also benefit from going to school. It was always thought that only boys could take care of their parents. The girls were sent to herd cattle so the boys could go to school”.

Table 3: Educational Background of Respondents

Status	Absolute Value	Percentage (%)
Illiterates	16	40
Non-formal education ⁴	10	25
Primary	7	17.5
Middle	3	7.5
J.S.S./Sec./College/Vocational	4	10
Total	40	100

Source: field survey, 2005

It is quite clear from the above table that, the informal sector mostly employs people without recourse to their educational background. It can be seen that 40 percent of respondents have no formal education, 25 percent had non-formal education and 17.5 percent have education up to the primary school level. 7.5 percent and 10 percent of them had education up to middle school and junior secondary /secondary/college/vocational training respectively. The variance in these findings could be attributed to the greater availability of education to girls after the 1980s. The low educational status associated with women in Nandom could be as a result of parents always willing to send boys to school than girls. It is usually an assumption that girls would one day get married and move out to stay

⁴ Non-formal education is the type of education offered to adults in the night who have not had the chance in benefiting from formal education. The aim is to teach them how to read.

at the husband's house. So, it is deemed more worthwhile educating boys than to girls. This assumption may not be applicable to educated parents in many cases.

5.1.4 Household Size

Both Yanagisako (1979) and Mackintosh (1988), all cited in Gardiner (1997: 14), see the household “as the unit for analysis of domestic labor as it approximates more closely to the notion of a domestic unit, being normally defined as an individual or group of people who share living space and/or take at least some meals together”. The household is usually organized around human needs which have social, cultural, historical and psychological dimensions. These socially constructed needs include food, shelter, sleep, cleanliness, clothing, sex, reproduction, companionship and recreation (ibid: 14). In this sense, I consider the household as both members of the family groups that may or may not stay under one roof and eat from the same pot. The concept of the household in the context of Nandom is therefore very complex and difficult to define. For example, local culture makes it incumbent on one to extend to his/her kinsfolk whenever they are in need, making the household boundaries flexible. The household size may be a central matter in basic need measurement and poverty analysis but its definition is problematic. Rakodi (2002) has argued that the household size or composition is a determinant factor of the capabilities, choices and strategies available to it. Gonzalez et al. (2001) have also documented that the size of a household and the availability of income earners are very important elements of vulnerability. Poverty therefore is more prevalent in large household size with few income earners. This means that, in households where the woman is the only breadwinner, members are likely to remain to be poor. This is because; there will always be pressure on her little resources for the upkeep of the household. Manuh (ibid: 4-5) stated that women “income is indispensable for family survival regardless of the presence of men, since the system of allocation and distribution within many African households usually imposes individual responsibilities on men and women to meet their personal needs”. Small household size seems to be recommended. But in some sense, this assertion may not be true base on the fact that, a large household size with many providers would be better than a small household size with one provider.

Table 4: Household Size of Respondents

Size	Number	Percentage (%)
1-5	24	60
6-10	11	27.5
11-15	3	7.5
16-20	2	5
Total	40	100

Source: field survey, 2005

Observation from table 4 shows that 7.5 percent and 5 percent of the respondents have quite a large household size of 11-15 and 16-20 respectively. This is due to the extended family system which makes it incumbent on both a man and a woman to help in catering for children of deceased extended relations. Other dependants may also be brought in as house helps/maid servants. Also, 27.5 percent had a household size of 6-10 while 60 percent has a household strength of 1-5. Since these women are mostly the sole providers of the family livelihood especially during the lean season, there shall always be pressure on their little resources.

5.1.5 Summary

In this section, the major characteristics of the survey women entrepreneurs have been presented. From the presentation it has been shown that most of the respondents fall within the age cohort of 20-45, which represents the economic and reproductive age group. The least represented are in the age of 61 and above, which is above the retiring age in Ghana. It also came to light that married women (70 percent) forms the highest number of women engaged in non-farm activities and many of them never had any form of formal education. This shows that the informal sector employment does not require formal education. Some of the women have a large household size, which has implication on their economic activities. A large household size may mean many mouths to feed which calls for more time on unpaid domestic activities, and that may retard the growth of the business, because income generated would be channel into household welfare needs at the expense of the business instead.

SECTION II

5.2 Women Enterprises

The private sector has been identified as the engine of growth and economic transformation in the area of enterprise development in Ghana (Tackie, 2004). The emphasis now is on small and medium scale enterprises which have a high potential in generating significant employment. Women operate a major segment of trade and market enterprises in the informal sector, making about 91% of the labour force in that sector (ibid). Their enterprise activities lie mostly within a wide range of informal activities such as agricultural production, food processing, extractive industries, fish smoking, garment/textile, soap making, hairdressing, rural craft and petty trading. Manuh (ibid) work is insightful on the fact that women have taken advantage of new opportunities in producing vegetables for the urban markets on peripheral lands using labor-intensive methods. A study by Derbile (2003) in the Kasena-Nankane District of Ghana illuminated that women are often engaged in a number of income generating activities, including trade, shea-butter extraction, rice milling, pottery, local restaurant services, and local alcohol brewing (*pito*).

Baden et al. (1994) argues that women usually combine farming activities with a wide variety of agro-based processing activities especially in the rural areas of Ghana. They went further to note that rural enterprise activities in southern Ghana are predominantly food based. Along the coast and Volta Lake is fish processing. Gari-processing, oil extraction, and food preservation are important enterprise activities for women, they said. Other enterprise activities in the south worth mentioning are trading in raw foodstuff, vegetables, ingredients, merchandise in general goods, and many others.

Interestingly, women's enterprise activity in northern Ghana where this study was conducted seems somewhat different from those in the south, even though there are some few similarities. These economic activities include shea-butter extraction, malt processing, *koose*⁵ frying, *pito* brewing, weaving, petty trading, and handicraft production. From the survey, the unit of production levels of the women varies depending on the type of non-farm activity.

⁵ *Koose* is a flat rounded mass of beans/bambara groundnuts dough that is fried.

Shea-butter Processing

Shea-butter extraction is a tedious process, which involves either picking the sheanut from the bush or buying, processing and extracting the oil. And from the study, the weekly average unit of production for women in the shea-butter industry was 30 litres (10 *alonka* bowls). Apart from providing income and a temporally employment for the women, shea-butter have other important uses. It serves as a source of edible oil for the people of Northern Ghana. It is also an important ointment for the treatment of sprains, fractures and skin diseases when mixed with herbs. The local people in northern Ghana use it as pomade especially during the harmattan season. The women alleged that some companies also use it for the production of hair creams. The peak season for the production of shea-butter is from August to September/October, which is the period, that sheanut is in abundant supply. But its production gradually reduced; especially during periods that sheanut is in limited supply.

Figure 2: Women selling shea-butter in Nandom market



Source: field survey, 2005

Pito Brewing

Whitehead (1993) cited in Baden et al. (1994:34) explicitly stated that “*pito* brewing is an important activity of women associated with ceremonies and communal labour parties, but few women are able to make significant incomes from this”. Perhaps, it is the most popular economic activity engaged in by most women in Nandom. Before women go into it, they will have to acquire certain essential basic items/tools such as big cooking pots, pots/drums for the storage of water and the *pito*, firewood and malt. Most of the above mentioned tools could be acquire through inheritance or borrowed from colleague women, with the exception of the firewood and malt which must necessarily be bought before the business can proceed.

The process of *pito* brewing is very long and tedious; it starts with the processing of the malt, which could take about two weeks. It also takes three days to brew the *pito*. In the area of *pito* brewing, the women entrepreneurs were producing 15 gallons per week during the time of the study. To avoid excess supply of *pito*, women living in the same area brew in turns since they target the same market. *Pito* brewing reaches its peak from October to December and probably in January when they have harvested guinea corn. Also, it is the period during which farmers have money due to the sale of some food crops which have just been harvested. Production is however relatively low from April onwards when the cost of guinea corn is on the high side due to the lean crop season.

Figure 3: The house of a *pito* brewer



Source: field survey, 2005

Koose frying.

Koose frying is one of the popular activities in Nandom engaged in by these women. *Koose* is a flat rounded mass of beans and/bambara groundnuts dough that is fried. The beans are milled and fried in shea-butter oil or in some few cases groundnut oil to produce the *koose*. It came to light during the study that those frying the *koose* use 9 litres (3 *alonka* bowls) of beans per week during the harvesting season. But its production gradually reduces during periods that beans are in short supply, thus making its price to be high.

Many women prefer frying the *koose* by the roadside or at public places such as *pito* houses or market sites where cooked meat is sold. The choice of the site is influenced by the idea of attracting customers. This is depicted in the picture below where a woman is frying *koose* by the roadside with a baby strapped at her back. While this goes to explain that women are able to combine conveniently child care with economic activities in the informal sector, it also points women's ability to strategize to cope with challenging situations.

Figure 4: A woman frying *koose*



Source: field survey, 2005

Petty Trading

For production to be complete, it has to reach the consumer. Women play a crucial role in the distribution and marketing of agricultural and many other industrial goods such as textile/garments, foot wears, household provisions, among others. Women who sell the above mentioned goods in large quantities had to commute between Nandom and other major market centers such as *Hamile*, *Fielmuo*, *Pina*, *Wa*, *Gwollu*, and *Tumu* in order to get market for their products.

Other economic activities women engaged in are cooked food selling, weaving, and dressmaking/seamstressing. All these mentioned activities are seasonal in nature; women do them at certain time of the year during which, it is easy to come by the raw materials. Also, market for such activities reach its peak at certain period of the year, that is, during the harvesting season when there is money in the pockets of the local folks. All these are manoeuvring styles adopted by these women in order to cope with situations. The agency exercised by these women is their ability to actively engage in shaping their own world, rather than their actions being determine beforehand by capital or the intervention of the state (Long, 1992 cited in Gardner et al., 1996).

Table 5: Women Economic Activities

Economic Activity	Absolute Value	Percentage (%)
<i>Pito</i> brewing	18	40
Petty trading	8	17.8
Shea-butter extraction	7	15.6
<i>Koose</i> frying	6	13.3
Cooked food selling	3	6.7
Seamstressing	2	4.4
Weaving	1	2.2
Total	45	100

Source: field survey, 2005

The data from the above table indicates that 40 percent of the women are into *pito* brewing, 17.8 percent into petty trading and 15.6 percent are doing shea-butter extraction. The rest of the figures are 13.3 percent for *koose* frying, 6.7 percent of them sell cooked food, and 4.4 percent of them are seamstress. The last activity, which is weaving forms 2.2 percent of the women economic activity. Meanwhile, the table reveals a total absolute value of 45 who are into the various economic activities instead of the usual 40 respondents who were interviewed. This is due to the fact that some women are into more than one economic activity. When quizzed why engaging in more than one economic activity, one respondent explained “it is not all the times that you can get market for your products, so it is better having more than one so that you can always be sure of making sales in order to cater for the household basic needs”. This implies that occupational combination comes with economic security, because the multiple economic activities engaged in by these women is likely in ensuring their family survival and improving their well being. As stated above, women acting as social actors are knowledgeable and capable in processing social experiences and strategizing ways of coping with challenging situations. The multiple occupational combinations adopted by these women help them to meet their practical gender needs as household welfare providers’.

5.2.1 Credit Sources

Non-farm activities represent an important means of earning income for women in developing countries. But its growth depends on the availability of credit. For my purposes credit is small loans

made available to poor people for income generating activities in order to generate income for their livelihood. It enables human capital to be leveraged with physical capital in order to increase income (Hollis, 2002). This ensures the evenly spread of consumption across time (ibid). Meanwhile, lack of it is a major problem facing small entrepreneurs especially women. These women entrepreneurs are poor, and involved in trade such as *pito* brewing, *koose* frying, shea-butter extraction, cooked food selling, and petty trading, etcetera. For these women, credit was unavailable to them from banks. This is because the banks demand collateral in the form of land or a house before making loans to them. These immovable properties are not available to these women, rendering them unqualified for mainstream credit facilities. This explained why micro-credit institutions such as NGOs have to come to their aid, in making available to them credit facilities.

Table 6: Credit Sources

Source	Absolute value	Percentage (%)
NGOs and other micro-credit institutions	40	88.9
Private lenders	5	11.1
Bank	0	0
Total	45	100

Source: field survey, 2005

From the above table, 88.9 percent of the women have received credit from NGOs and other credit institutions, 11.1 percent took loans from private lenders and no woman have ever received credit through the bank. The total number of 45 respondents shown above is as a result of some women receiving credit from more than one source. Almost all the respondents interviewed mentioned the Freedom from Hunger (FfH) project as a credit source for their businesses. There were few women who spoke of ever receiving credit facility from the Lawra District Assembly and the Nandom Credit Union. This is usually supplemented by personal savings, which is noted to be derived from the sale of firewood, borrowing from private money lenders, and income from farm products, among others. One woman gave an overview of the ordeal she went through in paying back a credit she obtained from a private lender. This is what she has to say, “The interest rate on credit obtain from individual money lenders are usually very high, and the government institutions are neither better. We sometime

have to sell our assets to be able to pay off the loan taken. And that even explained why the FfH project is popularly known as *zore ke dure*, which literally means running whiles urinating”.

5.2.2 Table 7: Cross-tabulation of Amount received by Women and Source

Amount (¢)	Micro-credit Institutions	Private Lenders	Banks
Less than 100,000	4	-	-
100,000-300,000	15	1	-
400,000-600,000	6	2	-
700,000-900,000	7	4	-
1,000,000-1,500,000	3	3	-
Total	35	10	0

Source: field survey, 2005

¢ 9,000.00 = US \$ 1.00

From the study, the percentage distribution of the amount of money received as loans by women revealed that 4 women had received loans less than 100,000 cedis, 15 of them took between 200,000 to 300,000 cedis and 6 reported receiving 400,000-600,000 cedis from micro-credit institutions. The study further shows that 7 of the women took up to an amount of 700,000-900,000 cedis and 3 of them also ever received a loan to the tune of 1,000,000-1,500,000 cedis from credit institution as a source.

Mention must be made here that some women also reported ever taking loans from private money lenders. The breakdown is as follows: 1 woman took 100,000-300,000, 2 women received 400,000-600,000 and 4 reported ever receiving 700,000-900,000. The last but not the least is 3 women receiving 1,000,000-1,500,000. None of the female interviewees ever received credit from the bank, due to the fact that they do not own any asset, which could serve as collateral security to guarantee their loans.

The women indicated that one could only qualify to get assistance or credit through group formation. An individual could therefore not obtain credit from Freedom from Hunger project and the Lawra District Assembly without being a member of a women’s group. The group serves the purpose of a collateral security; the groups are liable for any loan facility obtained from the institution. And accordingly, women could take as much as 10,000,000 cedis initially from the Freedom from Hunger project but that did not last because beneficiaries of such much could not pay back. Regular attendant to weekly meetings also forms part of the criteria use in giving out loans to the women.

Moreover, any individual beneficiary who defaults in paying back her loan is harassed by her colleagues to pay. For a group's member's ability to pay back what she has taken guarantees the others the opportunity to access the next tranche of loan. A member who fails to pay may face the risk of assets seizure by her colleagues. This usually leads to social tension and embarrassment. There were reports about women who ran away from Nandom to southern Ghana just to avoid being harassed by their colleagues and credit officers; they could not pay back what they collected. It even came to light during the data collection that one of such 'ran away' women died along the line.

Figure 5: Brutu Women's Group



Source: field survey, 2005

5.2.3 Interest rate and Period of Repayment Arrangements

According to credit officers of the Freedom from Hunger project, the loan given out to the women attract a simple interest rate of 13 percent. This means when you are given 100,000 cedis at a simple interest of 13 percent, then you finally end up by paying 113,000 cedis. This will be spread over sixteen weeks for them, to enable these women pay off. However, the women could not tell how much was charged as interest but only complained that it was very high. When the loans are given out to the

women, they are only allowed a grace period of one week to begin paying back. This, the women complained was very short for them to be able to pay back the loan coupled with the weekly compulsory savings that they are doing. “This compulsory saving is really very helpful to some of us anyway, because it is given back to us after sometime to enable us buy certain valuable assets”, one respondent remarked.

The planning officer of the Lawra District Assembly also mentioned that the interest rate for credit given out was 20 percent. Meanwhile, beneficiaries were both male and female. Group formation was also a pre-requisite for loan acquisition. The loan facility also ranges between 200,000-5,000,000 cedis. This loan scheme has run into problems because it is more or less like a revolving fund, and unfortunately those who benefited initially have not been able to pay it back. Some of the beneficiaries described the loans facility as ‘chop money’, since it was just woefully inadequate to support any viable economic venture.

5.2.4 Records and Training

Keeping records on business activity is very important but unfortunately these women are at a disadvantage. The records would enable one to determine the cash inflows and outflows. About 80 percent or more of these women do not keep written records on their business apart from the few educated ones. Many of the women told me that even though they do not keep written records on their business does not mean that they do not keep records. Some of them questioned me “whether records keeping is only about writing it down on paper. It can also be done mentally, which is exactly what we are doing”.

Training forms a component part of the Freedom from Hunger project, and that is why it is termed as credit with education. Women have contacts with credit officers weekly, and during such meetings they are educated on how to manage the credit efficiently. They are also educated on the benefits of savings and therefore being encouraged to save and also pay back the loan taken on time. Aside the following mentioned is educating these women on family planning, personal hygiene, health care, exclusive breastfeeding, and etcetera. The benefits of the training component according to the women is very helpful in the sense that, it motivates members to pay back their loan promptly; it helps them acquire business skills, enhances their economic activities and the ability to meet the welfare needs of their children.

5.2.5 Technology Accessibility and Utilization

Information gathered during the data collection period was clear that varied means or service methods are adopted by the women during both the production and marketing process. All the 40 respondents pointed to the use of head portage in their enterprise activities. It is in few occasions some women use bicycles, animal drawn carts and tractors in transporting their raw materials and end products to either home or market centers. This means that the activities of these women generally require minimal capital investment as later discussions would show.

The data from the study also shows that women entrepreneurs employed various processing methods during the production stage of their activity. Using human efforts to grind and pound were the commonest methods adopted in order to process their products, especially in the case of those into shea-butter extraction and cooked food sales. Despite the difficulties involve in processing their products manually, they still prefer it because according to them it is expensive processing it with the use of engine/motor-powered grinding mills. They may also have to walk a distance in order to have access to grinding mills. “Is it not better processing the materials manually instead of with the use of grinding mill where you have to walk a very long distance before you get one? It is time consuming and at the time not at a free cost”, one respondent queried. It is on few occasions these women go with their raw materials to engine/motor-powered grinding mills to process. However, the common types of energy used by the women in their production process are the burning of firewood and agricultural residue (guinea corn and millet stalks). Stalks are always easy to come by during the dry season after harvest of farm crops but difficult to get in the raining season. The only option these women are left with is by trekking longer distances into the bush in order to fetch dry wood, a practice which the women saw very tiresome. It is really expensive if only you want to buy it due to its scarcity. Indeed, according to Long (1989) the actor-oriented approach assumes that actors are capable when even under restricted situations, in formulating decisions and acting upon them, which is really at work in the case of these women. The picture below is an indicative of firewood being made use of in the processing of *pito* brewing and *koose* frying.

Figure 6: Heap of firewood



Source: field survey, 2005

5.2.6 Marketing of Products and Profit made

The information gathered reveals that all the 40 respondents interviewed market their own products, except occasions where some of them get help from their children or relations. The reason is that the business is very small and therefore does not need more hands, and also for fear of not being able to pay for the services of extra hands hired. All the respondents market their products within Nandom. However, those in weaving and the sale of sandals, cloth, and raw foodstuff at times send their products to neighboring towns to sell.

Data on profits made by these women out of their non-farm activities varies depending on the type of trade one is into. Whiles some made profit around 4,000-20,000 cedis per week, others are able to make as much as 50,000-90,000 cedis weekly. As mentioned in chapter one, it was difficult obtaining information on women's earnings because they never wanted me to know exactly how much they were making as profit. This they did not want to do, because it may be use as a basis for them to pay tax in future. Majority of them are also into activities which are on small scale and

meant for consumption, which could at best be described as ‘from hand to mouth’, and therefore keeping records on them is not important according to them.

5.2.7 Table 8: Household Income and Expenditure

Weekly Income (¢)	Absolute Figures	Percentage (%)
10,000-50,000	24	60
60,000-100,000	12	30
150,000-200,000	4	10
Total	40	100

Source: field survey, 2005

¢ 9,000 = US \$ 1.00

The figures in table 8 shows that 60 percent of the respondents have a weekly household income falling within the cohort of 10,000-50,000 cedis, 30 percent are within 60,000-100,000 cedis and the remaining 10 percent weekly household income is in the range of 150,000-200,000 cedis or more. Unfortunately, most of the figures are based on estimations since the respondents never kept records on their income.

The following are the ways women use their income obtained from the non-farm activity:

- ❖ Reinvest into business
- ❖ Paying children school fees
- ❖ Household provisions
- ❖ Purchase of drugs or payment of medical bills
- ❖ Remit husband to support farm work
- ❖ Buying kerosene, just to mention but a few.

Meanwhile, about 65 percent told me they have to consult their husbands before they put their income into use. Questioned why the consultation, they assigned various reasons such as: incase of bankruptcy they may assist them pay off the debt, the loan belong to both of us and so they must be in a known as to how it is used, etcetera. It is interesting to have realized that one respondent even concluded that

“the husband is the head of the family and I am under his authority. And I am even staying in his house, so there is the need for him to know the way the income is used”. What remained important in the various decisions and choices women make is the need for security. The rest of the 35 percent of the respondent who never consulted their husbands before using the income assigned reasons such as “the credit is mine and therefore do not need to seek anybody’s approval before I could use it”. Those who were not married or the divorcees do not see the reason why they should consult before using their own income. “I have the ability to decide for myself, said one respondent”. Those who are widowed do not also consult. But in some situations, they may seek the views of their grown up children because to them two heads are better than one. But one respondent made it clear that, “in order to avoid mismanagement of the credit, it is better not to consult their husbands”. The reason given for such an answer was that, their husbands are not always present for their weekly meetings during which they are given education on sound financial management.

It is a repeated assumption that providing credit to women automatically increases their status within the household and society at large, and that this either equates with or directly leads to empowerment (Hunt et al. 2001:44). This assertion has been pervasively summarized by one NGO social development worker to mean: “Husbands are getting the money and seeing the loans as an income source for themselves-so they are now showing respect to their wives” (ibid:44). This is just the same story in terms of the studied women. Women’s ability to take up the role as the breadwinner of the household, and at the same time advance loans to their husbands for farm work and other long term investment plans win them the respect of their men folks.

5.2.8 Changing Terms of Marriage

All the respondents agreed to the fact that society or culture assigned different roles to the genders. The man according to the women is supposed to provide food, shelter, cloth, medical care, paying children school fees, taking care of farm work or pay for labor hired for farm work, and long term investments. To crown it all, they said the man is responsible for providing ‘chop money’ for the upkeep of the family. These men assigned responsibilities are of late not being honored or if even at all partially according to the respondents. Women on the other hand are responsible for feeding the children, buying food ingredients and cooking, keeping the house clean, processing of farm produce and storage, etcetera. During the survey, all the respondents made it clear that domestic activity such

as sweeping, cooking, washing, fetching of water and firewood, processing of farm produce and storage are the responsibility of women. They reiterated that some men do not provide sufficient 'chop money', and so putting the entire burden on them and therefore rendering the credit that they receive inadequate.

Women have to even remit their husbands in order for them to be able to hire farm labor as revealed in the household income and expenditure patterns. Many of the men do not pay back the loans taken from their wives. This afforded them a role in decision-making. Men falling on their wives for domestic credit are somewhat a pointer to empowerment at work. As indicated earlier, Narayan (2005) has stated that empowerment is the expansion of freedom of choice and action to shape one's life or the control over resources and decisions. She went further in explaining empowerment to mean the "expansion of assets and capabilities of ... [women] to participate in, negotiate with, influence, control, and hold accountable, institutions that affect their lives" (p.5). But women's ability to advance cash to their husbands affords them the opportunity in taking part in decision making process. This is buttressed by Kabeer when she stated that, "in the socio-cultural context of rural Bangladesh and India, where male guardianship is essential for economic and social security, social status, and even identity, research suggests that some female borrowers have been able to use credit to negotiate greater decision making power within the household" (Kabeer, 1998 cited in Hunt et al., 2001:49). This goes to suggest that even though women are denied the opportunity in taking part in household decisions, regain it when they are able to contribute to the household welfare needs.

5.3 Benefits and Aspirations

As already mentioned, it was difficult getting information on the women's incomes, simply because they were not prepared to give accurate account on it. For they saw me as an outsider; they were afraid to share information on their income, thinking it would attract tax assessment. Another reason is that, these women hardly keep written records on their business and could therefore not give accurate estimations.

In spite of women unwillingness in disclosing accurate information on their income, data gathered so far indicate some form of benefits associated with their non-farm economic activities. Most of the informants concluded that their activities are profitable and have led to improvements in their living conditions. As many of the respondents indicated, the ability to acquire personal belongings, feed and cloth their children and other household members make the economic activity apparently beneficial. It

has given us the opportunity to take part in household decision making, because we are able to provide for the family upkeep. Women empowerment in this case depends on their ability to own and control resources. The ability to provide all the basic items needed for the household make-up without recourse to the husband prevent misunderstanding between the man and woman. One woman gave an account of the benefits to include “I am able to pay for my children and dependants school fees for the past three years. I am also able to feed my family well. In addition, I have been able to buy certain basic items such as cooking utensils, cloth, books, soap, just to mention but a few for myself and children. This I could not for the past three years when I had not join the Freedom from Hunger micro-credit scheme”. Even though these women claimed to be making profit, one of my observations was that, they do not cost their own labor and raw materials such as firewood and stalk that are collected from the field free of charge. But the interesting issue here is that, these women are not only looking at the monetary gains that they are making but the other benefits that are associated with their activities. For example, the families of these women get their products free to enjoy which is usually factor into the over all benefits of their businesses. Also included in the benefits that these women are talking about is the education component of the credit scheme which includes family planning, health care, business skills and personal hygiene. The social education aspect of the project also leads to the empowerment of these women socially, as it keeps them updated on modern/urban practices.

The aspirations of the respondents seem to be partially satisfied. The reason is that, when asked whether their aspirations have been fulfilled, varied answers were given: about 50 percent concluded that their expectations were fulfilled while 20 percent said it was somehow fulfilled. The rest of the 30 percent indicated that their aspirations were not fulfilled. Those who claimed their aspirations have been fulfilled explained that they are able to pay off the credit taken and still take proper care of their family’s need and even save. But those who have half way fulfilled needs complained that it was really difficult to pay back the loan and still provide for the family needs. This therefore compels them to work for more hours without enough rest. Those who were not satisfied at all said they were always having financial difficulties. There was no market for their products, which makes it impossible for them to pay back the loan collected. Both credit officers and colleague women were therefore always pressurizing them to pay back the credit, which is very embarrassing in the credit communities.

5.4 Women Talking on Behalf of Men

The women stated categorically that their activities are seasonal, and attracting limited demand and low prices. For example, in the raining season where the farmers are planting their crops, there is limited food crops to sell for liquid cash. This is more or less the hunger season in the area. The women went further to say that most households do not have sufficient to eat let alone to sell food crops and earn income. This thus accounts for the low patronage of these their products during the raining season. Men are mostly their customers, and during such period mentioned above, buy their products on credit and thus locking up their capital.

Further, men are not able to pay back sub-loans made to them by their wives simply because they do not have the means to do it, which is no fault of theirs. Accordingly, there are no job openings in Nandom for these men. They do not also get any form of credit assistance from government or any credit institution for their farm work or non-farm work.

The availability of job opportunities for the men folk is therefore an issue these women are advocating for. They said, the creation of job opportunities would not only help the men folks but the women as well; for their goods would be bought and paid for by the men on cash basis. This therefore means that women empowerment is good, because they shall always talk confidently in the household and on behalf of men. And the ability to have access to non-farm activities might improve women agency within the family. Kabeer cited in chapter 4 defines empowerment as “the processes by which those who have been denied the ability to make choices acquire such ability. In other words, empowerment entails a process of change”. The reason is that, the non-farm activities would serve as an independent source of income for the family livelihood and hence a stronger ‘fall-back’ position to bargain or negotiate from (Kabeer, 2003). She went further to opine that women’s capabilities and their potential for living the lives they want, comes as a result of their access to resources and agency.

5.5 Women Misgivings about the Loan Scheme

The women respondents however, have expressed some misgivings about the loan scheme. One of them is capital which they need in order to operate on a large scale. The credit offered them was inadequate, and therefore not sufficient to help start any profitable business. They term it as ‘chop money’. There is a ceiling on an amount a woman can take. Apart from that, the interest rate is very high for them.

Another misgiving these women expressed about was the repayment period. According to them, they start to pay back the loan after one week of the collection date. And for those who are into *pito* brewing, it may even take them about two weeks to process the malt before they could start to brew. “So, how then is it possible for us to start with the repayment?”, one *pito* brewer asked.

Another problem facing these women is that their activities are seasonal and therefore attract very low prices most at times. During the raining season, it is difficult for the people of Nandom to get cash in their hands. This is because that is the hunger season of the year, so every household is always struggling to make ends meet. They went further to explained that households cannot get sufficient food to eat and still have surplus to sell and make income, and that is why they have low patronage of their products during such period. They also indicated that due to lack of money during such period, customers often buy the goods on credit and thus lock up their capital. For example, one of them said, “my son, I am out of business currently because there is no market for *pito* of late. All is bought on credit anytime I brew, so I have stopped”. Another issue is tax such as market tolls which the women complained was very high. They pay the market tolls whenever they appear with their products in the market. Failure in making sales on a particular day is not a guarantee for one not paying the tolls.

Lack of technology is also a problem women respondent complained about. Majority of them process their product using manpower. They cited shea-butter processing as a case, which involves a lot of energy and time consuming. But due to lack of technology for its processing, women entrepreneurs process it manually and that at times do not turn out well for them. This they concluded could be attributed to their inability to grind the sheanut very well when it is done manually. The adoption of crude technology is as a result of inadequate capital.

Women also mentioned that it is very difficult combining economic activity with farm work. This at times leads to conflict of roles. And in the attempt to pay attention to their economic activity at the expense of the farm work, sometimes bring about misunderstanding between the married couples. Women are therefore always compelled to do the two along side coupled with domestic activities which are left entirely in their care. They are mostly overburdened with work and have no time to rest, hence their inability to concentrate on their activities. They could not also hire additional hands to help because of the low level of their finances.

The bad road network of Nandom is also a problem to some women who are into certain economic activities such as petty trading and weaving which involves traveling to other market centers. Vehicle owners are usually not prepared to put their Lorries on such roads, so it is often difficult reaching many market centers for the marketing of their products.

5.6 Proposed Solutions

The following proposals were therefore put forward by the women, which according to them could help solve their problems when attention is paid to them.

- ❖ The creation of jobs in Nandom. This proposal the women suggested that it could be achieved if Nandom is allocated a fair share of the job opportunities that are created in the Lawra-Nandom District. In other words, Nandom could be made a separate district of its own.
- ❖ Reduction of the interest rate or it should be scrap off completely. And the time they will have to start paying back the credit collected should be extended from one week to four weeks or more. This will even encourage more women to enroll in.
- ❖ More credit schemes should be made available in the area for both men and women.
- ❖ The ceiling put on the amount a woman can collect should be increase.

5.7 Summary

Generally, these women are into productive activities such as *pito* brewing, petty trading, shea-butter extraction, *koose* frying, weaving and cooked food selling. Their main aim is to make profit, and this has made some of them engage in more than one trade. They all mentioned the Nandom Rural Bank-Freedom from Hunger project as their source of finance. Others also received credit from the Lawra District Assembly, private lenders and other credit institutions. Even though it was not easy getting information on women earnings, information gathered indicates that they were not making profit as such. Whatever profit they make is use in the purchase of household provisions.

Women respondents mentioned high interest rate, lack of technology, lack of market for their products and inadequate finance as some of the problems facing them. Aside these, is women inability to keep written records on their activities. They also lack the basic knowledge in business. They combine their

household work with their trade which is time demanding, thus compelling them to use most of their time working.

The next chapter is on summary and conclusions.

Chapter Six

Summary and Conclusions

6.1 Introduction

The focus of this study has been the effect of micro-credit as a tool in alleviating poverty, and as a means in empowering women. In effect, it attempts to find out whether women contribute to household welfare from their micro-credit enterprise activities, and also leads to giving them a voice in decision-making. Women in their efforts to go into income generating activities (IGA) faced certain obstacles such as finance. NGOs and government line agencies have therefore taken upon themselves as a challenge in advancing credit to these women to enable them meet their practical and strategic gender needs.

In this final chapter, I present a general summary of the principal findings of the study, and draw conclusions within the context of enhancing the interplay between micro-credit schemes and poverty alleviation.

6.2 Summary of the Principal findings

The findings have shown that institutional credit programmes such as the one by Freedom from Hunger Project, and the Lawra District Assembly have had a significant positive impact on women. The members of the credit schemes have gained more assets, greater control, and more say in household decision-making processes.

Local culture has marginalized and discriminated against women in Nandom in terms of resource allocation. These women are excluded from land ownership, which constitutes a major source of work and collateral for business and personal credits. However, this same culture has assigned certain roles to these women, such as buying food ingredients, buying kerosene and clothing the children. In order to satisfy these gender based needs, these women have gone into income generating activities, with all the attendant problems. For they find it difficult to mobilize the seed capital. And this explains why NGOs and government line agencies have to come to their aid with micro-credit.

Moreover, these rural women are engaged in more than one income generating activity within the year coupled with their unpaid gender roles within households. They are engaged in activities such as *pito*

brewing, *koose* frying, shea-butter extraction, petty trading, and weaving, through the use of local resources in the production process. Meanwhile, the seasonality in the supply of raw materials in the production process has necessitated their involvement in several income generating activities simultaneously. The multiple occupational combinations ensure steady business and income throughout the year.

Encouraging as these findings are, evidence suggests that these women use the income generated from their economic activities in meeting their gendered based needs as mentioned earlier. Some of them are purchasing perishable household provisions, meeting children's educational expenses, buying of cloths for themselves and children, extending loans to their farmer husbands, and acquiring of assets.

It is worth mentioning that NGOs have played a significant role in the development of poor countries, especially Sub-Saharan Africa. They play a more leading role in ensuring equitable socio-cultural and economic development in both urban and rural areas. NGOs are perceived as the outside actors who work in the interest of the poor/women. In the absence of the state, they have played a vital role in the provision of basic essential services such as water, health and education to the poor (Narayan, 2000). Poverty reduction is a concept which was first promoted by these NGOs, and they do this by making available to the poor micro-credit for their income generating activities.

Due to women's involvement in the credit schemes, they are able to develop savings behavior and business skills. This may be due to the fact that, savings is a component part of the Freedom from Hunger Project. They are encouraged by the credit officers to pay back the loan collected and save as well weekly. These weekly savings are given back to them after considerable number of savings, for them to use in buying valuable assets to themselves. They are compelled to save because it is the loan conditionality. Many women would not have saved if it had not been a condition; having money on hand makes them more vulnerable to demands for money by their husbands and other relations.

Apart from being breadwinners of their respective households, these women give financial support to their husbands to enable them hire day-farm laborers. Unfortunately, the men do not pay back the loans given by their wives. However, since the men folks could easily resort to their wives for money to meet pressing needs, these women are usually respected by their husbands. They are consulted by their husbands before certain household decisions are arrived at. This implies that the credit facilities extended to these women empower them economically and socially. Narayan (2005) pointed out that

empowerment is the expansion of freedom of choice and action to shape's ones life, that is, the control over resources and decisions. Empowerment is the "expansion of assets and capabilities of ... [women] to participate in, negotiate with, influence, control, and hold accountable, institutions that affect their lives" (ibid: 5).

It is interesting to note that when women are empowered economically, they may even speak on behalf of men. The fact is that these women do not get ready market for their products especially during the rainy season. This is because the men, who are their customers, do not have reliable sources of income. So they are always compelled to buy the products on credit, from the women traders. There are no job openings in Nandom for the men and they do not also get any form of assistance from credit institutions. The creation of job opportunities in the study area for men is thus an issue women consider important to look at by the government and other development partners.

Moreover, it was realized that the repayment period for the loans taken is very short. The production cycle for most of the women's trade such as *pito* brewing is very long, about two weeks averagely. Therefore, the grace period of one week given to these women before starting with repayment is unrealistic. It means repaying with the loan collected without the opportunity to trade with it. In situations where the credit has already been invested into the purchase of raw materials, they had to borrow, sell assets or fetch firewood from the forest to sell to meet their obligations to the scheme operators. The interest rate also is somewhat high considering the prices of the women's products. They would not be able to pay back the loan and still make profit. In such situations, then one would not be far from right to say that the credit is not serving the intended purpose.

The women have an unmet need for credit for their non-farm activities. The credit advanced to them by the credit institutions, especially the FfH project is inadequate. One could conclude that the credit given serves more as 'chop money' to these women instead of 'business money'. Acting as breadwinners of the family due to 'changing terms of marriage', most of these women commit their profits into the household welfare needs instead of reinvesting into their businesses. These women who found themselves in such new positions as breadwinners offer them the opportunity to take active part in household decision-making process, and thus empower them.

The traditional production method adopted by these women contributes to low production yields. Notwithstanding, there is an orientation towards combining traditional mode of production with

modern technology. This is because they sometimes processed the inputs of their trade with machines. Meanwhile, credit is a determining factor in the type of technology to adopt; the credit advanced to these women is inadequate, influencing their choice of crude and labor intensive technology, and the production outcomes.

Women are usually overburdened with work and therefore have no time to rest. They are faced with conflict of roles where they would have to combine their economic activities with unpaid domestic tasks. This has an adverse effect on their economic activities.

Finally, although these women are not able to contribute fully towards household poverty reduction due to the various constraints skirting their non-farm enterprises, they are on the right path. Like Derbile (2003), the study notes that enhanced non-farm enterprises provide the economic basis from which women are able to contribute to household poverty reduction; it leads to reduction in unemployment rate among women within the households; it is a major source of women's income, which has a positive impact on the household's livelihood; and it is the economic basis for women in financing households' social services such as health, education and water.

6.3 Conclusions for Policy Planning

To improve the well being of women and their positions in society, it is really important for policy makers and donor agencies to listen to them. A comprehensive and holistic approach must be adopted by governments and their development partners, as well as women themselves to remove the social and economic constraints imposed on them by society. Below are some of the elements of the broad micro-credit policy recommendations:

1. 'Business Money' verses 'Chop Money'

The success of every business enterprise depends on the availability of credit. Therefore 'business money' instead of 'chop money' is what is important for the development of these women enterprises. The credit given to these women are woefully inadequate to be able to start to run a successful business. Such little loans made available to these women are put into the family livelihoods instead of into business. Mahammoud⁶ (2006) has described as "chop money" the loan given to women and

⁶ The Upper East Regional Organizer of the New Patriotic Party (NPP).

⁷ New Patriotic Party (NPP) is the current ruling government's political party in Ghana.

appealed to the government to increase it to more appreciable amount". He went further to explained that what comes to the mind of a hungry person who has received money, be it loan or whatever, would be quenching the unpleasant blazing fire in him or her before any other thing else. And that is the same situation these women have found themselves in. This helps in contributing to the low recovery rate of the credits, and therefore may never help in alleviating poverty in the study area. The need in giving 'business money' instead of 'chop money' to these rural women is highly recommended in this case. 'Business money' would help the women to be able to adopt modern technology in their production process which will go a long way in increasing output on a regular basis. This will enable these women meet their gendered household needs. Secondly, they will be able to pay back the loan. In that light, there is the need for government to negotiate on behalf of these women so that they get access to credit facilities from credit institutions without weighty collaterals. Institutions such as NGOs and District Assemblies, which in one way assist women with credit for their non-farm activities should also increase the amount one can get at a time.

2. Removal of Interest Rate

The loans made available to these women attract interest. The interest charged add up in inflating the total amount these women are suppose to repay. Meanwhile, the activities of these women are not productive to be able to generate enough income to meet their gendered needs and repay the loans. They do not get market for their products because their products are homogeneous and geared towards the same market. In this light, I pose these rhetorical questions: What is this interest charged meant for? Is it for administrative cost or for those who drink bottled water? Why wouldn't the credit institutions rather bear the interest component if they really intend to help these rural women overcome the impediments in their way? For the credit to serve its intended purpose, which is poverty reduction, there is the need to scrap off the interest component.

3. Appropriate Technology

The promotion of viable rural technology which is geared towards replacing labor efforts in women's repetitive work is highly recommended. Such technology should be well tested to ensure that it is appropriate to the prevailing conditions in the study area. Productivity of micro and small-scale enterprises is likely to be increased through improvements in technology. Therefore using the

appropriate technology such as motorized processing techniques by these women would lead to increase in production of their non-farm enterprises. It will also save them from exhausting all their energy during the production stages of their products, which at times, contributes to their ill-health. Simple loading/transportation equipment is recommended in order to spare them of the health risk associated with head portorage (carrying load on the head).

Energy is very vital to the activities of these women. They used fuel wood in processing their products. Meanwhile, the woods are very scarce these days, compelling them to trek longer distances into the bush to fetch it. The use of fuel wood has even contributed to the depletion of the forests in the area. A very cheap and reliable source of energy is therefore recommended for these women. This means that, solar-powered equipment and gas suitable for micro and small-scale production should be made accessible at affordable prices.

4. Local Knowledge and Policy Design

Local knowledge is very important in the design of policies for rural people. Most of the women's non-farm enterprises have longer production cycles. A typical example is *pito* brewing which takes about two weeks to process the malt and start with the brewing. Meanwhile, in the design of credit schemes for women, such factors are never taken into consideration neither are women consulted. This puts the beneficiaries at a disadvantage. With the FfH project, women are expected to start with repayment of loan after one week of collection. They are likely to use the loans taken to start with the repayment instead of investing them in their businesses. And in situations where the credit has been invested in raw materials for production, the women had to resort to other alternative income sources such as borrowing or sale of personal assets in order to be able to meet the loan conditions. It is therefore prudent to take into consideration local knowledge or involve local actors during the planning stage of such policies, which are designed for their benefit.

5. Engendering the Scheme

The next issue worth considering is the number of beneficiaries of the credit scheme. Only few women are benefiting from the programme, which may not serve its intended purpose of reducing poverty in the area. There is therefore the need in involving many women in the loan scheme. Consideration should also be given to the men folks in Nandom Traditional area in getting access to the credit

schemes, which will go in a long way helping them too in non-farm enterprises. When men get their independent incomes, the problem of women sharing their micro-credits with their husbands will be solved. For the men do not pay back the 'domestic loans' from their wives, and this has contributed in overburdening women, as they will have to work very hard to be able to earn extra income to repay the loan. Guerin (2006) proposed that bringing men into micro-credit matters should be a priority. "In an effort to address gender issues, many programmes ignore men with the result of increasing tensions in the household ..." (ibid: 567). This explains why the men should also be given the credit. The involvement of many people would also mean the introduction of more credit institutions in the study area to be able to meet the needs of the increasing population.

6. Instituting Training Programmes

Literacy, training, and formal education are factors that affect productivity and income. There is therefore the need for policy makers to put in measures in order to improve on the education of women in the country. The promotion of female enrolment in vocational/technical education in order to broaden their economic opportunities is an issue policy makers should consider very strictly. These women should be given literacy or training programmes, which should entail skills relevant to their economic activities. This calls for the increase in the functional literacy skills among the populace, and more especially women to be able to ensure their training needs and record keeping. Women's ability to read and write will ensure their trust in public officials. For they will be able to read for themselves documents kept on the loan scheme operations by the officials. Notwithstanding women's lack of skills/formal education to be able to keep records on their activities, there is the need to give capacity building training to the credit officers who would intend train the women. This will help in building the women's capacities with regards to efficient management of the micro-credit. The National Board for Small Scale Industries (NBSSI), Lawra District Assembly, department of Community Development and Non governmental Organizations could be of help in building the capacities of these women in effective management of finance, and entrepreneurship development.

Parents should also be encouraged to give formal education to the girl-child. Formal education will equip them with reading and writing skills. This will guarantee them access to formal jobs, which gives stable income and retirement pension. I will argue that, investing into girl-child education will

help in breaking poverty. Also, girls' ability to read and write will help them in keeping proper records on their economic activities, which these rural women are not able to do presently.

6.4 Overall Remarks

Micro-credit has had positive and significant effect on poverty reduction and women empowerment. Findings presented in other studies such as Guerin (2006), Khandker (1998), MckNelly (1998) and Derbile (2003) threw light on some successes of micro-credit in alleviating households' poverty. They enabled women to go into gainfully self employment. Income from such non-farm enterprise is used for household provisioning and other essential basic services. This leads to improvement in the family livelihood. Women acting as breadwinners of the family gives them the opportunity in taking part in household decision-making, which changed their positions relative to men's in Nandom. But, in the case of women in Nandom, the credits given to them are inadequate to support any viable venture. They are therefore compelled to put the loan collected into supporting the family's routine subsistence. This, in one way or the other, defeats the intended purpose of the credit scheme. For women to remain in business and contribute to the family livelihood, it is important NGOs and government line agencies consider revising the terms of the schemes. This should be done to give women access to 'business money' instead of the usual 'chop money' which does not help in poverty reduction.

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14. How do you qualify for the credit?.....
.....

15. Do you usually pay back the credit obtained?..... If yes, how often?

Weekly/monthly/daily.....

16. Do you pay interest?..... If yes, at what rate?.....

17. Do you need to seek permission from any one in order to obtain credit? If yes, who? Husband, father-in-law, mother-in-law, others (specify).

18. How is the credit obtained spend, and by who?.....
.....

D. RECORDS AND TRAINING

19a. Do you have contacts with the institution/NGO after sourcing the funds?.....

19c. If yes, what is the contact about?.....

19d. Do you find the contact beneficial? Explain.....
.....
.....

E. MARKETING OF PRODUCTS

20. Where do you sell the products of your activity?.....

21. Do you sell it by yourself or through some other means/people? (specify)

.....

If by somebody else, do you pay the person?, and if yes, how much?.....
.....

22. Do you make profit on your activity? If yes, how much either daily/weekly/monthly?

.....

F. HOUSEHOLD INCOME AND EXPENDITURE

23. Can you estimate your daily/weekly/monthly income?.....

.....»

24. What do you use the income from your activity for?.....

.....

.....

25. Do you usually save part of it?..... If yes, how much?.....

.....

26. Do you always seek permission from your husband on how to use your income?...

..... If yes/no, why?.....

.....

G. GENDER ROLES

27a. In your family, who is supposed to provide for the up-keep of the household?

.....

27b. Are the above role being performed by the responsible persons? Explain your

answer.....

.....

28. Who does the following domestic activities?

(a) sweeping

(b) cooking

(c) washing

(d) fetching of water

(e) fetching of firewood

29. What is the main occupation of your husband?

30. Do you help him in his occupation?.....

Explain.....

.....

31. Does he also help you in your activity?.....

32. Has your status changed in your family after you have started to receive credit for your income generating activities? Explain

.....

.....

.....

33. How do you get to know about this micro-credit scheme?.....

.....

H. BENEFITS, PROBLEMS AND ASPIRATIONS

34a. Is the credit given to you for your income generating activities beneficial?.....

34b. Explain your answer in 34a.....

.....

35. Can you say that the credit given to you has resulted in improvement in your life and your family as a whole? Explain your answer.

.....

.....

.....

36a. What are the problems facing you in your daily activities? Mention them.....

.....
.....
.....

36b. What do you think can be the most practical solutions to the problems mentioned above?

.....
.....
.....

37. What in your view, can be done in order to improve the credit scheme?.....

.....
.....

38. In your opinion, what do you think can be done to improve the over all living conditions?

.....
.....
.....

APPENDIX II

RURAL WOMEN AND MICRO-CREDIT SCHEMES: CASES FROM THE LAWRA DISTRICT OF GHANA.

Research Guide for Government agencies and Non-Governmental Organizations.

Note: Skip questions which are not applicable.

1. When was this organization established in the Lawra District?
2. What are your goals or aims in Nandom?
3. Why are you located in the Lawra/Nandom District?
4. What criteria are used in the selection of women for assistance?
5. Do you usually give preference to a type of Income Generating Activities (IGA)?
- 6a. How do you reach out to your female clients?
- 6b. How much do you give to these women?
7. Did they need to have guarantors or collateral security before they are granted credit?
- 8a. Do they pay back the credit received?
- 8b. If yes, how long does it take them to start paying back the loans?
- 9a. Do they pay back with interest?
- 9b. If yes, what is the rate of interest?
- 10a. Do you organize training for the women about how to manage the credit?
- 10b. If yes, when, that is, is it before/after the credit has been received?
- 11a. What is the purpose of the training scheme?
- 11b. Do the women view the training beneficial? Explain.
- 12a. Do you involve the women in decision-making, and how?
- 12b. At what stages are they involved?
13. Why do you give credit to only women?
- 14a. Are there other organizations in the district working on women issues?
- 14b. If yes, do you collaborate with them? Explain your answer.
15. What are the problems confronting these women who are into IGA?
16. Do you think the credit is able to boost IGA? If yes, how?
17. Can you tell if your involvement in giving credit to these women have resulted in improvements in women's life and Nandom as a whole? Explain.

18a. Do you encounter problems in your activities?

18b. What efforts are you making in order to overcome the problems identified in 18a.