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Contemporary approaches to sustainable development: Exploring critical innovations in traditional leadership in Ghana

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The paper examines the complexities between traditional and political leadership, science and technology and sustainable development in the context of developing countries. Particular resource information was drawn from Ghana's experience. Available literature was also reviewed. The participatory methodology was used for data collection. This included Literature review or review of existing research data, Community forum, Focus group discussions, Interview of key informants and Community cafes. Key informants including chiefs, researchers, and community opinion leaders were interviewed on their perception on how science, technology and tradition can co-exist to demystify the issues of sustainable development in the rich cultural Ghanaian societies. Descriptive sampling design was used and covered various communities of Ghana. A sample size of 500, making up 100 households of about 5 people, were sampled for their views, comments and perceptions on indigenous knowledge, traditional leadership, environmental best practices. The sampling procedures employed included incidental, purposive, snowballing and cluster to identify floating respondents, groups and key informants through identification by friends, colleagues and neighbours. It was identified that both traditional and national politics have critical roles to play in ensuring sustainable development, as they stand a greater chance to demystify the misconceptions about science within the rich cultural environments of the Ghanaian society. Chiefs, Queen mothers and elders of Ghana's traditional societies are actively contributing to sustainable development through best practices, education and advocacy and drives towards a safer and productive environment and its resources. Adopting a closer bottom-to-up approach to development was identified as a pragmatic step to ensuring an environmentally safe and productive development that applies science and technology to provide the needs of the present and future generations.

Key words: Society, tradition, leadership, governance, sustainable development, indigenous knowledge.

INTRODUCTION

Different societies have their distinctive view of nature, society, human and history. While sustainability is a global issue requiring bilateral and multilateral coopera-tion, the basic framework of sustainable development must embrace the distinctive social and cultural setting, with special attention to the local economic and social conditions (for example, poverty, inequality and inefficient use of resources). The issue of governance and sustainable development therefore demands a multiple, complex and important interface as reiterated in the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Indigenous knowledge, leadership and biodiversity are comple-mentary phenomena which are essential to human development. Global awareness of the crisis concerning the conservation of biodiversity was assured, following the United Nations Conference on Environment and

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Development held in June 1992 in Rio de Janeiro. Of equal concern to many world citizens, is the uncertain status of the indigenous knowledge that reflects many generations of experience and problem -solving by thousands of ethnic groups across the globe. Very little of this knowledge is being acknowledged and recorded, yet it represents an immensely valuable data base that provides humankind with insights on how numerous communities have interacted with their changing environment including its floral and faunal resources.

Wherever sustainable development decisions are taken, impacts on economic well-being, quality of life, governance and the natural environment depend on good decision support. Wrong decisions, or decisions which are blocked because of lack of public acceptability and effective collaboration with institutions including traditional societies, can have major impacts on the achievement of development goals. Sustainable development decision-making raises a wide range of environmental, social, political and economic issues apart from holding implications for the goals, objectives and development of the society concerned. Poor decisions which lack public acceptability or are not based on proper analysis can have serious impacts on the environment as well as economic and social well- being. Decision support is therefore absolutely critical. Partnering traditional societies for effective governance and sustainable development is an emerging concept. Apart from the claim that traditional societies have intended purposes of promoting development, it performs to ensure the conservation and preservation of the environment for both present and future uses, key amongst them is the role of indigenous knowledge.

Generally, indigenous traditional knowledge are based on symbolism, and involve spiritual rituals, religious practices, social taboos, and sacred animal totems. Other positive practices are based on the experiential, involving travel in order to learn from the experiences of other farmers, hunters, gatherers, fishermen, herbal medicine healers, and artisans. The traditional keepers and users of local ecological knowledge and wisdom are typically the key elders from rural African communities. Ghana has taken remarkable strides towards consolidating demo-cratic development in recent years, with successive and successful national elections. This spans across nearly 50 years of democratic and military periods of state governance. However, the country faces a significant challenge. The rapid pace of development has led to numerous local tensions over land, resources, and chief-taincy succession, especially where traditional groups and communities have grappled with modern politics and jurisprudence. While the chieftaincy system has served as a mainstay for social cohesion in Ghana even in modern times, the politicization of some aspects of the system has contributed to these tensions. In the recent past, an absence of new mechanisms to complement traditional means for managing these tensions has led to violent conflict.

Countries the world over, have been critical of achieving the benchmarks of sustainable development. However, institutional support for sustainable develop-ment has been inadequate as government policies have also achieved minimal success. Traditional authorities can and have valuable contributions to offer in ensuring sustainable development, however not much has been pursued. Ghana continues to lose large tracts of forest cover to environmental degradation. Domestic and industrial waste still pose problems to biodiversity and human health. Refuse continue to pile up in major cities in, including Sekondi-Takoradi, Accra, Tema and Tamale, Ghana. The issue arising has been the absence of effective policies draws on indigenous knowledge to address waste management and conservation of environmental resources.

METHODOLOGY

The participatory methodology was used for data collection. This included:

1. Literature review or review of existing research data.
2. Community forum.
3. Focus group discussions.
4. Interview of key informants.
5. Community cafes.

Descriptive sampling design was used and covered various communities in the Brong Ahafo Region of Ghana. A sample size of 500, making up 100 households of about 5 people, were sampled for their views, comments and perceptions on indigenous know-ledge, traditional leadership, environmental best practices. The sampling procedures employed included incidental, purposive, snowballing and cluster to identify floating respondents, groups and key informants through identification by friends, colleagues and neighbours. The sampled respondents included staff Chiefs and Queenmothers, traditional leadership and people living in rural communities where indigenous knowledge if primarily used. In-depth interviews were conducted with the youth and elderly people. The focus of the inquiry included views of the respondents on the advantages and dangers using indigenous knowledge and traditionalism to address environmental issues.

COMPLEXITIES OF TRADITIONAL SOCIETIES IN GHANA

Traditional rule in Ghana finds expression in forms such as religious leadership, lineage headship, leadership in extended families, and chieftaincy. Chieftaincy is however, the fullest expression of traditional rule in its institutionalized form. It embodies: the cardinal characteristics of prescribed kinship and lineage succession to office, awe and sacredness of office and office holders, specific forms of contractual relationships between chiefs and their subjects, and institutionalized

procedures for decision-taking and implementation at the levels of local community and local participation as indicated by some selected traditional leaders in Chiraa and Abesim.

Ghana's traditional leadership structure is a hierarchy. At the base is the clan head (Abusuapannin). Next and above the clan head is the village or town chief, also known in some of the Akan dialects as the "Odikuro", literally the head of the village or the town. The next in the hierarchy is the "Omanhene" or the paramount chief, usually the traditional leader at the district level. At the apex is the head of a tribal group such as the King of Asantes or the Ga Mantse of the Gas.

The Asante dynasty, a classical example of a traditional leadership, is one of the well constituted traditional bodies in Ghana. Apart from the rather unique role of the *Asantehene,* and of the Golden Stool in welding virtually autonomous traditional states and *amanhene* together, there is very little in which the Ashanti differ from other Akans in their political set-up. Such roles are also performed by the Akyem and Ga dynasties in Ghana. More so, the Asante dynasty has clearly demarcated hierarchy of authority that transcends from the head of the clans to the Abusuapanin, thus supporting the claims of Radcliffe-Brown (1961).

Qualities and features of traditional leadership

"The kingly office springs from a period in native history when there was continual warfare among the different tribes inhabiting the country. In a related incidence, the Krontihene of Sunyani, the traditional prime minister of the Paramount Chief, indicated that the choice of a king was most probably determined by the personal valour, intelligence and capability of the individual to lead the forces of the community in times of war. As he added, such an individual was undoubtedly the best man the community could produce." For example, under the kingship of his royal majesty Nana Wiafe Akenten III, the Offinso traditional council has been working to prove the quality traditional leadership offers, restoring the pride once lost and reforming into its true status. It is therefore apparent that traditional leaders are people imbued with good virtues as supported by many scholars. Contributing to the debate, Casely Hayford had noted that:

"At the head of the native state stand prominently, the chief (king) who is the chief magistrate and the chief military leader of the state. He is first in the councils of the country, and the first executive officer. His influence is only measured by the strength of his character."

Another feature of traditional rule is the sacredness of the office of the chief, and for that matter, the person of office bearers. Thus, offices (and personages) are set apart

from ordinary mundane phenomena including others. These in turn served to validate that the exercise of his authority was mainly through myths and tradition; and owing to the religious-secular nature of political office, the incumbent was seen as more than human. In Ghana, this was particularly so in the cases of the *Awoamefia* of Anlo, and the *Yagbonwura* of the Gonja state. Finally, while incumbents of office could be questioned about the way the system was manipulated, rarely did people question the structure of the society and its institutions as such. In other words, one experienced enough rebellion but scarcely revolutions (Casely-Hayford, 1903).

Traditional governance systems varied considerably among the different peoples that occupied the region of modern Ghana. While some groups developed very complex hierarchical structures, others had simple kin-based types. The matrilineal Akan- speaking people, for example, seemed to have evolved once of the highest forms of the complex system of governance. The Akan political system ensured socially acceptable conduct backed by general good-will that in turn ensured social cohesion.

Other groups like their Guan-speaking neighbors and the Ga-Adangme groups who originally practiced a religion-based system of government seem to have adopted and adapted the Akan model, as could be inferred from the titles used for their political leaders. In the northern regions, although there are such centralized states as Mamprussi, Dagbon, Gonja and Wa that have hierarchical structures with clearly defined rules of succession and titles for their office holders, there are many others like the Tallensi, Konkomba and Gurunsi who until fairly recently did not have such systems.

It is important to note that, the history of the chieftaincy institution differs among the different ethnic groups and even in the various administrative regions into which the country is divided. The role and significance of traditional leaders have dwindled with age. People no longer continue to hold the office in an extremely high esteem as previously existed. The powers they wield have also reduced with the introduction of democratic tenants in the society. However, in many communities in the Akan societies, traditional leaders still carry a high level of respect and thus, contribute substantially to the governance and development of their communities.

TRADITIONAL LEADERSHIP AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN CONTEMPORARY GHANA

Good governance and sound public management are preconditions for the implementation of sustainable development policies. These preconditions include efforts to ensure an ethical and more transparent government process, as well as decision-making practices sufficiently open to citizens. Good governance therefore seeks to

satisfy economic, political and administrative demands of a society. Traditional leaders play both statutory and non-statutory functions. They are seen contributing effectively to state governance through effective economic, political and administrative policies. The statutory functions, as provided by respondents, among others are:

1. Collection, refinement, codification and the unification of customary laws.
2. Adjudication in chieftaincy disputes.
3. Compilation of lines of succession to offices in the various traditional areas.
4. Appointment of representations to various government statutory bodies including the Council of State, Prisons Council, National and Regional Lands Commissions and Regional Co-ordination Councils and constitutionally too, traditional rulers are barred from active partisan politics.

The non-statutory functions of traditional rulers are derived from their positions as moral/natural leaders of their respective communities. In a related incidence, a key informant interviews with selected elders in the Sunyani municipality showed that, chiefs as influential members of their communities undertake the under-listed functions:

1. Settlement of disputes through arbitration, mobilization of their people for development purposes.
2. They act as linkages between their communities and development agencies including central government departments, local government organs, NGOs, diplomatic missions, religious bodies and welfare associations and use of the agency of annual festivals when traditional rulers mobilize their people for the purpose of planning and seeking avenues and opportunities for executing development projects.

On close examination of the historical development of local government in the country, one can discern two basic orientations. From 1951 to 1959, local government concept was conceived largely in terms of the democratic right of the local people to run their own affairs. This right consisted in the people's ability to select their own representatives who then became the policy-makers or law-givers, as far as the affairs of the local areas were concerned. The right also consisted in the people's capacity to determine what services to provide, what taxes to impose, and how the proceeds of these taxes should be used. The type of local government that obtained then was akin to the British local government system with its emphasis on the principles of democracy, representation, devolution and responsibility. This was not surprising since it was from the British that Ghanaians took their cue for most of the country's political and constitutional development.

Although, the traditional manners of government look awesome and fearful when seen from outside, and although the pomp and pageantry around the leaders make them look impregnable, a closer study reveals otherwise. Indeed, in many regards, traditional rulers appear as loving slaves to their office. There is no movement of theirs which is not controlled by custom, tradition and taboo. In palace deliberations, for instance, the chief talks last – and what he says is usually a summary of what has been said by other elders and counselors. Besides, the traditional leader only speaks through a linguist, a titled palace official versed in customary usages and oratory. In such regards, any tendency to depart from consensus decisions will be straightened out by the linguist in the course of his presentations.

Creating the enabling functional environment for traditional leadership would result in an effective collaboration between the state and the local societies. The outflow is a society that enjoys peace, economic growth and human development. The negative impact of defective governance on economic and social development, as well as on the environment, is clear. In addition to these basic preconditions, the importance for sustainable development of key management tools, such as performance measurement, mechanisms for citizen engagement, specific policy and implementation processes, and continuous strategic assessment is crucial.

In Abesim, Chiraa, Fiapre and Zongo, as environmental education programme being undertaken by the Brong Ahafo Research and Extension Centre (BAREC) in collaboration with the leadership and people of the communities proved the active contribution to chiefs and Queen mothers to environmental education (Arthur et al., 2011). Many of such chiefs have instituted days for cleaning of their communities. They also operate functional sanitation officers that seek to the cleanliness of the people and their communities. Such communities have also contracted the services of local waste companies to clean and lift solid and liquid waste, obviously a step towards ensuring a health people and society.

TRADITIONAL LEADERSHIP AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT NEXUS: THE CONFLICTS

Democratic governance has also not succeeded in eroding such tendencies for tension between state and traditional administration. 1992 saw the swearing into office in Ghana, of an elected government. This brought into its wake the District Assemblies (DA) concept. DAs are accorded wide-ranging powers by the 1992 Constitution and the Local Government Act of 1993. Within its designated geographical area, each District Assembly is the: highest political and administrative authority, planning authority, development authority, budgeting authority, and rating authority (Ayee, 2003).

The District Assembly also has an overall responsibility to "co-ordinate, integrate and harmonize" the activities of all development agencies in the District inclusive of central government ministries, departments and agencies (MDAs) and non-government organisations [Article 10 (5)]. The District Assemblies work in close collaboration with the traditional leadership in areas of their jurisdiction. These chiefs serve on local boards and also on different committees within the assembly.

Ensuing an effective DA and traditional leadership therefore creates an interface that sometimes result in duplication of functions, as well as undesirable frictions. Such complexities do mainly result from the intersecting roles and boundaries of operation, including managing waste and executing executive functions, for both state and traditional machinery of leadership. Decalo (1989) argues that, in hoping to "modernize" their usual mono-economies, the new African leaders often espoused an "African Socialism" where the state controlled the economy. Insisting upon the need for "national integration," in the face of a plethora of ethnic collectivities, African leaders imposed a single party system, claiming that this was close to the African "palaver." However, there are also offshoots of this association that are quite undeniable. Such include the fight for control and legitimacy, as well as the difficulty of respecting leadership boundaries.

In a similar view, Kwame Nkrumah had a bitter conflict with the Asantehene and other traditional leaders in Ghana who objected to being excluded from government. In Ouagadougou, a frustrated traditional emperor, the Mogho Naba of the Mossi people, attempted to use his traditional army in a quixotic attempt to dissolve an embattled Territorial Assembly. Sir Edward Mutesa II of the Baganda quarreled with Sir Andrew Cohen, Britain's last colonial governor, about the future government of Uganda and was exiled to England where he died in poverty.

In April 2000, religious and traditional leaders agreed to modify the ban in drumming and noise- making, an annual event prior to celebrating "Homowo" a festival of a large section of traditional enclave in the Greater Accra region of Ghana. The agreement was for drumming to be subdued and confined to the churches. On May 7, 2001, the first day of the 2001 ban, the Ga Traditional Council (GTC) announced that the agreement it had previously reached with local churches in 2000, which dealt on moderate and permissible noise making levels, was not applicable for 2001 and that the ban would apply to all drumming and noise-making. Christian churches claimed then that the ban was unconstitutional and that they would not observe it. Several incidents of violence were reported during the ensuing 2001 ban on drumming. In the phase of such challenges, political leadership stayed a further 'distance' away from the unfortunate developments. The resultant conflict led to massive destruction to property worth hundreds of millions of Ghanaian cedis. Clearly, if there was a meaningful collaboration between these traditional societies and state governance the stalemate would not have manifested. Coherence and effective empowerment of traditional leadership, had led to many strides in effective governance, hence sustainable development. Traditional societies are actively represented in the general assembly of the District Assemblies (D.As). Policy decisions are taken with the keen input and contributions of local authorities.

Creating an enabling interface between traditional and state leadership has not been without challenges. Leadership styles and ideologies do and have in many instances created friction in governance at both national and local levels. What confounded many western theorists on the issue were whether African leaders espoused Marxism- Leninism, African and non-African socialism, capitalism or mixed capitalism and so on, their efforts failed. A critical scenario was the situation when Dr Kwame Nkrumah rejected compromises and ignored the advice of Sir Arthur Lewis to him, that the political-economy of the new African states should use agriculture to build their economies and should employ ethnic-based coalitions for government (Lewis, 1967). The result was that confusion reigned about how African leaders could and should deal with their economies and regimes (Lloyd et al., 1970).

PARTNERING TRADITIONAL LEADERSHIP FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN GHANA

The concept of partnership for sustainable development

Partnering the traditional leadership in state governance is a vital and necessary tool for sustainable development. Key respondents including chiefs and elders of clans stated that traditional leadership, state government and traditional societies have functional inter and intra-relationships, that impact on both local and global environmental variables. The level of partnership is as shown in Figure 1.

The state, traditional leadership and societies exist in a globalized world to which there exists a close knitted collaboration. It is therefore necessary that all parties to sustainable development of human societies are integrated towards growth and development that satisfies all (Figure 1). Governance, though complex becomes easy to coordinate if considered in an inte-grative manner. Rooting indigenous knowledge in state governance is therefore a necessary impetus for growth and development. Achieving sustainable development therefore requires an effective use of both traditional leadership and state governance, since communities are
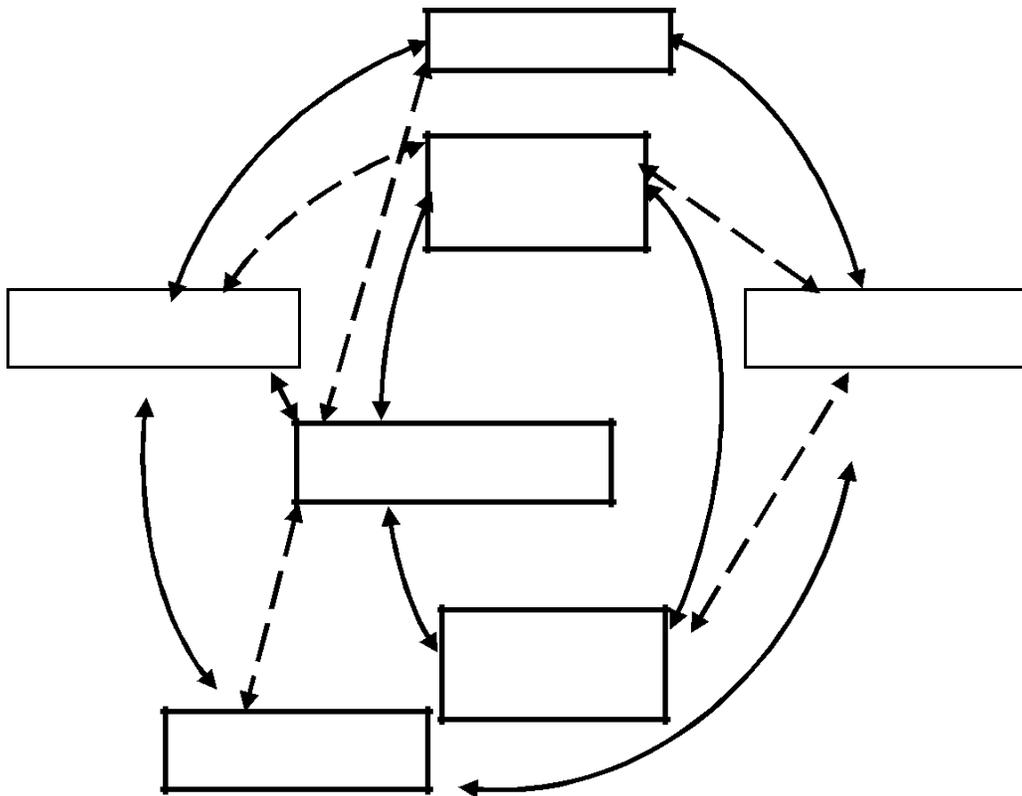
Figure 1. Contemporary approaches to sustainable development: Exploring critical innovations in traditional leadership in Ghana. Source: Author's construct.

mostly controlled by elders and clan heads that are answerable to chiefs and kings who also, pay allegiance to state authority.

Positioning traditional societies for sustainable development in Ghana: The innovations

Chiefs and Kings are accorded extreme respect due to the power and authority they wield (comments from a traditional leader in Chiraa). In the past, the authority of traditional leaders was considered way above that of colonial administrative power as well as contemporary state authority, and therefore a critical for controlling and governing communities. Using chiefs for development therefore, is an active ingredient for achieving one's objective of sustainable development. Since the chief resides with his subjects in the community, he is able to monitor and ensure that his decisions are carried out since, such directives are not different from decrees. Using them therefore, to make and monitor laws of the environment, would ensure maximum co-operation and observance of such directives.

In many traditional societies, large areas of land are

reserved as sacred grooves or abodes of the gods. Observance of such directives is non-negotiable, and this ensures that the land with its resources is conserved. The belief behind the scenario is that, if such laws are not respected, one would incur the displeasure of the gods, which is mainly fatality. Respondents in Fiapre also stated that, unlike death, people do not fear punishments associated with the laws of the state. Laws are sometimes flouted with impunity, since they considered non punitive. However, the directives of chiefs are revered and sometimes considered laws, which should be obeyed to the later. This approach, when used to regulate the use of natural resources, leads to the conservation of resources including forest ecosystems, an indigenous innovation to sustainable development.

Totems, a critical cultural practice amongst traditional societies, revolve around the use of objects as symbols of worship and reverence, are prevalent in many communities in Ghana. Animals including but not limited to the crow, deer (aboakyer festivals) are considered sacred in certain communities. It came out from respondents that, failing to protect such animals becomes a crime against the gods. Such a practice has led to the increase in the population of such animals in many communities.

An interface of such idea and practice would ensure the protection of the environment and its resources. Governance structures in Ghana are also vital, as it contributes significantly to an effective way of managing the environment. Currently, Ghana practices a Presidential system of government that seeks to execute power from a central government with representatives in both the regional and district administrative zones. State authority, which is mainly centrally based, makes it difficult for effective monitoring and coordination of national agenda. Making chiefs responsive in state governance would ensure that government policies are easily accepted and observed by the various communities in Ghana. In such dimensions, an effective scenario, which seeks to promote good governance and development, would be created. Communities would also gladly accept government policies whilst working hard to ensure that they are achieved. The success story of government's massive cocoa spraying exercise for the past 4 years had been mainly due to the active and effective participation of traditional leadership and societies. Executing governance from the local levels is therefore the key option for championing the drive to environmental best practices.

Respondents were quick to mention that, a bottom-to-up governance strategy involving local authority and central government would also encourage communities to own policies developed, since they would be part of the planning and implementation of such projects. Studies have proved that, community projects that infuse the suggestions and contributions of indigenes have culminated into the success of these projects. Chiefs in Ghana, though not to engage in active politics, can help better explain policies of the government whilst mobilising resources for its completion. In doing so, such chiefs would earn the trust and support of their people which will further enhance and promote the needed governmental support for their communities. The introduction of a Kumasi Ventilated Improved Pit (KVIP) facility, a place of convenience, in most coastal communities met little support from such communities. The underlining cause was identified to be the non-involvement of such communities in the planning and execution of such projects. The people therefore, avoided using such facilities. Through a collaborative agreement between such communities and government, the people have returned to the use of these toilets, since it has now been constructed at sites and in conditions accepted and approved by the communities. Sanitation and health has consequently improved in such communities. This obviously is the success story of involving state and traditional leadership in governance. Such a development, therefore, promote group living, discipline since anyone can be punished as offender notwithstanding whether they are closely related. The future generation is also very critical to their present state and ability to see

and survive the future. This invariably is a good impetus for growth and development of human societies.

APPLICATION OF SCIENCE THROUGH INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE: THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF TRADITIONAL SOCIETIES

Meeting the challenges of governance in contemporary Africa is to recognize and satisfy the goals and aspirations of different groups and their leaders. Different African societies necessitated types of governance based on compromises between types of groups and individuals. International and national development agencies have recognized the value of participatory approaches to decision- making for sustainable approaches to development. During the past decade a rapidly growing set of evidence, indicates a strong relationship between indigenous knowledge and sustainable development (Posey, 1985). It is therefore in the right perspective for state governance to actively pursue inclusive state governance that recognizes traditional leaders, societies and their contributions.

State-traditional leadership partnership is vital to resolving societal conflicts, as a result of the growth and development of values that are central to traditional societies. In the early 2000s, one of the longest-lasting violent conflicts in Ghana afflicted the Dagbon traditional area of the Northern region, where each of the two major clans claimed affiliation to different and opposing national political parties that is, New Patriotic Party (NPP) and the National Democratic congress (NDC). In 2003, the traditional ruler of Dagbon and a number of his followers numbering about 40 were killed in a chieftaincy dispute. Law enforcement agencies provided only a tepid response. Perceptions by the aggrieved clan of national authorities' ineptitude or compliance significantly ratcheted political tensions at the national level. This threatened to create instability and violence during national elections in December 2004. The scenario is an inducement for an effective collaboration between state and traditional leadership, since its omission will mean a possible chaos. The state should recognize traditional leadership whilst providing for such their legitimate state support and discouraging the obvious involvement of traditional leadership in mainstream governance.

Traditional leadership quizzed indicated that, it is not their duty to meddle in politics but rather in effective governance of their communities and the state. Chiefs and their council of elders are therefore cautioned not be seen in party paraphernalia, as well as partaking in party political campaigns. By respecting their boundaries in politics, it would prevent situations where they fall into the *dark side* of parties in power, such as violent campaigning which can undermine traditional authority. Meddling in state politics may result in some of the

unfortunate events that led to the Dagbon crisis that occurred in Ghana. The chief's authority is primarily vested in his people and he should therefore be primarily responsive to the needs of his subjects. When such a desirable interface between traditional leadership and state machinery is created, it would further enhance strides for cooperation, growth and development of human societies.

Sustainable development that seeks to provide the need of the present generation without compromising that of the future generations should, be an integral component of the aspirations of societies at the community level. Chiefs, Queen mothers, though actively working towards community development, can be made more effective if given the necessary legal backing as well as state support.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Achieving sustainable development should see political leadership adopting an all inclusive governance system that integrates all including and not limited to traditional leadership and societies, civil societies and development partners. Government should strengthen traditional leadership through the regional and national houses of chiefs, to ensure the promotion of peace and settlement of chieftaincy disputes. The judiciary can also be tasked to deal effectively and quickly with chieftaincy disputes, in order to safeguard the chieftaincy institution. This would facilitate the existence and effectiveness of the institution. The Asantehene has instituted a policy that ensures that, most chieftaincy disputes in the Ashanti kingdom are settled out of court. The current Asantehene has also requested and personally requested and ensured the withdrawal out of court of such disputes that relate to his kingdom and his sub-chiefs. This is a clear manifestation of the quest to ensure the effective participation and function of his chiefs to promote effective governance and development.

Further, development should take into account recommendations and demands of local authorities. The inputs of traditional societies should be sought before development projects are institutionalized, as this would ensure a fuller corporation of the communities. This obviously would lead to development by, for and with the people. Effective growth and development should also seek to include the empowerment of organizations that work at the local level. Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs), Civic groups and Community Based Organizations (CBOs) should be given adequate support to ensure their effective participation in community development. As these groups are supported, they can effectively collaborate financially with traditional leadership to execute community project that include the conservation and protection of the environment. Governments should

create the environment for unity and should not align themselves with particular chieftain or people in the societies, which leads to suspicion and division. This would ensure that successive governments continue to work effectively with all communities.

Conclusion

Through the 50 years of Ghana's independence, the nation has transcended through a mirage of leadership ideologies both at local and national levels. This has passed through stages of colonial leadership that exploited traditional leadership to the present, where the District Assembly concept has co- habited traditional leadership and state governance. In all such developments, the benefactors or losers have been the societies and the environment. Given the evolution of both traditional and state governance available to the societies, new strategies are needed to extend sustainable development to all societies. State support and indigenous knowledge is recognized as a basic right that is vital to the society.

Yet, governments have not been able to promote effective bottom-to-up governance, which integrates the contributions of traditional leadership. With a high level of forest resource depletion, pollution of water bodies and low level of consciousness to environmental issues, it is relevant that chiefs, Queen mothers and local opinion leaders are recognized and integrated into state governance. This obviously would lead to appropriate modes of conserving and preserving the environment, hence improved wellbeing. It must be noted that, it is absolutely impossible to promote sustainable development of human societies without ensuring a partnership that seeks to draw traditional leadership into state governance, hence sustainable development.

The study also revealed that, Ghana has laudable policies towards dealing with environmental conservation and preservation. Such policies deal with issues including forest stock depletion, pollution and best practices. Such policies though effectively coordinated, has left much to be desired. The Ghana Standards Board (GSB), Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Chamber of Mines have been active in the front to comprehensive and effective environmental protection and consciousness. However, their functions and policies are not effectively coordinated, due to the little involvement of traditional leadership and indigenous knowledge.

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