

WEST GONJA DISTRICT HUMAN DEVELOPMENT REPORT 2007

Vulnerability and the Attainment of the MDGs at the Local Level



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Prepared by
Institute of Statistical, Social and Economic Research (ISSER)



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Forward

His Excellency, the President of the Republic of Ghana, in his sessional address to parliament in 2007, spelt out Government's development agenda for accelerated economic growth. The President's vision is to transform Ghana into a middle income country with GDP of at least 1,000 US dollars by 2015. The main pillars for achieving this growth are human resource development, private sector development and good governance. These are critical for attainment of good indicators for Human Development in the country.

Human Development is central to Government's development agenda. The traditional conceptualisation of well-being in Ghana does not focus only on the income of a person, but also on what a person is capable of doing, as well as, on the physical appearance of the person. The concept of human development may be considered as being well-suited to the average Ghanaian's concept of welfare and standard of living. While improving human health is intrinsically desirable, it is broadly recognised that health is a necessary prerequisite for socio-economic development since it improves human capital, productivity and wealth.

Ghana has produced National Human Development Reports in almost every year since 1997 which more often than not are national aggregation of the human development situation of the country. Useful as these indicators and figures may be, they do not present adequate and relevant micro information for district and local planning and decision making processes. Regional and district level indicators of human development are therefore needed to provide critical information for making decisions on how resources are to be judiciously allocated.

District Human Development reports can be useful to assist district administrations in

tracking progress and feedbacks in their development efforts. In 2004, the first set of district human development report were prepared for three district, Atwima, Builsa and Tema Municipality with the support of UNDP.

The theme of this second set of district human development reports, "Vulnerability and the Attainment of Millennium Development Goal (MDGs) at the Local Levels", which is also supported by UNDP is very appropriate in view of the fact that, empowering the vulnerable and the excluded especially women to contribute to and share in the benefits of growth of the economy ensure sustained poverty reduction. Vulnerability of communities, households and the individuals to negative shocks can impact adversely on the attainment of the MDGs and improvement in human development.

I strongly believed that these district human development reports for the districts will critically unveil the interplay of vulnerability that communities, households or individual faces in order to prevent the occurrences of the negative events or to mitigate or to cope with the impact of the shocks.

I wish to acknowledge the contribution and commitment of all stakeholders in the development of these reports and call on all to acquaint themselves of the content and to realign their support for the implementation of the recommendations of the reports. Through such collective support, we shall achieve the objectives of the GPRS II and the MDGs.



HON. KWADWO ADJEI DARKO (MP)
MINISTER, LOCAL GOVERNMENT,
RURAL DEVELOPMENT & ENVIRONMENT

Preface

Since 1997 UNDP Ghana has been working with government to prepare and disseminate national human development reports. The prime objective of the reports is to offer guidance on policies and priorities required at different levels by different actors to keep development actions focused, coordinated and efficacious by presenting systematic account and assessment of social and economic developments in the country from the sustainable Human Development perspective.

In recent times, UNDP Ghana has taken the Human Development Report to the district level to capture more development issues from the grassroots to provide a more in-depth diagnostic analysis on key human development issues; raise awareness about the critical development challenges; inform planning and resource allocation; and strengthen the link between national and district development planning frameworks. To this end, three district human development reports were prepared in 2004 - on the pilot districts of Tema, Atwima and Builsa.

These current sets of the District HDRs cover another three (3) districts of Ahanta West, Offinso, and West Gonja in Western, Ashanti and Northern Regions respectively on the theme "Vulnerability and the Attainment of the MDGs at the Local Level". This year's theme is appropriate as it lends credence to the various shocks and risks communities and individuals are exposed to, and its subsequent contribution to the derailment of their efforts to live a meaningful and productive life. It is therefore hope that the reports would lend support to the district medium-term development plan, to further inform the on-going national development plan preparation, and to forge a closer link between these two documents and the GPRS II.

It is heart soothing to know that progress has been made in achieving most of the MDG indicators in health and education in the three districts. It is hope that efforts would be made to sustain the improvement made so far. Improvement in health and education infrastructure, fighting malaria and HIV/AIDS and reducing any form of vulnerability at all levels in the districts are worth undertaking. Increasing the income base of the districts by setting up more economic ventures would go a long way to mobilize revenue for the MDG activities in the districts. The MDGs can and should be achieved at the local levels for national attainment of the MDGs to be a reality. To that effect, all hands must be on deck for the betterment of humankind.

It is our fervent hope and effort that the report is extended to cover more districts, at least ten (10) at a time. With this, more development issues at the district levels would be brought to the fore for more appropriate actions to be taken.

I encourage all national development orientated entities (civil society, development partners, and the government at large) to continue to share their suggestions to the approach to this report as we continue in our efforts to fill the gaps in the design of programs and projects towards the improvement of lives at the district and community level.



DAOUDA TOURE
UNDP RESIDENT REPRESENTATIVE

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The first Human Development Report for West Gonja District has been completed successfully due to the efforts and involvement of various government and non-government organisations. The UNDP Office in Accra and the West Gonja District Assembly provided useful assistance in coordinating the preparation of the report.

The overall project was guided by Professor Ernest Aryeetey, Director of the Institute for Social, Statistical and Economic Research (ISSER), University of Ghana, and coordinated by Ms. Abena D. Oduro of the Department of Economics, University of Ghana. Dr. Isaac Osei-Akoto of ISSER was responsible for the preparation of this report. He was assisted by Mr. Rufai Kilu Haruna of the Department of Sociology, University of Ghana, and Mr. William Quarmin of ISSER. The other team members of the District Human Development Reports (DHDRs) 2007 research group, Mr. William Baah-Boateng and Ms. Abena Oduro, drafted sections of the West Gonja report when the main author was bereaved.

The fieldwork received enormous contribution from the leadership of the West Gonja District Assembly, which assumed ownership of the report without hesitation. In particular, the District Chief Executive, Mrs. Janet Jambia Alhassan, the District Coordinating Director, Mr. Kofi Kussachin, and the 2006/2007 National Service personnel attached to the District Assembly worked in diverse ways to make the

Preparation of the report, especially the primary data-gathering component, relatively easy. Our gratitude also goes to Messrs W. A. Tarezina and Haruna Mustapha from the Ghana Statistical Service, who co-supervised the household survey.

The ICT and Geography staff of the Ghana Statistical Service provided noteworthy assistance in extracting information from various datasets which enabled the report to be organised in a manner that is particularly meaningful for district-level analysis. Mr. Nii K. Bentsi-Enchill served as technical editor in the production of the report and his contribution is highly appreciated.

The report was finalised with active participation and in consultation with members of the Economic Policy Unit of the UNDP namely Prof. Amoah Baah-Nuakoh, Messrs. Paul Derigubaa, Kordzo Sedegah, Emmanuel Otoo and Nicholas Amponsah, Ms. Simran Singh, and Ms. Mary Ankrah, particularly the Focal Point for Human Development Reports and Coordinator of the District Human Development Reports, Mr. Kordzo Sedegah. The personal attention given to the entire process by the Resident Representative, Mr. Daouda Toure, is very much appreciated.

The report has also benefited from comments and suggestions made during the stakeholder workshop held in the district after the completion of the draft report.

DHDR 2007 Research Team

Ms. Abena D. Oduro	-	Coordinator and Researcher Responsible for Offinso District Report
Dr. Isaac Osei-Akoto	-	Researcher Responsible for West Gonja District Report
Mr. William Baah-Boateng	-	Researcher Responsible for Ahanta West District Report

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Ghana has produced national human development reports almost every year since 1997. A quantitative measure of human development based on UNDP's measure of well-being focuses on three dimensions identified as critical to enlarging people's choices. These are longevity, based on life expectancy at birth; knowledge, which is a composite of adult literacy and enrolment rates at various educational levels; and standard of living, measured by income per capita in purchasing power parity dollars. Due to the lack of adequate district-level data, however, it has not been possible to move the unit of analysis beyond that of the region in many instances. However, regional and district-level indicators of human development are needed to provide information critical for making decisions on how resources are to be allocated at the local level.

District Human Development Reports (DHDRs) can be useful tools to assist district administrations in tracking progress or otherwise in their development efforts, even if timely quantitative measures cannot be produced at the district level. The first set of DHDRs have shown that useful inferences can be made and planning at local level could be made a little easier if the components and factors driving the indicators of the components are thoroughly analysed.

The first set of DHDRs was prepared in 2004 for three districts, the then Atwima District, Builsa District and Tema Municipality. The West Gonja District Human Development Report is one of three similar reports prepared for the second set of DHDRs in three different ecological zones of Ghana. The other districts covered in this set are Ahanta West District in the coastal ecological zone and Offinso District in the forest zone. These reports serve as pilot

reports initiated by UNDP to assess human development at district level. The information and analysis contained in them will assist in the design and targeting of interventions aimed at improving the human development of the population. It is hoped that the reports will therefore be useful in examining important development issues at the district level within a comparative framework.

As with the first set of DHDRs, the theme for this set is vulnerability. This year's theme is also linked to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The overall objective of Ghana's development agenda is to attain middle-income status by 2015. In addition, a social protection policy is being developed that is aimed at "empowering the vulnerable and excluded, especially women, to contribute to and share in the benefits of growth of the economy, thus ensuring sustained poverty reduction." The 2003-2005 Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRS I) and the 2006-2009 Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRS II) emphasise vulnerability as a critical issue. GPRS I included it as one of the five thematic areas and GPRS II puts it into the mainstream of each of the thematic areas. Vulnerability analysis is thus crucial for understanding poverty and, by extension, human development. We hope that such analysis will lead to the development of strategies which will help the country attain the MDGs and GPRS targets.

Data and Methods

The participatory approach in information gathering was widely used for the preparation of the report. Both qualitative and quantitative methods were used to gather data from three different sources. Information was obtained from official documents, secondary data from various censuses conducted in Ghana and the district-based Core Welfare Indicators

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Questionnaire (CWIQ) survey that was conducted in 2003. In addition, ISSER also conducted a socio-economic household survey in 2007. In all, 240 households from 19 localities out of the total of 183 localities in the district were sampled for the preparation of this report. Various consultations were also made to ensure that the interests of stakeholders were addressed and technical omissions minimised.

This report does not calculate a human development index for the district. This is because it was not possible in the time frame within which the report was prepared to obtain reasonable data on district-level income. However, a human poverty index for Ghana was constructed. The construct of this index differed slightly from the construct of the UNDP HPI-1 index by substituting the probability of death before age 40 years with the regional under-5 mortality rate. This substitution was done because of the difficulty in obtaining data for probability of dying before age 40 years at district level.

The report is organised in seven chapters. The chapter after the introduction presents a profile of the district. The next three chapters contain an assessment of trends in employment, poverty, education and literacy, health, water and environmental sanitation. Vulnerability is the subject of the sixth chapter. Challenges and policy recommendations are contained in the last chapter.

Economic Activity and Poverty

West Gonja District is predominantly rural and its economy is built on the natural resource base. The district has an agriculture-based economy, with agriculture, including fishing, employing close to 60 percent of the economically active population. The report reveals signs of gradual structural change. Agriculture's importance in terms of employment has declined considerably from employing about

80 percent of the economically active population in 2000 to the current 60 percent. This decline appears to have been absorbed by industry (particularly manufacturing) and the services sector. In particular, the proportion engaged in the services sector, excluding wholesale and retail trading, has almost tripled over the period 2000 to 2007.

The report highlights a number of problems that inhibit growth in the agricultural sector. They include technology-related methods of farming and marketing of produce, which need urgent policy attention to ensure progress in achieving the poverty reduction targets of the MDGs in the district. As in many other areas in Ghana, agriculture continues to be rain-fed, with limited irrigation. The cropping pattern follows the land fertility pattern and farmers use either inorganic and organic manure or fertiliser. Many farmers use simple tools such as hoes, cutlasses and animal traction. Tractor services are limited; the number of tractors is estimated to be 73 and the tractor-farmer ratio is 1:172.

Even though agriculture employs the majority of the workforce in West Gonja District, there is a clear reduction in the proportion of both women and men employed in agriculture. Women continue to dominate the wholesale, retail and manufacturing sectors. The proportion of women employed in these sectors has more than doubled between 2000 and 2007. However, the report shows that while the proportion of men employed in the formal sector increased since 2000, there was a considerable decline in the proportion of women employed in the formal sector. This is clearly far from expected and does not signify progress towards the third MDG goal promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women which has as one of its indicators the share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector.

On employment, it is reported that the proportion of the labour force which is unemployed in West Gonja District is about 14.5 percent. This represents an increase from 8.5 percent in 2000. A major category of adult unemployment was rural adult females, with an increase of more than 10 percentage points above the rate observed in 2000 to a level of about 19 percent in 2007. Unemployment among the youth was worse. The eighth MDG advocates strategies for decent and productive work for the youth. The analysis shows that no progress has been made towards achieving this goal in the district. The proportion of unemployed youth increased from 5.2 percent in 2000 to 27.4 percent in 2007. While rural male unemployment appears to have been eradicated in the district, unemployment among rural and urban women as well as urban men has worsened.

The report also shows that more people in rural areas (48%) are underemployed compared to people in urban areas (42%). The underemployment rate was highest among workers in agriculture and related sectors (52%) and was mainly due to the fact that the sector is highly dependent on the erratic nature of rainfall in the district.

The results indicate that 4.7 percent of children between 7-14 years were in the labour market in the district. This is very low compared to child labour figures recorded in 2000 in the district and it signals the positive effects of recent interventions in the education sector that seek to keep children of school-going age in school. The situation for girls in rural areas shows a slightly higher number at work in 2007 than in 2000.

With regard to the first MDG which seeks to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger, the extent to which poverty in West Gonja is rising or declining cannot unfortunately be determined with existing data. The only

district-level disaggregated data provided by the National Development Planning Commission (NDPC) and the Ghana Statistical Service (GSS) show that the urban and rural areas of West Gonja District were ranked as 27th and 12th poorest respectively among Ghana's 110 districts in 2000. Their respective head count poverty rates were 43 percent and 94 percent; the overall head count poverty for the district was estimated to be 89 percent, and ranked as the 11th poorest district among the then 110 districts of Ghana.

The other approach to indirectly determine the level of poverty is through estimation of the human poverty index. Calculation of this index shows that the situation for the district in 2003 was also significantly different from the national average. An assessment of the components of the index reveals that the district performs worse than the national average on almost all the components of the human poverty index except access to health in urban areas and the proportion of underweight girls in the district. The incidence of underweight children was lower among girls, particularly in urban households. About 32 percent of boys in rural households were underweight compared to 16 percent of girls.

Education and Literacy

Gross primary and junior secondary enrolment rates have improved in West Gonja since 2000. Improvements were registered for both boys and girls. Senior secondary enrolment rates declined for boys but increased for girls over the period. Adult literacy rates in the district are low. However, the relatively high literacy rate among people aged 15 to 24 years indicates that if the increase in enrolment rates is maintained and the quality of education is at the required standard, literacy rates in the district will improve.

Progress towards attaining the education-specific MDGs is mixed. The district has made substantial progress towards universal primary education since 2000. If the rate of increase in school enrolments is maintained, the MDG target of universal primary education by 2015 can be realised. A threat to the attainment of universal primary education in the district is late entry into primary school. This is a threat because if children start school late, they are likely not to complete primary education. This is a particular risk for girls who, when they reach puberty, may be under great pressure to be married off.

The third MDG sets 2005 as the target date for the attainment of gender parity in primary and secondary education. This has not been achieved. Gender parity indices at primary and junior secondary levels declined in 2007 compared to 2000 despite the rise in enrolment rates for both boys and girls. The gender parity index of over unity for senior secondary school does not imply an improvement in gender empowerment because of the very low enrolment rates.

The incidence of irregular school attendance because of illness introduces the risk of children not completing school. The environment in the district may be described as containing health hazards because of the unsafe methods of waste disposal and low incidence of safe sanitation facilities, particularly among rural households. It is, therefore, not surprising that ill-health is the most frequently given reason why children miss some days of school. Thus, failure to make progress on other MDGs can create conditions that compromise the attainment of the MDGs on education.

The district has made great strides in improving enrolment at the lower levels of education and in youth literacy. The challenge the district faces is how to ensure that children start primary school at the age of 6 and complete at least nine years of quality basic education.

Health, Water and Sanitation

The district has nine health institutions made up of one hospital located at Canteen, Damongo, one clinic, six health centres and one CHIPS zone. However, estimates of access to health facilities in the district show that they are not adequate and are also unevenly distributed. One of the important reasons for low physical access is due to the low population density of the district. Whereas about 60 percent of urban households need less than half an hour to reach a clinic or hospital, over 80 percent of rural households have to spend one hour or more to get to a modern health care facility. Another major constraint is the inadequate number of skilled health personnel in the district.

The incidence of child and infant mortality is a critical determinant of life expectancy at birth. However, the mortality situation in the district does not show any sign of improvement. The total number of deaths rose consistently from 64 in 2004 to 89 in 2005 and 98 in 2006. The number of infant deaths almost doubled between 2004 and 2006, after a significant drop in 2005. The institutional estimate for infant mortality is about 122 per 1,000 live births, much higher than both the regional and national ratios of 71/1,000 and 83/1,000 respectively. The number of under-5 deaths also more than doubled over the same period. More positively, the report shows that the under-5 malaria case fatality rate saw consistent decline from 2004 to 2006 and institutional coverage for immunisation against the childhood killer diseases is very impressive despite obvious infrastructural difficulties in the district.

The analysis using both morbidity and mortality statistics suggests that the district has not made significant progress in the last five years in halting and/or reducing the incidence of malaria. This raises concerns about the level of environmental sanitation in the district and the effectiveness of methods

adopted in preventing malaria infection.

While the district was making progress in reducing the incidence of guinea worm infestation and tuberculosis, the HIV/AIDS situation in the district seems to be worsening. The number of HIV/AIDS cases diagnosed dropped marginally from 41 in 2004 to 39 in 2005 and rose to 46 in 2006. The disease is more prevalent among the youth aged 20-24 in that over half the cases reported were among this age group. These statistics send a worrying signal about whether the district can realise the MDG of halting and reversing the HIV/AIDS infection rate.

The district saw a remarkable improvement in access to safe drinking water between 2000 and 2007, particularly in rural areas where access to safe drinking water improved from about 25 percent to over 90 percent. The only exception was one of the towns visited, Larabanga. The construction of boreholes in a number of communities has contributed remarkably to the improvement in access to safe drinking water and this may have largely accounted for the reduction in the reported cases of guinea worm in the district.

Even though access to safe sanitation in 2007 was better than in 2000, overall access is very low, especially among the rural population. This situation may compel households to resort to unorthodox means of human waste disposal, such as defecating in the bush, without regard to its adverse environmental and health consequences. Over 95 percent of rural households were found to be without access to a safe toilet facility in 2007. The situation was relatively better in semi-urban and urban areas where about 25 percent and 40 percent of households have access to a safe toilet facility.

The unsafe disposal of liquid and solid waste in the district is environmentally unfriendly.

This favours the breeding of mosquitoes and other dangerous insects that cause malaria and other parasitic diseases. In all, access to basic sanitation in many communities needs to improve so as to minimise the risk of outbreak of diseases.

The National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS) aims to increase access to quality health care services by reducing the cost of access, particularly for the poor and deprived. Registration with the NHIS in the district is well above the national rate mainly because the district hosted one of the pilot schemes in Ghana and has been operating since 1995. Even though over 50 percent of the population is not registered or covered, the scheme has seen significant improvement in uptake by the citizenry. About 25 percent of the population is registered and 23 percent is covered by the implicit exemption built into the NHIS. The selection of high-risk individuals by households into the scheme, even among the wealthiest remains a major problem. There is also the need to look at the sustainability of the scheme because of the low number of times subscribers renew their membership. The proposal to redirect NHIS subsidies to school children appears laudable and should be carefully studied to address the increasing concerns over sustainability.

Vulnerability

The reports brings to fore the understanding that households currently seen as non-poor might face negative shocks in the future that lower their level of well-being. This is a very broad conceptualisation of vulnerability (indeed broader than the District Assembly's concept) because it is a multi-dimensional phenomenon. The definition looks at several aspects of livelihood issues such as illness, unemployment, changes in family structure or negative events such as sexual abuse.

The discussion of vulnerability therefore seeks to understand the capacity or otherwise of households in the district to cope with shocks. The analysis considers the nature of shocks in the district, the frequency of shocks and the groups vulnerable to these shocks. It also describes coping mechanisms of households to counteract these shocks.

The findings are that at least 50 percent of households in the district experienced one or more shocks over the 12 months which preceded the survey. The highest occurring number of shocks was one (about 20 percent of households), while 15 percent of female-headed households and 20 percent of male-headed households experienced two shocks, and 10 percent of female-headed households and 12 percent of male-headed households experienced three shocks in the year.

The report also observes that vulnerability is highest in semi-urban and rural communities. The differences may arise from the fact that urban households have a more diversified occupational base while households in rural areas are concentrated in agriculture, which records the largest number of shocks for households due to the seasonality of the occupation.

Shocks were classified in different ways but the majority of households reported that the shocks they faced were human related (47%) compared to the 23 percent of households that reported shocks resulting from natural events. Asset loss is an important human-related shock in West Gonja District that affects more than a third (35%) of households. This event is largely due to the loss of livestock either through death or through theft. Stakeholders' discussions pointed to difficulties the communities face with regard to the activities of Fulani herdsmen in particular. The communities complained of environmental destruction, destruction of farms and organised stealing of livestock,

which have to be tackled to avoid deadly encounters with the Fulani herdsmen and their collaborators.

Policy-induced shocks resulting from price changes (such as utility price increases) also affected households in several ways. Logically, it would appear that rising food prices would increase the incomes of food farmers. However, affected households indicated during interviews that higher food prices reduced their real incomes. Part of the explanation lies in the tendency of farmers to sell their produce to meet urgent social obligations immediately after harvest when prices are low. They then buy back the produce during the lean season when prices are highest. It is reported that about 50 percent of farmers' produce may be sold off to meet social obligations. Thus, high food prices tend to adversely affect farmers' real incomes, their ability to cope with food shortages during the lean season, and the extent of assets loss as they sell livestock and other assets to purchase food.

There are several mechanisms to cope with shocks in the district but the survey shows that when a disaster strikes, households' main strategy is to rely on self-help strategies or self-insurance and the least common strategy is to receive help from the government or other forms of institutional assistance.

Challenges and Recommendations

There are several challenges that threaten progress towards the achievement of the MDGs in the West Gonja District. The major challenge is how to significantly reduce mass poverty in excess of 80 percent to levels consistent with the MDG on poverty. The analysis has shown that mass poverty is the result largely of low agricultural productivity and production, and the lack of other income-earning opportunities. Reducing poverty, therefore, must involve policies and programmes to increase

agricultural productivity and production among small-scale farmers while at the same time creating opportunities for non-farm income-generating activities and employment. Specific actions should include reversing the decline of soil fertility and erosion. Inappropriate farming methods arising out of inadequate and ineffective use of extension services also need to be addressed.

Increasing utilisation rates and access to economic and social facilities is one of the fundamental challenges in the district. Access and utilisation involve the physical availability and distribution of facilities, and education of the population to ensure effective use of available opportunities. Health care delivery in the district is inadequate. There is a need for expansion of health infrastructure and provision of more skilled personnel. The bulk of the population have no access to sanitary toilet facilities and over 60 percent of the population use uncontrolled dumping for the disposal of both solid waste and household sewage. The report notes that net enrolment rates are extremely low, particularly at secondary school level. The gap between these rates and the MDGs for education is also wide, and requires special efforts to bridge it.

The deplorable road network in the district is perhaps the most problematic situation the residents face. This is especially the case during the rainy season when very few roads are motorable, thereby seriously reducing access to and within the district. Reasons for this are the very sparse distribution of the population coupled with the long delays in constructing two important bridges that would link the otherwise cut-off north-eastern parts of the district. With the exception of the district capital, the district does not have a single kilometre of tarred road and most of the roads become almost completely unmotorable at the peak of the rainy season.

What appears to be the most difficult challenge confronting the district is creating non-farm employment opportunities and income-generating activities, particularly for the youth. These activities are required in order to reduce the extreme vulnerability of the population to weather-related shocks. However, the labour force is largely unskilled, the investment environment is unattractive, and there are limited avenues to harness the natural resource endowment. The result is the dominance of petty trading and increasing migration of the youth to big towns outside the district. Creating opportunities for the growth of small-scale industries such as smock weaving, processing of farm produce and honey production is commendable, but unless they are combined with marketing arrangements outside the district, they will not be sustainable. Infrastructure development, especially good roads within the district, is crucial in this regard.

The district stands to benefit a lot from its tourism potential if it is properly harnessed. However, the growing reliance of families on charcoal production, organised theft of livestock and the apparent increase in conflict between villages and officials of the Forestry Department over the use of forest products pose a dangerous threat to the rich natural resource endowment of the district. Indeed, these pose a serious challenge to the livelihood of the people on one hand, and on the other hand, on the sustainability of biodiversity. This challenge needs immediate and pragmatic policy attention.

To avoid unplanned destruction of natural resources in the district, there is the need to establish woodlot plantations for firewood and charcoal, implement controls to minimise organised stealing of livestock and encourage community-based eco-tourism for the communities to benefit directly from tourism.

The report echoes the view that there is considerable mileage in the use of the District Assemblies Common Fund (DACF) to meet development requirements if there is efficiency in its use and central government authorities show some flexibility. Also, ingenious ways of mobilising local revenue need to be found if the district is to make faster progress towards its stated goals.

With regard to participation, citizens are not well integrated into the planning process. The dormant Area Councils should be revived so that through them, the citizenry can be involved, particularly in the monitoring of expenditure allocations and the implementation of projects at local level.

In summary, the report reiterates the need to protect incomes and expenditures from

falling to unacceptable levels. Reducing poverty and vulnerability is high on the national policy agenda and is also clearly spelled out in the district's medium-term plan for the period 2006-2009. However, in terms of addressing vulnerability, most of the development programmes may be described as safety ropes rather than safety nets. In addition to programmes, which are mainly designed for the physically challenged and women, it is also necessary to re-assess the strategy mix to address other vulnerable groups by providing safety nets to protect incomes and expenditures from falling. In particular, the rural areas of the district need counter-cyclical social risk management policies, which strengthen current disaster management programmes and expand the role of social assistance.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Introduction

The traditional conceptualisation of well-being in Ghana does not focus only on the income of a person, but on what a person is capable of doing and also on the physical appearance of the person. Indeed an increase in body weight is looked on with favour and seen as an indication of improvement in one's situation in life. The concept of human development, therefore, may be considered as being well-suited to the average Ghanaian's concept of welfare and standard of living. This is because UNDP's concept of human development is intended to extend the measure of the standard of living or well-being beyond income to incorporate other important non-income dimensions of living or being. Although income is important in determining a person's access to food, clothing and the other basics of life, the correlation between well-being and the income level of a person is not perfect. This is because in assessing their circumstances in life, poor people do not focus only on the purchasing power of their incomes. According to Sen, "income may be the most prominent means for a good life without deprivation, but it is not the only influence on the lives we can lead. If our paramount interest is in the lives that people can lead (the freedom they have to lead minimally decent lives) then it cannot but be a mistake to concentrate exclusively only on one or the other of the means to such freedom".¹ Building on Sen's analysis of poverty and

capability, UNDP defines human development as a process of enlarging people's choices. The most critical of these choices are: the option to lead a long and healthy life, to be knowledgeable and to enjoy a decent standard of living.

UNDP has since 1990 provided a quantitative measure of human development. The measure focuses on the three dimensions identified as critical to enlarging people's choices. Longevity is measured by life expectancy at birth. Knowledge is a composite of adult literacy and gross primary, secondary and tertiary enrolment rates. The standard of living is measured by income per capita in purchasing power parity dollars. The human development index (HDI) is a composite of these three variables (Box 1.1). Ghana's human development index is estimated to have risen from 0.515 in 1990 to 0.537 in 1995. It rose to 0.560 and 0.568 in 2000 and 2002 respectively. It is estimated to have declined to 0.532 in 2004, which gives Ghana a rank of 136th out of 177 countries with data (UNDP, 2006)².

The national aggregate figures mask critical information on regional and district-level disparities. It does not provide information on progress made, or the lack of it, by different groups in the country. The gender-related development index (GDI), also introduced by UNDP, is an attempt to incorporate the gender aspects of the three dimensions of human development³.

¹ Sen, A. (2000) Social Exclusion: Concept, Application and Scrutiny, Social Development Papers No. 1, Asian Development Bank, Manila, p.3.

² UNDP Human Development Report, 2006, New York

³ This is a composite index that adjusts the average achievement of each country in life expectancy, educational attainment and income to take into account the disparity in achievement between women and men.

Ghana's GDI was 0.528 in 2004 and was 99.2 percent of its HDI value. Out of the 136 countries with both HDI and GDI values, 70 countries had a better ratio than Ghana's in that year (UNDP, 2006).

Ghana has produced national human development reports almost every year since 1997. Regional and district-level indicators of human development are needed to provide information critical for making decisions on how resources are to be allocated. District human development reports can be a useful tool to assist district administrations in tracking progress or otherwise in their development efforts. It was only in 2004 that the first set of District Human Development Reports (DHDRs) was prepared for three districts, the then Atwima District, Builsa District and Tema Municipality. This report is one of three

similar reports prepared for the second set of pilot DHDRs in three different ecological zones of Ghana. The other districts covered in this set are Ahanta West District in the coastal ecological zone and Offinso District in the forest zone.

The theme for this second set of District Human Development Reports is vulnerability and the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Vulnerability was one of the five themes of the 2003-2005 Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRS I). The overall goal of Ghana's development agenda is to attain middle-income country status by 2015. In addition, a social protection policy is being developed that is aimed at "empowering the vulnerable and excluded, especially women to contribute to and share in the benefits of

Box 1.1. Calculating the Human Development Index

Calculating the Human Development Index

The Human Development Index (HDI) is a summary measure of human development. It measures the average achievements in a country in three basic dimensions of human development:

- A long and health life, as measured by life expectancy at birth.
- Knowledge as measured by the adult literacy rate (two-thirds weight) and the combined primary, secondary and tertiary gross enrolment ratio (one-third weight).
- A decent standard of living, as measured by GDP per capita (PPP US\$).

Before the HDI is calculated, an index needs to be created for each of the dimensions. To calculate these dimension indices, minimum and maximum values (goalposts) are chosen for each underlying indicator.

Performance in each dimension is expressed as a value between 0 and 1 applying the following general formula:

$$\text{Dimension} = \frac{\text{actualvalue} - \text{minimumvalue}}{\text{maximumvalue} - \text{minimumvalue}}$$

The HDI is calculated as a simple average of the dimension indices.

Goal Posts for calculating the HDI

Indicator	Maximum Value	Minimum Value
Life Expectancy at Birth	85	25
Adult Literacy Rate (%)	100	0
Combined Gross Enrolment Ratio (%)	100	0
Gross Domestic Product per capita (PPP US\$)	40,000	100

Source: UNDP Human Development Report, 2004. New York.

growth of the economy, thus ensuring sustained poverty reduction.”⁴ In contrast to GPRS I that included vulnerability as one of the five thematic areas, the Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRS II) puts vulnerability into the mainstream of each of the thematic areas.⁵

The adoption of the Millennium Declaration by Heads of State in September 2000 formally introduced the MDGs onto the development agenda. The MDGs were the result of the thinking that began in the mid-1990s on strategies to improve the effectiveness of aid. The MDGs consist of 8 goals, 18 targets and 48 indicators (Box 1.2 and Appendix Box 1.1). The MDGs have become an integral part of Ghana's development strategy. GPRS II “...seeks to operationalise various international agreements which are relevant to the poverty reduction objectives and of which Ghana is signatory. Principal among these is the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)...”⁶ A synergy has been created between the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries initiative and the MDGs by the transformation of the latter “into the mandatory framework of domestic economic policy in return for the grant of debt relief.”⁷ As a result of this, in both GPRS II and district development plans, there is a matrix indicating the link between identified priorities and the MDGs.

There is some overlap between the measures of human development, human poverty and the gender development indices on the one hand and the MDGs on the other. However, the MDGs do not include dimensions such as human security and participation. The

MDGs place great emphasis on targets debatable though they may be while the human development concept, although concerned with improving well-being, does not have any explicitly stated goals or targets.

The vulnerability of communities, households and individuals to negative shocks can have a negative impact on progress towards the MDGs and improvements in human development. Vulnerability is the interplay of shocks that the community, household or individual faces, the assets of the community, household or individual and the ability to manage assets in order to prevent the occurrence of negative events or to mitigate or cope with the impact of shocks. The desire of poor households to have security of income and to protect consumption levels from declining below the critical minimum influences their production and investment decisions. Being risk averse and lacking the means to manage risk, for example, access to credit, poor households will choose activities that have low but certain returns.

Thus, vulnerability elicits from poor households actions that can keep them at low income levels and put the local and macro-economy on a lower growth trajectory than otherwise would be the case if poor households had more income, political and social security. The death of a breadwinner can result in a child being withdrawn from school, thus increasing the probability that the child will not complete school. Droughts or floods that destroy harvests can force households to reduce consumption to levels that compromise the

⁴ Republic of Ghana (2005) Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRS II) (2006-2009. Vol. I: Policy Framework. National Development Planning Commission, Accra, p. 5

⁵ The three thematic areas of GPRS II are private sector-led competitiveness, human resource development and good governance

⁶ Republic of Ghana (2005) Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRS II) (2006-2009. Vol. I: Policy Framework, National Development Planning Commission, Accra, p. 5

⁷ Republic of Ghana (2005) Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRS II) (2006-2009. Vol. I: Policy Framework, National

growth and development of children, making them vulnerable to illness, and leaving them with poor learning abilities that undermine their interest in attending school. Vulnerability analysis is crucial for

understanding poverty and, by extension, human development and for the development of strategies to attain the MDGs and GPRS targets.

Box 1.2: Millennium Development Goals and Targets

Goal 1: Eradicate Extreme Poverty and Hunger

Target 1: Halve Between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people whose income is less than one dollar a day

Target 2: Halve between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people who suffer from hunger.

Goal 2: Achieve Universal Primary Education

Target 3: Ensure that by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling.

Goal 3: Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women

Target 4: Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and in all levels of education no later than 2015.

Goal 4: Reduce Child Mortality

Target 5: Reduce by two-thirds, between 1990 and 2015, the under-five mortality rate

Goal 5: Improve Maternal Health

Target 6: Reduce by three-quarters, between 1990 and 2015, the maternal mortality ratio

Goal 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases

Target 7: Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS

Target 8: Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the incidence of malaria and other major diseases.

Goal 7: Ensure Environmental Sustainability

Target 9: Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes and reverse the loss of environmental resources

Target 10: Halve, by 2015, the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation

Target 11: By 2020, to have achieved a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers

Goal 8: Develop a Global Partnership for Development

Target 12: Develop further an open, rule-based predictable, non-discriminatory trading and financial system

Target 13: Address the special needs of the least developed countries.

Target 14: Address the special needs of landlocked developing countries and small developing States

Target 15: Deal comprehensively with the debt problems of developing countries through national and international measures in order to make debt sustainable in the long term

Target 16: In cooperation with developing countries, develop and implement strategies for decent work and productive work for youth

Target 17: In cooperation with pharmaceutical companies, provide access to affordable essential drugs in developing countries.

Target 18: In cooperation with the private sector, make available the benefits of new technologies, especially information and communications

Data and Methodology

Both quantitative and qualitative methods were used to gather data from three different sources for the preparation of this report. Information was obtained from official documents, secondary data from various censuses conducted in Ghana, and data extracted from the district-based Core Welfare Indicators Questionnaire survey that was conducted in 2003 (CWIQ, 2003)⁸. ISSER also conducted a socio-economic survey in the chosen districts in March and April 2007 and consulted various stakeholders to ensure that their interests were addressed and technical omissions minimized.

Secondary data sources

Some aspects of the district's profile were obtained from documents prepared by the District Assembly for its programmes, as presented in the Medium-Term District Development Plans prepared for the implementation of the Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy at district level.

In addition, various departments of the District Assembly provided information on its activities over the last five years. This gave the team insights into the economic and social conditions in the district and the strategies that have been adopted and implemented to address human development issues.

An important source for additional secondary data was the census report for

2000. Data from the 2000 Population and Housing Census were extensively used to obtain district-level information on population dynamics, housing characteristics, employment and education.

Primary data collection

Interviews conducted in the district involved qualitative and quantitative techniques, principally to gather information on various dimensions of the MDGs and also for the assessment of the vulnerability component of the report. Two main questionnaires were used for this purpose: community (a check list of services and infrastructure available in addition to detailed discussion on development issues) and household questionnaires. The community questionnaire was completed during group discussions with traditional leaders of the communities, members of the District Assembly resident in a community and opinion leaders. The objective of the questionnaire was to obtain information about the socio-economic development of the communities visited, land tenure arrangements, trends in crime, and shocks that the communities have experienced, and community-level actions taken to deal with shocks.

The household questionnaire is separated into different modules answered by different members of the household and was also designed in such a way as to address issues concerning different targets of the MDGs measurable at district level. The questionnaire also covered information on

⁸ The CWIQ 2003 survey was conducted before West Gonja District was split into two and as such, estimates derived from it may not directly reflect the status of the localities as they were in 2003. Efforts by the team to sort out enumeration areas covered in the old district and extract information pertaining to the current boundary, as was done for the 2000 census, were not successful. Because of this lack of direct comparability, the analysis of household data in this West Gonja Report compares the information from the 2007 ISSER Household Survey only to information from localities in the current district boundary as captured from the census. However, where it becomes difficult to find comparable indicators in the census data, the old district data in CWIQ 2003 are used as a proxy for the new district.



A focus group discussion session at Kabampe, West Gonja District

the different types of shocks that households have been subjected to, the risk management strategies adopted by households and others, and the effect of the shocks on households.

Sampling techniques

For comparability with CWIQ 2003 data, a two-stage sampling procedure was employed with the objective of generating results that are representative of each of the three districts. The approach was multi-stage probability sampling, clustered, and stratified with probability proportional to the size of the district's population. Sampling was independently done for each district.

Well-defined enumeration areas (EAs) from the Ghana Statistical Service (GSS) database were randomly selected. The enumerations areas were properly described by the

cartography section of GSS and had well-defined boundaries, identified on maps, and were of relatively small sizes, with cluster of households. These clusters are demarcated along the lines of the proven process used by the GSS in its implementation of Ghana Living Standards Surveys (especially GLSS III, IV and V) and CWIQ I and II. The selected EAs or communities were listed fully to determine the total number of households and this served as a sampling frame from which an appropriate sample size was selected systematically for each stratum in the district. This was done to facilitate a manageable interviewer workload within each sample area and also reduce the effects of intra-class correlation within a sample area on the variance of the survey estimates.

An enumeration team (consisting of the researcher responsible for the district, a supervisor and a number of interviewers chosen and hired from the district) listed all

Preparing for the Implementation of the Study

The choice of the districts was determined by UNDP. Prior to the start of the study, a visit was made to the districts. The meeting essentially provided the officials of the district with background information on the study and a discussion of the needs of the research team. Present at the meeting were representatives of several of the decentralised ministries, departments and agencies (MDAs) in the district.

Letters were sent out to the District Chief Executive and copied to the heads of the MDAs informing them about the actual period for data collection. Attached to the letters were the data requirements that the team hoped the district administration could assist it with.

households in each of the chosen enumeration areas. This was important because some of the enumeration areas had changed in size in the seven years since the 2000 Population and Housing Census was done and the sampling approach at this stage did not consider their sizes before the selection. An equal number of households were selected in each enumeration area. The listing information was therefore needed to compute appropriate weights for proper estimation to be done at the analysis stage.

Stratification

The technique of stratification in the sample design was employed to enhance the precision and reliability of the estimates. The stratification of the frame for the survey was based on the size of the locality the enumeration area was chosen from, that is, whether the locality was urban, semi-urban

or rural. Sampling within each stratum was done independently of others and the approach of picking the number of enumeration areas in each stratum was proportional to the population size in each stratum. This was followed by systematic sample selection within each stratum. In all, a minimum of 200 households were chosen from 10 EAs.

In West Gonja District, 240 households were selected for this study from 10 EAs. In addition to the administration of the household survey, focal group discussions were conducted in five of the communities. The list of enumeration areas sampled for West Gonja District report is presented in Appendix Table 1.1. In all, 240 households from 19 localities out of the total of 183 localities in the district were sampled for the preparation of this report.

CHAPTER TWO

PROFILE OF THE DISTRICT

The profile of any given locality serves as an information bank with regard to the vulnerability of its population to natural as well as human-made risks and shocks, their management arrangements and adaptation challenges. This section gives a brief sketch of the physical conditions and social realities of West Gonja District in the Northern Region of Ghana.

Physical Features

West Gonja District is one of the 18 districts in the Northern Region of Ghana, with a total land area of 8,352 square kilometres. This represents about 12 percent of the total land mass of the region. The district lies between longitudes 1° 5" and 2° 58" West and latitudes 8° 32" and 10° 2" North. It shares boundaries in the south with Central Gonja District, Bole and Sawla- Tuna- Kalba Districts in the west, Wa East District in the north-west, North Mamprusi in the north, and Tolon Kumbungu District in the east.

West Gonja District has an undulating topography, with an altitude of between 150-200 metres above sea level. The only high land is the Damongo Escarpment, located north of the district capital. There are a few outcrops of weathered rocks around Daboya. The Mole River from the northern boundary joins the White Volta east of Damongo and this joins the Black Volta near Tuluwe in the Central Gonja District. The White Volta River also passes through the eastern boundary of the district.

The district is situated in an old geological area. The rocks are mainly of Voltaian formation with isolated Cambrian rocks, which contain valuable minerals such as gold, mudstones and sandstones in the Alluvial Damongo formations. The extreme western part of Damongo is composed of granitic material of low fertility. Rich alluvial sandy deposits occur around Damongo and the Kenikeni Forest Reserves. The soils around Mankarigu, Kotito and Lingbinsi are said to be fertile and suitable for cereals, legumes and root crops, and also for livestock production. Underground water potential is limited due to the Voltaian formation.

Forest and Game Reserves

The largest forest reserve in Ghana, the Mole Park is located in the district. It is about 30 km west of Damongo and has been judged to be one of the best managed game and wildlife parks both in Ghana and in Africa south of the Sahara. The park covers an estimated 5,500 hectares and is a major tourist attraction in the northern part of Ghana. The other forest reserve is the Kenikeni Forest Reserve. They are both rich in flora and fauna. There are other minor forest reserves Damongo Scarp, located north of Damongo; Nyangbong, located south east of Damongo; Bombi, situated after the Damongo Hospital towards Kotito No.1; and the Damongo Town Plantation, situated after the Agriculture Settlement, east of Damongo.

Vegetation and Climate

One of the targets of the seventh MDG is to reverse the loss of environmental resources but it appears that not much progress has been made in West Gonja District towards attaining this target. The vegetation of the district is Guinea Savannah. The vegetative cover is dictated by soil type and human activities, such as shifting cultivation and the slash-and-burn method of land preparation.

The introductory parts of the Medium-Term Development Plan clearly states that the original vegetation in major settlements such as Damongo, Busunu, Mankarigu and Daboya have been destroyed by human activities. As one drives through the length

and breadth of the district, one deliberately set to hunt for animals and also to help households prepare firewood for sale. Cutting trees for charcoal is also common in almost every settlement of the district.

The major tree species are sheanut, dawadawa, baobab, acacia, nim and a few ebony trees. The trees are scattered except in most valleys where isolated woodland or forest are found. Most trees are deciduous, shedding their leaves during the dry season in order to conserve water. Grass grows in tussocks and may reach 2.7 metres in height during the rainy season. This indicates that the area is suitable for crops such as millet, sorghum, maize and groundnuts.



Picture of secondary forest allegedly burnt to hunt animals and prepare trees for firewood

The district has a tropical savannah climate with the maximum temperature occurring in the dry season, between March/April and is lowest between December/January. The mean monthly temperature ranges between 27°C and 34.1°C. Temperatures in the dry season can reach a maximum of about 42°C. The dry season is characterized by the harmattan wind, which is dry, dusty and cold in the morning and very hot at noon. Evaporation is very high, causing soil moisture deficiency. Humidity is very low and many people get dry skin and cracked lips.

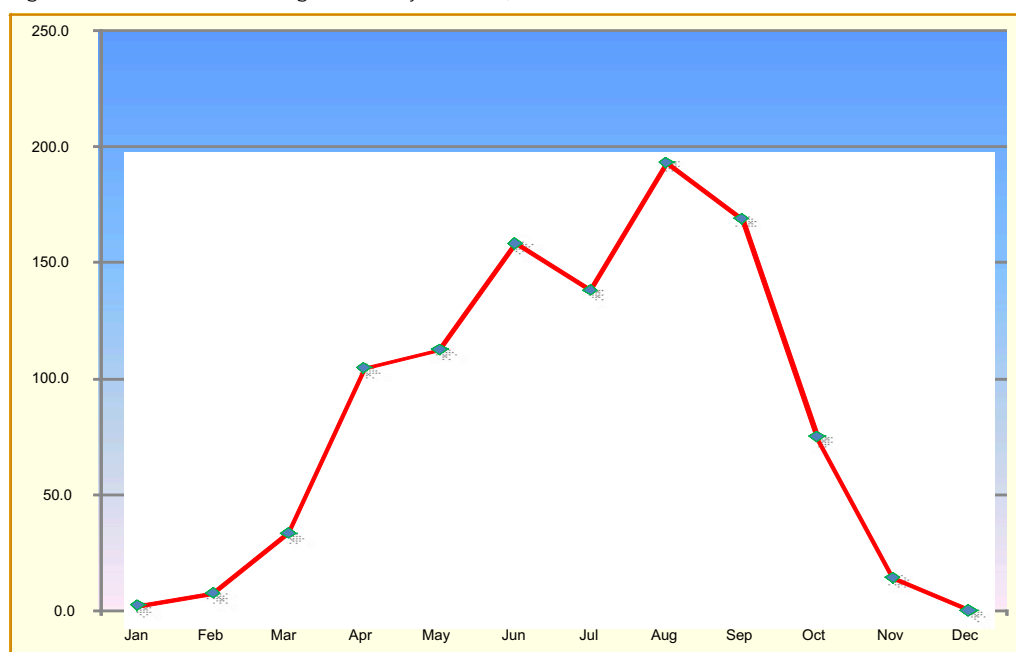
The district has a single rainfall regime, with average annual precipitation of 1,144 mm. The rainfall pattern is erratic. In some months of the dry season of November to March, little or no rain is recorded. The onset of the rains sometimes comes as early as

February but most times, reasonable precipitation begins in late April; it builds up in August and ends in late-October. There is more frequent rainfall in June, with a prolonged dry spell in July. The rains are stormy and torrential up to 300 mm per hour especially in August and September, making erosion and floods commonplace around that time.

Demographic Characteristics

The demographic characteristics of West Gonja District such as large household sizes, and high infant and child mortality rates are similar to other rural districts in Ghana. There are also marked differences. The 2000 Population and Housing Census, for instance, revealed that the district has an average household size of about eight, while

Figure 2.1 Seven Year Average Monthly Rainfall, 2000-2006 (mm)



Source: Computed from rainfall data obtained from the Meteorological Service, West Gonja District, Damongo

the national average is five people per household. The major demographic indicators and their implications for development are presented below.

Population Size and Density

West Gonja District has a population of 63,737, according to the 2000 Population and Housing Census. This gives a population density of 7.6 persons per sq. km, which is below the regional density of 25.9 persons per sq km. However, the district population growth rate of 3.1 percent is higher than the national (2.7%) rate and the regional (2.8%) rate respectively. The projected population for the year 2007 is 79,183.

The sex ratio of the population was 100.1 males to 100 females in 2000. This is slightly higher than the regional ratio and much higher than the national ratio, and is informed by the fact that females are more mobile and are more likely to migrate outside the district than their male counterparts. Another fact is that there is enough arable land for the men, who are mainly farmers.

Age Structure

In general, the population structure of the district is in the form of a broad-based pyramid that tapers to the top, indicating a concentration of the youth at the base. This is typical of the age structure in developing economies where there is often too much demand on the national and local government structures to provide services consumed by children and youth. The age structure follows that of the regional pattern. The 0-14 year age cohort constitutes 47.3 percent of the total population, while those aged 65+ comprise 4.5 percent (Ghana Population and Housing Census, 2000).

The economically active population (16-60 years cohort) constitutes about 52.1 percent of the population, thus creating a high dependency ratio in West Gonja District. This is slightly higher than the regional ratio and about 5 percent higher than the national dependency ratio. The social security implications for the aged population are a little better than the national situation. The number of economically active people responsible for one elderly person (65 years

Table 2.1: Basic Demographic Indicators in 2000

	West Gonja*	Northern Region	Ghana
Population	63,737	1,820,806	18,912,079
Density (pop./km ²)	7.6	25.9	79.3
Growth rate (%)	3.1	2.8	2.7
% Urban	22.7	26.6	43.8
Sex ratio (number of males to 100 females)	100.1	99.3	97.9
% of population age 0-14 years	47.3	46.2	41.3
% of population age 65+	4.5	4.5	5.3
Potential support ratio	7.4	7.3	7.1

* Data are derived from localities in the Statistical Service's 108 Enumeration Areas that are within current West Gonja District boundaries
Source: Authors' calculations from 2000 Population and Housing Census data

and over) is about 7.4, as compared to the national figure of 7.1. However, due to the high unemployment and underemployment rates in the district (see chapter 3 below), the real dependency ratio could be higher and the situation can have a negative impact on development.

Living arrangements continue to be predominantly traditional. Less than 20 percent (17.9%) of households in 2000 were headed by women and the households also contained significant numbers of people (20.1%) that are not close relatives of the head or spouse of the household.

Migration and Urbanisation

Migrating outside the district has very serious consequences for the development of the district for example, loss of productive labour although it can lead to positive effects in the long term. Information from the census indicates that there is a significant deficit of males in the 20-24, 24-29, 30-34 and 35-39 age groups (Figure 2.2). The groups represent the young adult population

and their situation may be attributable to a strong out-migration of males in search of jobs. It is also very disturbing that the district has a deficit of females in the teen age groups. This is particularly the case for the 15-19 age group, which has a female deficit of nearly 7,000. It shows the extent to which girls in the district migrate to bigger towns to do menial jobs (such as kayayoo) instead of staying in and reaching higher levels of school or learning vocational skills.

This out-migration of the youth explains why the bigger towns in the district have not seen much growth since the 1984 census (Table 2.2). Whereas population growth for the district is 3.1 percent per annum, the rate for the district capital is only 0.9 percent per annum. The rates for the second and the fourth largest towns (Daboya and Larabanga) are also lower than the district growth rate. The tenth largest town, Achubunyor, had a marginal fall in population between 1984 and 2000. This translates to an urban population of 22.7 percent, which is much lower than the national proportion because of fewer opportunities for the youth in the district.

Figure 2.2: West Gonja District Population, by Age, 2000

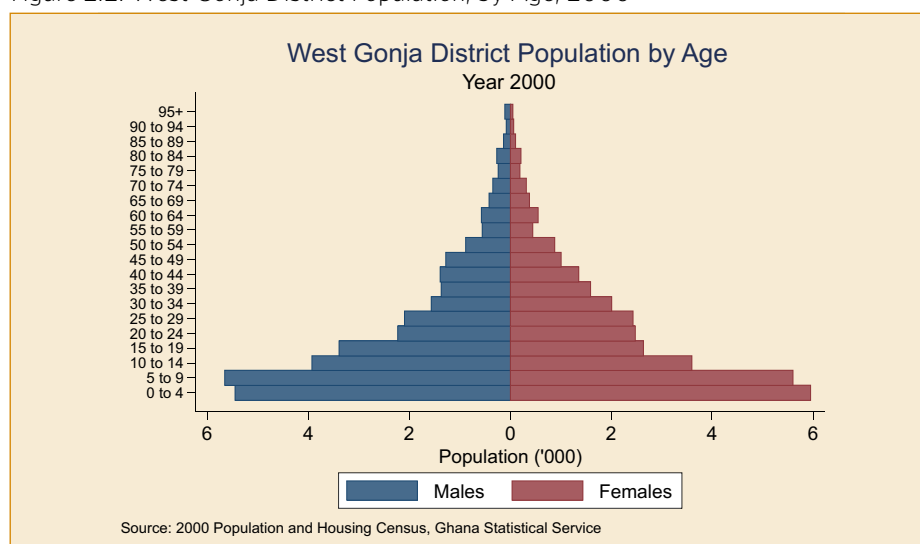


Table 2.2: Population of 10 Largest Towns in West Gonja District, 1970-2000

Locality	Population			Growth rate	
	2000	1984	1970	Between 1984 & 2000	Between 1970 & 1984
DAMONGO	14,442	12,522	7,760	0.9	3.5
DABOYA	4,740	3,111	1,872	2.7	3.7
LINGBINSI	3,263	1,732	869	4.0	5.0
LARABANGA	2,971	1,847	1,040	3.0	4.2
MANKARIGU	2,504	1,225	563	4.6	5.7
LUKULA	1,924	868	851	5.1	0.1
BUSUNU	1,819	1,117	1,087	3.1	0.2
YABUM (YAGBUM)	1,686	-	-	-	-
SINGA	1,450	803	478	3.8	3.8
ACHUBUNYOR	1,161	1,180	15	-0.1	36.6

Source: Ghana Statistical Service, 2000 Population and Housing Census

The 10 largest localities (in terms of population) contain 56.8 percent of the district's population, implying that the other 173 localities are small and dispersed in the vast geographical size of the district. They are also mostly inaccessible, especially during the rainy season.

In-migration is also low even though there is recent evidence of increasing movement into the district as compared to the period over 25 years ago (Figure 2.3). About 79 percent of the population was born in the district. The majority (25.1%) of those who were not born there moved into district within the last 25 years for various reasons.

The socio-economic survey conducted by ISSER for this report shows that a third of in-

migration consists of farmers in search of farmland (33.6%). A little over half moved into the district to join family members (52.0%); other in-migrants include tourists who visit the Mole National Park and religious people who visit Larabanga for religious activities. A significant number of in-migrants in Damongo (18%) were students who went there to attend senior secondary school (SSS), the Agricultural College and other schools at the lower level.

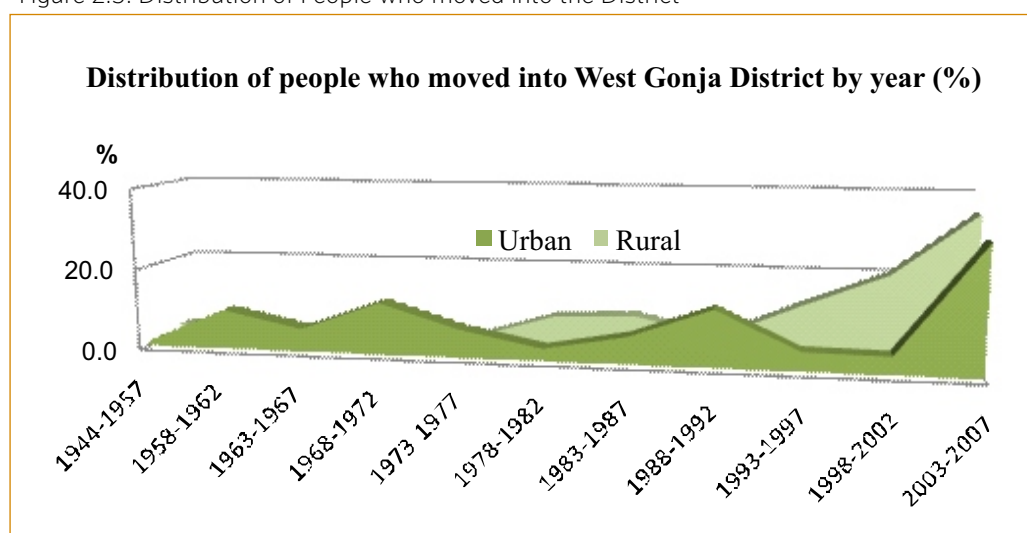
Nearly half the in-migrants were Gonja (49.3%) and about a third were from other ethnic groups in northern Ghana (34.3%). This trend of in-migrants further increases the degree of homogeneity of the district, which can be described as mainly Gonja and Muslim.

Table 2.3: Population Born in the District (%)

Born in this town	Census 2000	ISSER 2007
Urban	79.8	78.9
Rural	82.2	79.8
Total	81.6	79.5

Source: ISSER Household Survey, 2007

Figure 2.3: Distribution of People who moved into the District



Source: ISSER Household Survey, 2007

Table 2.4: Reasons why People Move into the District and Ethnicity of in-Migrants

	Urban	Rural	Total
Reasons for moving			
To work/farm	39.3	30.1	33.6
To join family	41.3	58.4	52.0
To attend school	18.0	11.5	13.9
Other	1.4	0.0	0.5
Ethnicity of those who were not born in West Gonja District			
Gonja	56.8	45.9	49.3
Other northern Ghana tribes	39.2	31.6	34.3
Other Ghanaian tribes	1.1	20.0	13.8
Non-Ghanaian	2.8	2.6	2.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: ISSER Household Survey, 2007

In terms of general ethnic composition, the district can be said to be fairly homogeneous. The Gonja ethnic group forms 69.3 percent of the population. Other northern Ghanaian

groups form 25.3 percent while other Ghanaian tribes form about 4.2 percent. The population of non-Ghanaians is only marginal at 1.2 percent in 2007 (Table 2.5).

Table 2.5: Ethnic Composition of the West Gonja Population

ETHNICITY	Census 2000	ISSER 2007
Gonja	44.1	69.3
Other northern Ghana tribes	45.1	25.3
Other Ghanaian tribes	10.1	4.2
Non-Ghanaian	0.7	1.2
Total	100	100.0

Source: ISSER Household Survey, 2007

Table 2.6: Religious Affiliation

RELIGION	Census 2000	ISSER 2007
Christian	22.5	11.5
Islam	66.1	85.7
Traditional	8.7	2.7
Other	2.7	0.1
Total	100.0	100.0

Source: ISSER Household Survey, 2007

The religious picture also appears to be fairly homogeneous. Islam is dominant with 85.7 percent of population while Christianity comes next with a population share of 11.5 percent. Traditional religion constitutes 2.7 percent and other religions (unspecified) form only 0.1 percent of the population in the district (Table 2.6).

Housing Conditions and Socio-Economic Infrastructure

The 2000 Population and Housing Census reports a total housing stock of 6,164 in the district, with estimated households of 9,638 in 183 localities. In a district of 63,737 people, therefore, there are about 10.3 people and about 6.6 households in a house. Owing to polygamy and accommodation problems, some families have separate cooking and feeding arrangements. The largely rural and dispersed settlement pattern increases the unit cost of investment for the provision of most basic social facilities and/or infrastructure such as electricity and mechanized pipe-borne water.

In West Gonja District, many houses are constructed with locally available materials. About 84 percent of the housing structures are built with mud bricks while about 46 percent are roofed with corrugated iron sheets. The rest are roofed with thatch (grass). The floors of houses are mostly made of cement/concrete (76.1%) or mud/earth (22.7%).

About 66.7 percent of occupied houses are self-owned and about 8.8 percent are rented out. The majority of households live in compound houses. A major housing problem in the district is the poor quality of houses, which is a direct reflection of the low-income levels of the people (West Gonja District Medium-Term Development Plan, 2006-2009).

Use of Energy

Information from the ISSER survey reveals that less than half of the households in the district (43.3%) use electricity for lighting and almost none of them use it for cooking. This is despite the fact that between 2000 and 2007, the proportion of both rural and

urban households that use electricity for lighting has increased (Table 2.9). Apart from Damongo, Daboya, Larabanga and the Mole National Park that obtain electricity from the national grid, the rest of the district remains unconnected to the national grid. The majority of households use kerosene lamps as the main source of household lighting (55.6%), a proportion substantially due to the nearly 100 percent reliance on kerosene by rural households. The current poor access to electricity can have a negative impact on the processing of agricultural produce as well as on education and literacy programmes. The use of gas for cooking is also virtually non-existent.

Wood is the main energy source for household cooking. Invariably, continued dependence on this source encourages land degradation and deforestation as many trees are felled; and soils are eroded and made infertile, resulting in low crop yields. Over 80 percent of households (88.9% in 2000 and 84.1% in 2007) rely solely on wood for cooking. Traditional Energy Unity of Savannah Resources Management Project (SRMP) conducted a field study on fuel wood in the district in 2001. It found that an average of 5,000 bags (2.5 tonnes) of charcoal was produced monthly for sale in the district. This continued reliance on solid fuels for livelihood represents a major obstacle to the attainment of the MDG target on reversing unsustainable loss of environmental resources.

Sanitation Facilities

Poor sanitation, especially in urban areas, is becoming a health hazard in the district. About 80.7 percent of the population has no toilet facilities at home; only 0.3 percent has flush toilets; another 0.5 percent uses

pan/buckets; while public KVIP is used by 18.1 percent. The bulk of the population, however, has no access to sanitary toilet facilities and resorts to indiscriminate defecation in bushes around compounds. This practice results in widespread pollution of water bodies, especially during the rainy season, and increases the vulnerability of the population to several diseases. Disposal of both solid waste and household silage is not well organised. About 62.1 percent of households practise uncontrolled dumping of refuse, either in public dump sites or elsewhere in the surroundings (ISSER, 2007).

Source of Drinking Water

The proportion of households that drink pipe-borne water within the household or compound has decreased in the district since 2000. The percentage of households that obtain their drinking water from boreholes has increased to 73.7 percent (Table 2.7). However, about 13 percent of households overall (and nearly half 48.2% of households in rural areas) still get their drinking water from rivers, lakes and ponds in rural areas. The piped water network is not extensive, so not all households have access to it. In some communities, although provision for piped water has been made, the water does not run continuously. When this happens, the alternative sources of water are boreholes, covered wells and rivers and springs, depending on what is available to the community.

Road Conditions

The district has no single tarred road connecting two towns, apart from the one that connects Damongo to its main suburb,

Table 2.7: Household Characteristics in West Gonja District (%)

Household Characteristics	Urban		Rural		Total	
	2000	2007	2000	2007	2000	2007
Solid Waste						
Collected	1.3		1.9		1.7	
Burned by household	9.2	18.1	3.4	17.5	4.8	17.7
Public Dump	46.8	26.3	33.8	16.0	37.1	19.2
Dumped elsewhere	37.4	54.2	59.0	65.7	53.5	62.1
Buried by household	4.7	1.4	1.5	0.8	2.3	1.0
Other	0.6		0.5		0.5	
Toilet Facility						
None	57.4	55.1	95.3	92.2	85.6	80.7
Flush toilet	2.9		1.1	0.4	1.6	0.3
Pan/bucket	2.6		0.1	0.6	0.7	0.5
Covered pit latrine	3.7		1.3	0.6	1.9	0.5
KVIP	3.5	43.3	0.2	6.1	1.1	18.1
Other	29.9	1.7	2.1	0.1	9.2	0.1
Fuel for cooking						
Firewood	68.2	68.9	96.0	90.9	88.9	84.1
Charcoal	24.8	26.7	1.2	9.1	7.2	14.5
Gas	1.3	1.4	0.2	0.0	0.5	0.4
Other	5.7	3.1	2.7	0.0	3.4	1.0
Fuel for lighting						
Kerosene	41.6	25.6	94.1	69.1	80.7	55.6
Electricity	54.9	74.4	4.6	29.3	17.5	43.3
Others	3.5		1.4	1.6	1.9	1.1
Source of drinking water						
Pipe in compound	19.1		0.9		5.6	
Public outdoor tap	55.6	4.2	1.7	11.8	15.4	9.4
Borehole	5.7	87.5	15.4	67.5	12.9	73.7
Protected well	10.2	4.2	18.1	0.0	16.1	1.3
Unprotected well	6.3		15.4	2.5	13.1	1.7
River, lake, pond	2.6	2.8	48.2	18.3	36.6	13.5
Purchase from vendor	0.6	1.4	0.3		0.4	0.4
Other			0.1		0.1	
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100
Number of households	2,460	72	7,168	168	9,628	240

Source: Computed from Census 2000 data sets and ISSER Household Survey, 2007

canteen. Most of the roads are not graded. Residents of the district lament the deplorable road network, especially during the rainy season when very few roads are motorable, thereby seriously reducing the level of accessibility in the district. Reasons for this include the rivers that crisscross the district, coupled with the low-lying terrain and soft soils that lead to most road links being flooded and sometimes completely washed away during the peak of the rainy season.

The north-eastern part of Damongo covering Daboya to Mankarigu is virtually cut off in

the rainy season from the rest of the district. A contract to re-build the main bridge connecting Busunu to Daboya has been awarded but has been delayed for several months. This situation makes vehicular movement in that part of the district extremely difficult because the area is also cut off from Tolon Kumbungu District on the east by the Black Volta. The bridge connecting Daboya to the other district fell into disuse in the 1970s and has since not been repaired. Residents use canoes to cross the river and for several months of the year, this section of the district remains inaccessible to vehicles, either from the south or from the east.

Table 2.8 Road Conditions in the District

ROAD	LENGTH	STATUS	CONDITION	SURFACE TYPE
Damongo-Canteen Reset	7km	Engineered	Good	Bituminous
Laribanga-Murugu	14km	Engineered	Good	Gravel
Canteen- Buachipe	26km	Engineered	Good	Gravel
Canteen-Congo	2.5km	Partially-Engineered	Poor	Earth
Canteen JSS- Catholic Guest House	1.5km	Partially-Engineered	Fair	Earth
Damongo-Bomboto	4.9km	Non- Engineered	Poor	Earth
Yazari- Krubeto	12km	Non- Engineered	Poor	Earth
Sori No. 2-Lito	24km	Non- Engineered	Poor	Earth
Sori No. 2-Kojo Kura	10km	Non- Engineered	Poor	Earth
Soalepe- Kebeso- Yipala	22km	Non- Engineered	Poor	Earth
Daboya-Semisi	16km	Non-Engineered	Poor	Earth
Daboya- Dakurope	13km	Non-Engineered	Poor	Earth
Lingbinsi-Wawato-Donkonpe	32km	Non- Engineered	Poor	Earth
Yazari-Daboya	42km	Non- Engineered	Poor	Earth

The district has the Busunu-Daboya barrier to the south (left) and the White Volta barrier to the east (right)



The district has the Busunu-Daboya barrier to the south (left) and the White Volta barrier to the east (right)

Communication Facilities

West Gonja District has poorly developed socio-economic infrastructure. In particular, postal services as well as telecommunication facilities are not only inadequate, but also highly inefficient due to frequent breakdowns. About 51.1 percent of the population need to travel over one hour to access postal services in the district. Only 1.7 percent use less than 15 minutes to reach the nearest postal service (Table 2.9).

Passenger transport services are inadequate

and unreliable. These include the Metro Mass Transit (MMT) and five private buses, which run between Tamale, Damongo and Bole. Taxi services are available only in Damongo Township. Most parts of the district, especially the "overseas" areas Lingbinsi, Mankarigu and Daboya are completely cut off from marketing centres and the district capital during the rainy season. Here, boats and canoes are used to carry passengers and goods to other parts of the district. Improvements in road transport will promote the socio-economic development of the district.

Table 2.9: Access to Public Services in West Gonja District, 2007

	Urban	Rural	Total
Food market			
Less than 14 minutes	43.9	51.1	48.9
15-29 minutes	32.8	6.6	14.8
30-44 minutes	22.0	6.8	11.5
45-59 minutes	0.0	5.4	3.7
60 minutes or more	1.4	30.0	21.1
Public transport			
Less than 14 minutes	41.1	47.1	45.2
15-29 minutes	33.9	7.3	15.6
30-44 minutes	20.3	5.1	9.9
45-59 minutes	1.7	6.1	4.7
60 minutes or more	3.1	34.4	24.6
Post Office			
Less than 14 minutes	23.1	6.5	11.7
15-29 minutes	45.0	3.4	16.4
30-44 minutes	25.8	15.0	18.4
45-59 minutes	1.7	2.9	2.5
60 minutes or more	4.4	72.1	51.1
Police station			
Less than 14 minutes	30.3	0.0	9.4
15-29 minutes	40.9	2.1	14.2
30-44 minutes	20.8	15.0	16.8
45-59 minutes	3.9	2.9	3.2
60 minutes or more	4.2	80.0	56.4

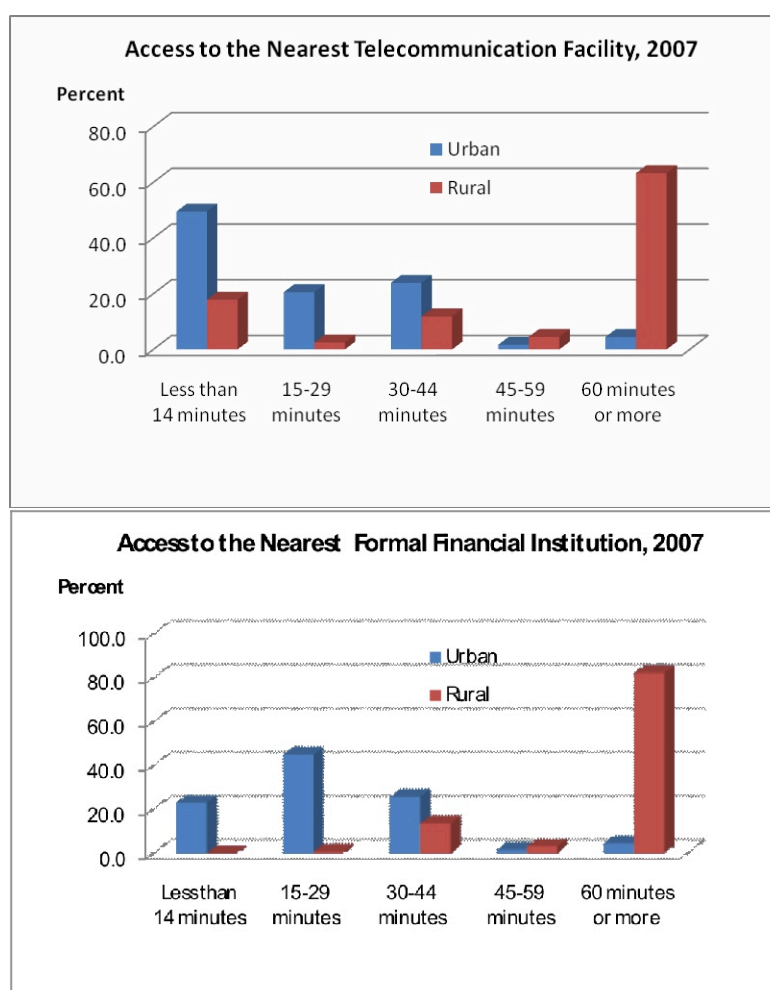
Source: ISSER Household Survey, 2007

Many households do not have access to fixed-line telephone services in West Gonja District. Indeed, none of the households sampled reported having fixed-line services even though the district has a telephone exchange at Damongo. Generally, telecommunication is facilitated by the services of the mobile phone companies. In those communities where there is coverage, private entrepreneurs provide access to mobile telephone services at a fee.

Until recently, mobile telephone services were equally inadequate and only available in Damongo Township, Mole and Larabanga. However, two mobile communication networks (OneTouch and Areeba) have been

operating at Damongo and its surrounding areas extending to a radius of about 18 km. (West Gonja Medium-Term Development Plan, 2007). Millicom (tiGO) service has also been extended to the district, operating mainly along the Busunu-Sawla trunk road. These developments have improved modern communications in urban areas, in particular. About half the population in urban areas is within 15 minutes distance from telephone service but 63.3% of people in rural areas still need one hour or more to reach a telephone (Figure 2.4). The district policy of making available modern information and communication facilities (in accordance with MDG target 18) can be achieved if access for the rural population is improved.

Figure 2.4: Travel Time to the Nearest Telecommunication Facility and Financial Institution, 2007



Source: ISSER Household Survey, 2007

Formal Financial Services

There are only two formal financial institutions in the district: one Commercial Bank at Damongo and one recently established micro-finance institution also at Damongo. With this small number of institutions and the sparse population in the district, access to formal financial services is very poor about two-thirds of urban dwellers are within 30 minutes of the institutions whereas 82.3 percent of the rural

population have to travel one hour or more to access formal financial institutions (Figure 2.4).

Access to Goods Markets

The five major markets in the district are Damongo market (Saturdays), Busunu (Fridays), Mankarigu market (Fridays), Kotito No. 2 market (Fridays) and Lingbinsi market which runs weekly, keeping the

wheels of economic activities in the district moving. Average monthly revenue generated by the five markets is about GH50 cedis (West Gonja District MTDP, 2007). Also, none of these markets can boast of adequate stores, stalls, sheds, warehouses, sanitary facilities, and drainage systems despite their contribution to the growth of the local economy.

Human Security

The district is served by one police station. Only about 16.4 percent of households in the district can reach a police station in less than 30 minutes. Rural communities are disadvantaged because about 80 percent of rural households are more than 60 minutes away from the nearest police station compared to about 4.2 percent of urban households (Table 2.9).

assaults, poaching and stealing. Some instances of petty crime involving theft of crops and of livestock were reported. Although the incidence of crime is relatively low in the district, about 27.5 percent of households were less confident about their personal security while 45.8 percent are more confident now than five years ago (Table 2.11). Depending on how much is stolen and the situation of the household, theft of a harvest can deal a severe blow to a household by, for example, compromising the ability to pay school fees, drugs and other essential items.

None of the communities visited reported incidents of unrest in the last five years arising from chieftaincy, land, religious, ethnic or election-based disputes. There were reported cases of life-threatening clashes between some communities and Mole National Park Reserve guides.

Table 2.9: Crime Statistics in West Gonja District

Reported cases of crime	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Murder	1	3	0	1	2	2	3
Stealing	14	34	26	32	16	12	16
Rape	1	3	0	1	1	0	1
Defilement	0	0	0	1	1	0	2
Threatening	2	7	5	4	4	6	5
Causing harm	1	0	1	5	1	2	3
Fraud	2	1	6	3	1	0	2
Robbery	0		0	0	0	3	0
Assault	16	25	25	20	2	20	35
Causing damage	2	4	4	2	1	2	2
Possessing narcotics	4	0		1	0	2	1
Poaching	7	11	6	21	23	22	17
Impersonation	4	0	0	0	0	0	1
Total	54	88	73	91	52	71	88

Source: Ghana Police Service, West Gonja District Command

The number of reported crimes in the district rose from 54 in 2000 to 91 in 2003, dropped sharply, then rose in successive year to reach 88 in 2006 (Table 2.10). The most frequently reported types of crime are

Complaints leading to such incidents concern inadequate land left for farming as a result of the activities of wild animals in the reserves. This has been a grave concern in the affected communities such as Kabampe.

Table 2.11 Perceptions of Human Security in West Gonja District

Compared to five years ago, would you survive in times of need?	Locality					
	Urban		Rural		Total	
	CWIQ 2003	ISSER 2007	CWIQ 2003	ISSER 2007	CWIQ 2003	ISSER 2007
More confident	20.8	46.6	17.6	45.4	17.9	45.8
Same	60.6	25.5	44.3	27.4	45.9	26.8
Less confident	18.6	27.8	38.2	27.3	36.2	27.5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: ISSER Household Survey, 2007 and CWIQ 2003

Local Governance

Administrative Structure

The institutional framework for decision making rests with the West Gonja District Assembly (WGDA), which is the highest political and administrative body in the district. The WGDA consist of a District Chief Executive, 20 elected and nine appointed representatives of the people, and one Member of Parliament. The district has the highest proportion of women as District Assembly members in Ghana, with eight women among the 20 elected members.

As provided for by the 1992 Constitution, the Town and Area Councils and Unit Committees are vital in local level development in any district. Hence, the West Gonja District has created one Town Council and five Area Councils, and has formed 91 Unit Committees in all the six Town/Area Council zones. None of the Area Councils is functional at present but the Northern Region Poverty Reduction Programme (NORREP) has selected Busunu Area Council for capacity building and equipped it with four motor bikes.

The District Chief Executive heads the Office of the District Assembly and presides over meetings of the executive committee of the Assembly, while the Presiding Member presides over Assembly sessions, meetings and any other committee s/he may chair. The Local Government Act (Act 462) reconstituted the former 22 decentralized departments into 11 under the District Assembly. The operations, activities and initiatives of these departments are coordinated by the District Coordinating Director.

The Local Government Law, Act 462, 1993 established that District Assemblies are responsible for:

1. Overall development of the district (plan, budget and implement development programmes and projects)
2. Coordination of activities of ministries, departments, public corporations, NGOs, etc. within the district (see list of institutions in Table 2.12).
3. Maintenance of security and public safety (execution of law).

There is an executive committee chaired by the District Chief Executive, and sub-committees with deliberative functions. These sub-committees are:

1. Development Planning sub-Committee
2. Works sub-Committee
3. Justice and Security sub-Committee
4. Finance and Administration sub-Committee
5. Social Services sub-Committee
6. Public Relations and Complaints sub-Committee
7. Health and Environment sub-Committee
8. Economic Development sub-Committee
9. Education and Culture Sub-Committee
10. Women and Children sub-Committee

Table 2.12: List of Institutions in West Gonja District, 2006

CENTRALIZED DEPARTMENTS	NON-DECENTRALIZED DEPARTMENTS
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ghana Education Service 2. Ghana Health Service 3. Information Services 4. Community Development 5. Department of Social Welfare 6. Town and Country Planning 7. Statistical Services 8. Births and Deaths Registry 9. Forestry 10. Ghana Fire Service 11. Agriculture 12. Controller and Acc. Gen. Dept 13. Central Administration (Assembly Secretariat) 14. Works (PWD, DFR) 15. Min. of Trade, Dept. of Cooperatives, NBSSI 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Savannah Agric. Research Institute 2. Damongo Senior Secondary Sch. 3. Damongo Senior Sec. Technical Sch. 4. Gonja Traditional Council 5. Police Service 6. Judicial Service 8. Labour Department 9. Game and Wildlife 10. Centre for National Culture 11. National Service Secretariat 12. Bureau of National Investigation 13. West Gonja Hospital 14. Agricultural College 15. National Commission on Culture 16. Commission for Human Rights and Administrative Justice
OTHER INSTITUTIONS	NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ghana Commercial Bank 2. Credit Union (2) 3. Ghana Library Board 4. Ghana Water and Sewerage Corporation 5. Ghana Postal Services Ltd. 6. Ghana Telecom Company 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Institute of Cultural affairs 2. Katchito Development Centre 3. Opportunities Industrialisation Centre (OIC) 4. Adventist Development Relief Agency (ADRA) 5. Catholic Relief Services 6. RESEP 7. AROCHA 8. MAFEC 9. Tulso Human Dev. Home 10. Centre for Rural Improvement Services (CRIS) 11. Justopose Integrated Development Association 12. SNV
RELIGIOUS BODIES	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Muslim Council 2. Catholic Church 3. Presbyterian Church 4. Assemblies of God 5. Evangelical Church 6. Deeper Life Church 7. Pentecost Church 	

Source: West Gonja District Medium-Term Development Plan, 2006-2009

Functions of the District Assembly

The District Assembly has two major functions: political and administrative, and planning. According to the provisions of Act 462, the District Assembly is the highest political and administrative authority in any district. As such, the West Gonja District Assembly provides guidance, gives direction to and supervises all administrative authorities in the district. In so doing, it exercises deliberative, legislative and executive functions over its territorial jurisdiction.

Under the same Act, the District Assembly is established as the planning authority of the district. In pursuance of this function, the West Gonja District Assembly ensures the preparation of district development plans and submits them through the Northern Regional Coordinating Council to the National Development Planning Commission for approval. In addition, it prepares budgets related to the approved plans and submits them to the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning for approval.

Specifically, the Assembly performs the under-listed tasks⁹:

1. Formulates and executes programmes and strategies for the effective and efficient mobilisation and disbursement of necessary resources for the overall development of the district.
2. Promotes and supports productive activity and social development in the district and removes any obstacle to initiative and development.
3. Initiates programmes for the development of basic infrastructure and provides municipal works and services in the district.
4. Is responsible for the development, improvement of human settlements and the environment in the district.

5. Takes necessary steps to execute approved development plans for the district.
6. Guides, encourages and supports sub-district local government bodies, public agencies and local communities to perform their roles in the execution of approved development plans.
7. Initiates and encourages joint participation with other persons or bodies to execute approved development plans.
8. Monitors the execution of projects under approved development plans and assesses and evaluates their impact on the people's development, the local, district and national economy.

Development Goals

The high incidence of poverty and low level of social development have made living and working in the West Gonja District difficult. The consequences include a high rate of out-migration, especially of the youth. Hunger, malnutrition, ill-health, high mortality rates, low life expectancy, high school dropout rates, low education outcomes, crime, abuse of women and children, streetism and loss of personal integrity are some of the other consequences of the high level of poverty and low social development in the district.

In this respect, the Assembly has planned specific development activities linked to the pillars of GPRS II. In line with NDPC guidelines, most of these priorities are aligned to the targets and goals of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The identified goals are classified under three headings: private sector-led competitiveness, human resource development and good governance. The objectives under each sub-sector of the district are presented in Table 2.13.

⁹ Draft West Gonja District Medium-Term Development Plan, 2006-2009

Table 2.13: Priorities and Specific Objectives of West Gonja Medium-Term Development Plan, 2006-2009

Thematic Area	Sub-sector priorities	Specific Objectives
Private Sector-Led Competitiveness	Agriculture: Improve agricultural productivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide credit and agricultural inputs to individuals and farmer groups to increase agricultural productivity • Increase farmers' access to extension services • Increase land under irrigation • Support the private sector to provide tractor services to farmers and improve structures in major markets in the district
	Support Services: Improve access to link farms with marketing centres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pay attention to improving the road network in the district • Support the private sector to provide efficient transport services (River and Road Transport)
	Energy: Improve the supply of energy for both domestic and industrial use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connect major towns in the district to the national grid • Promote use of solar energy in communities far from the national grid
	Environment: Control environmental degradation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage communities to establish woodlots for fuel wood • Support private sector to establish liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) distribution points in the district
	Science and Technology: Equip the youth and vulnerable people with skills to make a decent living Improve communication systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lobby for establishment of foundry and training centres to train artisans to manufacture simple farm tools and implements • Encourage the private sector and NGOs to establish FM station in the district capital • Complete and equip Community Information Centre building • Lobby for expansion of telephone services to major towns
	Tourism: Promote the development of tourism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concentrate on constructing Reception and Cultural Centres in Damongo • Develop four tourist sites in the district • Encourage the private sector to construct standard guesthouses, restaurants and chopbars • Advertise tourism potential of the district on the Internet, and in print and electronic media
	Small-Scale Industry: Support the development of small-scale industries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organize Daboya Smock Weaving into a viable cooperative • Provide gari, cashew, soya beans and shea butter processing machines to farmer groups • Train and provide beekeepers with hives and equipment to increase honey production
Human Resource Development	Education: Reduce illiteracy rates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve access to basic education • Improve quality of teaching and learning • Support organization of STME clinics in the district • Support functional literacy education programmes • Build a library complex in the district
	Manpower and Sports: Improve skills; promote and develop sporting disciplines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lobby for the construction of vocational and learning centres to train the unemployed • Provide incentives and credit to trainees to set up businesses • Lobby for construction of sports stadium • Encourage formation of football clubs and keep-fit clubs • Support development of sports in schools

	Health: Improve health status of the people Control population growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve and provide quality health services • Intensify health education on malaria control, guinea worm, TB etc. • Support NIB programmes, provision of offices and staff accomodation for the district mutual Health Insurance Scheme. • Support NGOs and CBOs to intensify education on HIV/AIDS prevention. • Support awareness creation on family planning methods
	Water and environmental sanitation: Improve potable water supply and environmental sanitation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide po table water for all communities in the district • Construct boreholes and public standpipes for communities • Construct public toilets, and encourage construction of household latrines and slaughter houses • Train W ATSANS to manage and maintain water and sanitation facilities • Form and train b ushfire volunteers and disaster volunteer groups in all communities
	Urban development: Control the development of towns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare layouts for three towns • Number all houses in the district • Improve drainage in all major towns • Enforce strict adherence to building regulations
	Vulnerability and exclusion: Mainstream vulnerability and exclusion issues in development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the development of early childhood development centres • Train and equip women and physically challenged people with employable skills • Create database on the vulnerable and the excluded • Involve the vulnerable and excluded in the planning and implementation process
Good Governance	Political governance: Ensure that all District Assembly sub-structures are made functional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that all Area Co uncils and other sub -structures are made functional • Construct and equip two police stations • Encourage women 's participation in local and national policies • Organize awareness creation on outmoded cultural practices that militate against women's advancement (e.g. widowhood rites)
	Economic governance: Increase District Assembly's revenue base	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Widen the tax net in the district • Intensify tax education campaigns • Update revenue database annually • Train and equip revenue collectors and provide incentives to hardworking revenue collectors

Source: West Gonja Medium-Term Development Plan, 2006-2009

The development plan is well thought out and set out. It is anticipated that the district will have to mobilise GH¢49,300,000 to implement it over a four-year period. Whether or not this proposed development plan can be executed largely depends on the volume of resources generated locally and supported with external inflows such as the

District Assemblies Common Fund (DACF).

There are many sources of funds to run the District Assembly's activities, with varying degrees of impact on the financial health of the assembly. They are broadly defined as internally generated funds (IGF) and grants, which constitute all external sources that are

passed through the Assembly's financial system. Table 2.14 outlines a comparison between IGF and grants received by the district for the period 2002 to 2005.

transferred to the district through the DACF Administrator. Central government also indirectly channels resources to the district through sector-wide programmes.

Table 2.14: Distribution of Revenue by Head Item, 2002-2005

Revenue Item	Share of Head Item (%)			
	2002	2003	2004	2005
Internally Generated Funds o/w	11.1	3.4	4.0	1.2
Rates	1.5	0.1	0.6	0.1
Land	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
Fees/Fines	4.0	0.9	0.9	0.3
Licences	5.2	1.7	0.4	0.3
Rent	-	0.1	-	0.3
Investment Income	0.4	0.6	0.1	0.1
Miscellaneous	-	-	1.8	-
Grants	88.9	96.6	96.0	98.8
DACF	53.6	36.1	37.1	39.3
HIPC	-	23.7	37.2	38.9
Other Grants	35.3	36.8	21.7	20.5
Total	100.0	100.00	100.0	100.0
Amount (million cedis)	2,510.5	11,295.6	15,930.2	13,632.5

Source: Authors' calculation from West Gonja District Assembly records, 2007

The role of the central government is crucial to the successful implementation of the plan. There are several points at which resource flows to the district level can be traced directly to the central government. They include the Ministry of Local Government, Environment and Rural Development; the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning and the District Assemblies Common Fund.

The local government ministry covers the emoluments of District Assembly personnel, and also allocations to some items in the 2-4 expenditure categories. Resources from the finance ministry are generally referred to as central government transfers. They include the HIPC funds and other ceded revenues. The main central government transfer to district assemblies for development activities, which is the DACF, is however

Programmes and projects are undertaken in different sectors, particularly by the decentralised departments, with budgets from ministries, departments and agencies (MDAs). However, these resources from MDAs do not pass through the accounts of the District Assembly; they are not captured by the district, implying that the district has little influence on the use of such funds.

The data in Table 2.15 clearly show that resources from grant sources constitute more than 85 percent of total inflows for the District Assembly. It also shows that the Assembly is heavily dependent on DACF and HIPC funds. This has serious implications for sustainability and timely execution of development programmes as the total amount of internally generated funds is quite meagre compared with the development

challenges of the district. The District Assembly will find it extremely difficult to operate if resources from these sources are delayed for any particular reason; the activities of the district will virtually come to a halt.

The poor revenue generation effort has been attributed to many factors, including improper recruitment of collectors. Laxity on the part of collectors, supervisors and staff of the Assembly is a major concern, alongside unwillingness of the public to pay basic rates, and the failure of revenue collectors to pay in all monies collected to the Assembly (West Gonja District Medium-Term Development Plan, 2006-2009).

The District Assembly has instituted various measures to address this important aspect of economic governance. They include replacement of non-performing collectors, setting targets, providing motorcycles to supervisors, paying commissions and using civic organisations to collect revenue.

Participation of the Citizenry in Planning and Implementation of Development

Financial and other factors can lead to a weakening of the sub-structures of the District Assembly, which has adverse effects on participation and the flow of information between the Assembly and citizens. Participation is an important aspect of the decentralisation agenda of Ghana as plans and projects are expected to benefit from the input of the general public.

The ISSER 2007 Household Survey, however, suggests that a lot of work will have to be done in this area. About 39 percent of the population aged 18 years and above (42 percent of men and 36.8 percent of women) had been consulted prior to the start of community projects. However, less than 1 percent of the members of the households surveyed knew how much had been allocated to the district in 2006 through the District Assemblies Common Fund. In some instances, this lack of knowledge of the workings of the Assembly may be because of a lack of interest on the part of the general public. However, it also reflects inadequate information flow between the Assembly and the general public.

