

**AN EXPLORATION OF THE ROLE OF ADULT LITERACY IN
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF
PERCEPTIONS AND EXPERIENCES IN JUASO AND SAAMAN IN
GHANA**

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ABSTRACT

This study explored the relationship between adult literacy and community development in Ghana from a social practices perspective of literacy and people-centred development. The study adopted an interpretive qualitative case study methodology, using the perceptions and experiences of research participants in two neighbouring communities. Primary data were collected using four ethnographic methods of data collection namely: in-depth interviews, participant observation, informal conversations, and document review. The data was then analysed using the constant comparative method.

Consistent with the claims of the social practice theory of literacy, the study found many social uses of literacy, as well as literacy practices among the learners. It also identified many community-wide literacy practices. These included commercial literacy, religious literacy, funeral literacy, and public communications literacy.

The study established that in both communities, adult literacy, in terms of participation in adult literacy classes, or the social uses of literacy by learners, did not lead to community development. However, some of the general literacy practices like reading and writing, funeral literacy, and public communications literacy played roles in the implementation of community development. Development committees, for instance, used reading and writing in activities like

taking minutes at committee meetings, writing letters to donors for support, and collecting levies.

The study concluded that adult literacy, on its own, might not lead to community development. It would need the complementary role of people-centred development to achieve this.

A key finding of the study is that what counts as literacy varies even between different groups in the same community, consistent with the claims of LSP.

Finally, rather than providing only classroom -based school literacy with the hope achieving community development, the study advocated for training learners on community development literacy, in the adult literacy classes as well as during the process of community development.

DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis is my own work, and that neither I nor any other person has submitted it in the past for any degree or examination at any University. I acknowledge however, that I received professional guidance from my supervisors in the conduct of this thesis.

Signed

Signed by candidate

Signature Removed

Theophilus Nkansah

February 2016.

DEDICATION

To my dear wife, Rene, and my lovely children, Junior, Papa and Maame, for your unfailing love and support throughout the entire process of this PhD thesis

Also to you, miss Bernice Kwabeng, my true and faithful friend, for believing and sharing in my dream at a time when most people around me thought the idea of pursuing a doctoral degree was a misplaced priority. Truly, I could not have started this programme but for your invaluable support!

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My first insights into doctoral research were at the University of Botswana where I started my doctoral studies before moving on to the University of Cape

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

ADDRO	Anglican Diocesan Development and Relief Organization
BGL	Bureau of Ghana Languages
CAP	Community Action Plan
CCP	Cadbury Cocoa Partnership
CD	Community Development
CHPS	Community-based Health Planning and Services
DCE	District Chief Executive
DOC	Department of Cooperatives
DFID	Department for International Development
EWLP	Experimental World Literacy Programme
FGI	Focus Group Interview
FLSP	Functional Literacy Skills Project
GBC	Ghana Broadcasting Corporation
GBPA	Ghana Book Publishing Association
GCE	General Certificate of Education

GNFLP	Ghana National Functional Literacy Programme
GNP	Gross National Product
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMF	International Monetary Fund
JHS	Junior High School
KVIP	Kumasi Ventilated Improved Pit Latrine
MCE	Municipal Chief Executive
MOE	Ministry of Education
MP	Member of Parliament
MSLC	Middle School Leaving Certificate
NDC	National Democratic Congress
NDR	National Democratic Revolution
NFLD	Non- Formal Literacy Development
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NLS	New Literacy Studies
SAP	Structural Adjustment Programme
SMC	School Management Committee

UCT	University of Cape Town
VIP	Ventilated Improved Pit Latrine
W.H.O	World Health Organization
WVG	World Vision Ghana
LSP	Literacy as Social Practice
PCD	People Centred Development

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

“Eradication of illiteracy in Ghana has been considered a strategy for sustainable development by empowering people to develop themselves, participate in the process of development and enjoy the benefits thereof” (Aryeetey & Kwakye, 2005:5

1.1 Background to the study

This research explores whether adult literacy plays a role in community development, using Saaman and Juaso as case studies.

Literacy is conventionally perceived to have a direct effect on community development and this perception has been the driving force behind policy discourses and development interventions in the developing world. According to World Health Organization (WHO) research studies, there is evidence that literacy leads to improved health, improved hygiene, and improved community infrastructure amongst community members as was argued by Wagner (1995).

In Ghana, the government implemented a nation-wide adult literacy programme as a means of achieving community development (Aryeetey & Kwakye, 2005). However, resulting from personal observations made in the field of practice

during the over twenty years of my career as a development practitioner, working with several international development agencies in Ghana, I have come to hold the orthodoxy of this claim in contention.

As Street observed in the foreword to Robinson-Pant's book (2000: V), the nature and meaning of literacy continue to elude scholars in the field of literacy. To understand what the concepts of adult literacy and community development meant to the case communities, I decided to use the ethnographic approach in my research.

This approach represented an important move-away from previous research in Ghana, most of which had focused on the effects of adult literacy on learners (e.g. Adjei, 2009; Aoki, 2005; Arko & Addison, 2009; Aryeetey & Kwakye, 2005). Rather than looking at learners as passively receiving literacy (Robinson-Pant, 2000:7), I looked at how they appropriate literacy for their own purposes (Kulick & Stroud, 1993: 55).

1.2 Rationale: Developing the idea for a PhD thesis

For 22 years of my career life, I have been doing community development work in Ghana and it is this experience that triggered in me the desire to undertake this doctoral thesis. I believe a brief presentation of my career life will help my readers to put this thesis into context. From January 1993 to the time of writing this thesis (August 2015), I have worked in the field of community development with a number of international NGOs including World Vision International (Ghana Office), Compassion International, and the Netherlands Development

Organization, all in senior management positions. I am currently a Project Manager at Care International in Ghana, managing a project funded by Mondelez international to improve cocoa productivity and livelihoods of cocoa farmers, as well as contribute towards the development of cocoa growing communities in Ghana. I have also worked on a development programme funded by a multi-national company (Cadbury PLC), as well as a number of local NGOs, including one that I co-founded- Optimal Change Partnership (OCP). I therefore come into this research with a strong background in the design, implementation and management of community development projects.

Working with all these development organizations gave me the opportunity to work in many rural communities in Ghana, including Saaman and Juaso where this thesis is located. During this period, I observed disjunctions between the policy expectations of the National Functional Literacy Programme (NFLP) and actual manifestations of impact of the programme in the communities that participated in it. To achieve the objectives of the NFLP, the government implemented adult literacy classes in many rural communities in Ghana. The aim of government was to achieve community development in the participating communities through the adult literacy classes. However, there was little evidence of community development in many of these communities. This observation made me begin to ask myself where the missing link was between the objectives and expectations of the adult literacy classes to bring about community development and actual realization of community development. My interest in doing this research was heightened when I worked for two years in

Saaman and Juaso, two neighbouring rural communities about just a kilometre away from each other, in 2008 and 2009. During this time I observed an interesting contrast between these two communities which puzzled me.

Both Saaman and Juaso were part of the nationwide adult literacy programme. However, whereas the adult literacy class in Saaman collapsed in less than 24 months due to lack of reading materials and incentives for the literacy facilitator, Juaso went through two cycles of literacy classes of 21 months each. This notwithstanding, Saaman was more active than Juaso in terms of initiating community development projects.

In the light of this observation, I became convinced that the link between adult literacy and community development was much more complex than has been claimed by international development agencies such as UNDP and UNESCO. I therefore saw the need to investigate further the relationship between the provision of adult literacy classes and community development.

Working with rural communities in Ghana all these years shaped my perception of community development. For me, community development is when communities are empowered to identify their needs and lead the process of acquiring those needs either by themselves or with support from sources external to the community, such as the local or national government.

1.3 Problem and purpose of the research

This research set out to explore, describe and analyze whether adult literacy plays a role in community development, using Saaman and Juaso as case studies. The research was conducted from the social practice perspective of literacy, which perceives literacy as multiple and varying according to context (UIS, 2008:25).

In view of this, in seeking answers to the research question, as stated on page 8, I decided to use but also go beyond the adult literacy classes in Saaman and Juaso to examine the following:

- The objectives of the classes and what the learners actually learned to see if these were geared towards preparing the learners to participate in community development.
- The social and vocational activities the learners were engaged in, whether these led to community development and whether they used what they learned in these activities.
- Whether participation in the adult literacy classes led to participation in community development.
- Literacy practices of the learners as well as general literacy practices in the two communities to see if they played any role in community development.

- Community development practices in Saaman and Juaso to see whether the identified social literacy practices, including reading and writing, played a role in them.

Locating my research within the frame of other research in Ghana, I noted that previous related research have mainly been conducted from the perspective of „autonomous“ literacy (Street, 1984:1). This model, described in detail in chapter two of this study, sees literacy as a cognitive skill which has many good effects on individuals and communities alike (e.g. Adjei, 2009; Arko & Addison, 2009). I have not come across any literature on research done in Ghana on the subject under discussion from the social practice perspective of literacy. My research therefore seeks to bridge this knowledge gap by providing empirical evidence on the relationship between these two concepts from an LSP perspective to make a contribution to knowledge in literacy scholarship. It also seeks to interface the perspectives of policy makers, programme designers, facilitators and participants in literacy and community development programme to enhance programme design. Such a design would be expected to incorporate the social literacy practices of learners into it, and thereby meet the felt needs of the participants. This will possibly create a more realistic link between adult literacy and community development.

It is my expectation that this research will open the way for other researchers in adult literacy and community development scholarship in Ghana to turn their attention to the LSP paradigm.

1.4 Location of my research

The research is located at Saaman and Juaso, two neighbouring farming rural communities in the Eastern region of Ghana. Profiles of these communities are given in chapter four.

1.5 Theoretical framework

The research was framed by two theories which provided the lens with which data on the research question was collected, analyzed and interpreted. These were literacy as a social practice (LSP) and people- centred development (PCD). These theories, which were complemented by other concepts such as „community development “and „adult literacy“, are described together with the complementing concepts, in detail in chapter two.

1.6 Research question and sub-questions

1.6.1 Research question

The research question is: What role (if any) does adult literacy play in community development?

1.6.2 Research sub-questions

The following sub-questions complemented the main question:

- 1 What counts as literacy for the people of Saaman and Juaso?
- 2 What counts as community development for the people of Saaman and Juaso?

- 3 Did participation in the adult literacy classes in Saaman and Juaso by the learners lead to participation in community development in the two communities?
- 4 What literacy events and practices are used by the learners in their daily activities and do these lead to community development?
- 5 How is community development practised in Saaman and Juaso and does adult literacy play any role in the process?

1.7 Aims and objectives

The research sought to achieve the following to contribute to the age-long debate on adult literacy and community development:

- 1 Establish the relationship (if any) between the two concepts.
- 2 Explore how the interface of the perspectives of policy makers, practitioners and learners can be used to enhance the design and implementation of programmes.
- 3 Providing empirical evidence from a Ghanaian case study to introduce and further research on the subject from the social practice perspective of literacy.

1.8 Outline of the thesis

This section provides the structure of the thesis. Besides serving as a guide on how the thesis is organized, it gives a brief description of what to expect in each chapter. The thesis is divided into 10 chapters and an overview of each chapter is given below. In the first three chapters, I present the background to the research, the theoretical underpinnings and the methodology used. In the remaining chapters I present and discuss the findings, conclude and make suggestions that could enhance adult literacy programme design and implementation.

In this introductory chapter, I have presented the background to the research, the rationale, the problem and purpose as well as the significance of the research. I have also introduced the theoretical framework on which the research is based. The remaining chapters are organized as follows:

In Chapter two, I review literature related to the research, thus contextualizing the research in relevant literature, and then I present in detail the theoretical frameworks used. The literature reviewed covered definitions of the key concepts, perceptions on adult literacy, provision of adult literacy in Africa and in Ghana, perceptions on community development, the interface between adult literacy and community development as well as a discussion of other related studies. Finally, I discuss in detail the theoretical frameworks used.

In Chapter three, I discuss the methodology and processes I used to collect and analyze relevant data for the thesis.

In Chapters four to six, I present the findings of the research, supported by data from interviews, informal conversations and observations.

In Chapter nine, I discuss and analyze the findings of the research in relation to the theoretical frameworks used, the literature reviewed, and other related studies.

In Chapter ten, the last chapter of the research, I draw the conclusion on the research; suggest contributions to theory and further areas for research.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I present and discuss the literature related to adult literacy and community development, to help me locate my research within the broader scholarly context. I also present the context of Ghana where the research is situated. The existing literature on literacy and community development strongly suggest that the meaning of these two concepts, as well as how they relate to each other are contested subjects within literacy scholarship. Competing schools of thought hold different conceptions based on the theoretical lens through which they look at the two concepts. This review of the literature attempts to explore available literature on the meaning and role of adult literacy in community development. I also review other related studies undertaken in and outside Ghana and compare the findings to mine.

Finally, having reviewed the relevant literature, I present in detail the two theories which I used to frame my research. These are: Literacy as social practice (LSP) and People-Centred Development (PCD).

In this research, I will use the acronyms LSD and PCD to refer to the two frameworks respectively.

2.2 Scholarly debates on literacy

Literacy is a veritable complex and dynamic concept which has over the years gone through many evolutions. Being „literate“ or „illiterate“ means different things to different people depending upon the scholarly lens through which one looks at it, context, culture, institutional or political agenda, or personal experiences.

In the international policy community, there have been changes in the conceptualization of literacy. These have included the view of acquiring basic skills as an end in itself; as a tool for development; and as a means of awareness-raising for social transformation. The consequences of literacy on individuals and society at large have also been a matter of great debate for decades. The assumption that literacy had positive effects on individuals and society dominated literacy scholarship. These claims were challenged by theorists from the social practice of literacy tradition (also known as the New Literacy Studies), as I will discuss in detail later. My own perspective on literacy is aligned to this tradition and this is what is going to guide my research. I proceed now to discuss the changes in the perceptions on literacy over the decades, bringing out the impact it had on development discourse in the international and national contexts.

2.2.1 *The „Great Divide“ view of literacy.*

Studies have shown that the „great divide“ view of societies has origins in the 1960s under the influence of theorists from the fields of anthropology like Claude Levi-Strauss (1962) and Jack Goody (1968), from the field of history,

Eric Havelock (1963), and in cultural studies, Walter Ong (1982). Proponents of this view claimed the existence of a great divide, socially and cognitively, between „literate“ and „illiterate“, ability to read and write being the invisible line that divided these two sets of people.

The literature suggests that the „great divide“ theorists such as (Goody, 1968, 1977; Ong, 1982) saw literacy as cognitive skills whose functions are not context, time and culture sensitive, and which have positive effects on individuals and societies. Literacy was therefore conceived as a skill to be acquired and which was the preserve of a privileged few. It was perceived to create a dichotomy between „oral“ and „literate“ societies, a divide which the individual crosses upon acquiring literacy, and thus achieves the new cognitive abilities, enabling more complex abstract thought as well as attitudes needed to function in a modern, scientific society than is possible in oral societies.

The acquisition of this literacy is also believed to deliver social, health, economic, and cultural benefits to individuals and communities (EFA Global Monitoring Report (2006). Street (1984:1) labelled this view of literacy “autonomous”, also referred to as conventional literacy. Other theorists, including Gough (1995) have substantiated the claims of the „autonomous“ literacy, attributing to it changes such as personal development and improvements in health status (Maruatona, 2001).

For decades this theory dominated literacy discourse at the global level. This is evidenced by the many international conferences and congresses organized by

UNESCO, which ended with conclusions or recommendations that reflected the view that literacy was a tool for development. A case in point is the 1960 Montreal conference on adult education, which underscored the importance of using „literacy“ as a means of addressing under-development. At the close of the conference, it called on governments to take responsibility of funding adult education (UNESCO, 1960:173).

2.2.2 *Criticisms against the claims of autonomous literacy*

Critics of „autonomous“ literacy have challenged its claims, describing the model as uni-directional, deterministic, de-contextualized, as well as a hegemonic imposition by the West. They challenge the claims made of the role of literacy in fostering rationality and abstract thinking capabilities. They argue that the understanding and uses of literacy vary according to culture and context and would therefore be erroneous to give a „one-size fits all“ definition to literacy (Prinsloo & Breier, 1996; Street, 1984; 1995; 2001b; Wedin, 2004).

Historically, getting to the close of the 1970s and early 1980s, the claims of autonomous literacy began to be brought into question. This included the claim of a divide between individuals and societies (Reder & Davila, 2005:170).

For example, the literacy historian, teaching comparative social history in the History and Humanities Programs at the University of Texas, Dallas, Harvey Graff (1982) in his essay „the legacies of literacy“, questioned the generally held assumption that literacy had positive effects on social and economic development, attributing these claims to ideological influences from the West.

He argued that the industrialization of the developed world cannot be attributed to literacy (Graff, 1982: 12-18).

Other scholars conducted studies, as discussed below, which came out with results that were consistent with the arguments of Graff that literacy on its own does not have consequences on individuals and societies.

Scribner & Cole (1981) also challenged the popular claim of a direct relationship between literacy and individual cognition. In their study on cognitive skills among the Vai people of Liberia, they found that cognition among the people varied depending on the literacy experiences. These included school, religious or community activities. They therefore challenged the „great divide“ views of literacy mentioned early on. Rather, they argued that literacy was to be conceived as the social practices that the people engaged in (Reder & Davila, 2005:172).

Around the same time that Scribner and Cole worked in Liberia, Shirley Heath (1982, 1983) did an ethnographic study on children in selected communities in the USA. She found that children are socialized to literacy in many different ways, depending on their background. Her work therefore problematized selecting just one of those ways as the standard by which all are judged. In her conclusion, she rejected the claimed distinctions between oral and written traditions as well as the presumed effects of „literacy“ on cognition (Heath, 1982: 73).

Again, Street (1984) provided further empirical evidence consistent with the works of Graff (1977), Scribner & Cole (1981), and Heath (1982) in challenging the claims of the „Great Divide“ theories on the nature and consequences of literacy. Working as a social anthropologist in an Iranian village, he discovered and described the use of literacy in different domains by people branded „illiterates“ in their day to day lives. For example, the local Quranic schools taught maktab literacy, while local people demonstrated commercial literacy in their fruit business. He also identified school literacy in government schools both in the villages as well as in urban areas.

From his study he also questioned the validity of the claims of the „Great Divide“ theories which he labeled „autonomous (Street, 1984:1) and argued for a conception of literacy embedded in social activity which he called „ideological“. He again challenged the neutrality of literacy as claimed by the „Great Divide“ theorists, asserting that literacy was neither neutral nor had effects on its own. Rather, he argued that the consequences that ensue from literacy are variable, depending on the social context and the literacy activities undertaken, that are also integral components of larger social practices (Street, 1984)

On his part, James Gee (1996) provided further insights into the literacy debate. He highlighted the important influence the home environments of children had on them in social institutions such as schools. He argued that children whose socialization had been different from that of the school system would need a new form of socialization to be able to perform effectively in the new system.

From the argument of Gee, what would distinguish one child from the other would be the kind of socializations they have been through. Given the same exposure and opportunity, one child might not be better than the other. Why then should we label someone „illiterate“ just because they have not been socialized into reading and writing.

These studies described above paved the way for other studies in the 1990s from around the world, with a focus on literacy as a social practice. Studies were conducted from many countries including the USA, South Africa and UK. These constituted the second generation of literacy studies (Baynham & Prinsloo, 2009).

Clearly, as shown by Graff, Scribner and Cole, Heath, Street, Gee and other scholars within the LSP tradition, a position I share, it would not be valid to conceive of literacy as a universal, neutral and de-contextualizing skill that autonomously, without regard to social and cultural contexts, as having consequences on individuals and societies. I also agree with the LSP scholars that the dichotomization of individuals and societies into „literate“ and „illiterate“ is misleading and therefore needs to be questioned.

In my estimation, while people who can read and write may show improvements in health and economic status, it would be problematic to attribute these changes to the impact of the „literacy“ acquired as claimed by the „autonomous“ model without considering the possibility that other factors like family heritage, vocation, or business may have been the causes of the changes.

Besides, there is no evidence in the literature that people who are not „literate“ do not progress economically or enjoy enhanced health. Should there even be such instances, would it be because they are „illiterate“ or it could be attributed to other factors? If these claims by the autonomous theorists are true, then in any given community those who have been introduced to „literacy“ would be well- off than others who have not benefited from it. Herein lies the justification for my research, as it will come out with empirical data to prove or disprove the claims on the nature and consequences of literacy.

Moreover, I share the concern of the critics who argue against using possession of cognitive skills as a measure of „literacy“ and which is used to label great numbers of people as „illiterate.“ I see such a measure as parochial and a negative hegemonic imposition from the West. Literacy is a multiple set of practices which all members of any community, „literate“ or non- „literate“ alike, engage in in various ways. Measuring „literacy“ by a person“s ability to read and write raises the question of what to read and write? Are all people expected to read and write the foreign languages imposed on them or their own language?

Even in the case where the focus is on people“s in their own languages, what about those societies whose languages have not been developed into written scripts? What do they read and write? Does not being able to put what is in their minds on paper using an imposed writing system erase what they know? Are they still „illiterate“ if they can express what they have in their minds using other forms of representation or orally? Unfortunately, these very people who use literacy in many different forms also consider themselves „illiterate“ because

they have been hegemonically made to believe so. These same sentiments were expressed by Rafat Nabi in the introduction to *„Hidden Literacies*, Nabi et al (2009: VI) when he reported having met people who called themselves „illiterate“ yet were able to use literacy in their social activities and vocations such as writing receipts, filling forms and sending text messages.

In the section below I discuss the social practice view of literacy to show how it is opposed to conventional literacy.

2.2.3 *Literacy as Social Practice*

The concerns over the claims of autonomous literacy led to the birth of the LSP paradigm as mentioned earlier.

Coming from a socio-cultural background, writers within the LSP (also called the New Literacy Studies) tradition, emphasized a model of literacy that was sensitive to context and culture (e.g. Barton, 1994; Heath, 1983; Street, 2003) Literacy is perceived as a social practices, rather than as an autonomous and neutral skill which is not affected by the context in which it finds itself (Street, 1984).

In consonance with the LSP conceptualization of literacy, Street (2003:77) argued that literacy is not about acquiring skills, rather it is a social practice. He conceptualized literacy as being multiple, and taking different forms in relation to time and space. He pointed to the power play in literacy in which some literacy practices marginalize others.

Perry (2012:54) understood literacy as “what people do with reading, writing, and texts in real world contexts and why they do it”. This view was re-echoed by Prinsloo & Baynham (2008:1- 2) adding that „literacy“ cannot be understood in a vacuum, rather as an integral part of society.

Barton & Hamilton (2000:8) proposed the nature of literacy as listed below:

- “Literacy is best understood as a set of social practices; these can be inferred from events which are mediated by written texts
- There are different literacies associated with different domains of life
- Literacy practices are patterned by social institutions and power relationships, and some literacies become more dominant, visible and influential than others
- Literacy practices are purposeful and embedded in broader social goals and cultural practices
- Literacy is historically situated
- Literacy practices change, and new ones are frequently acquired through processes of informal learning and sense making”

Agreeing with the above categorization, Hamilton & Ivanic (2000: 1-15) added a seventh characteristic which linked people’s understanding of reality to how they perceive „literacy“.

The historicity of literacy was corroborated by Freebody (1999:5) when he argued that writing materials and systems used in literacy leave traces for future generations to see.

However, as Street (2001a: 18) observes, the idea of literacy being multiple does not mean that there is one literacy per culture. There could be several literacy practices within the same culture.

Drawing from these categorizations of the nature of literacy, I re-affirm my agreement with the LSP tradition that literacy is an integral part of the social activities of the people who use it. I also agree with Baynham (1995) that literacy is a communal resource. However, social institutions like schools and the church exert a hegemonic influence on the understanding and use of literacy, making some literacy practices appear to be more important than others.

The focus of LSP on literacy as social practice has in recent times been expanded to include the use of “text and other digital forms that demand new social practices, skills, strategies, dispositions, and/ or literacies” (Coiro et al, 2008:21). There have been studies that expand the earlier focus on literacy as text to include attention to image and other semiotic forms, as well as multi-modal texts that include visuals and sound. For example, in *„Literacies, Global and Local“* Gee (2008: 139) defines a semiotic domain as one in which „words, symbols, images and/ or artifacts“ combine to provide meaning. These modalities are used in the communication process and they are understood by all members of the domain. A particular example given by Gee (2008) which

resonates well with my argument of iterative religious recitations as literacy practices is Roman Catholic theology (Gee, 2008:137). Members recite long phrases from memory because they have been doing it over and over again.

The semiotic and multi-modality view of literacy is further supported by Pahl (2008) as well as Prinsloo (2008). Both scholars agree on the multi-modal meaning-making practices among children, even though their studies were situated in different contexts. While Pahl focused on children's text-making practices at home and at school, Prinsloo looked at children's games and peer play routines in the out-of-school Cape Town township of Khayelitsha. Pahl shows how family resources and embodied history show up in the multimodal social activities of children. The idea of the conceptualization of literacy going beyond written text is also supported by the work of (Cope & Kalantzis, 2012), which noted how the written word, oral and gestures, among other modalities combined to make meaning (Cope & Kalantzis, 2012:3). I however, did not dwell on this aspect of literacy as it is not the focus of my study.

Following from the literature, my own understanding of literacy which I used in this thesis is that literacy involves reading and writing, which form an integral part of the social lives of the people. I also note that there are always reasons behind the observable literacy events and these can only be understood through engagement with the users. For example, a trader may use writing in her commercial activities to keep record of her sales, income and expenditure. The reason behind this act would be to ensure that he/she does not trade at a loss. I

also argue that for the understanding of literacy to be complete, it has to include the semiotic and multi-modal aspects of it.

2.2.4 Literacy and power relations

The ideological model of literacy recognizes the influence that societal power structures exert on literacy. As Gee (1996) indicate, literacy is a contested concept in its meaning, form, functions, and values. Literacy is ideological and some literacy practices are associated with particular world views which attempt to dominate other literacy practices. An example is the dominance of the autonomous model in literacy scholarship for decades, influencing policy and development practice, and suppressing the social practice view of literacy (Street 1984; 2001).

This hegemonic influence is subtly sustained through institutional structures such as schools and religion. Through these structures the values, beliefs, and practices as well as language of dominant groups are subtly imposed on marginal groups Gee (2005) referred to this as “the ways in which history, institutions, and affinity groups think and act in and through us” (Gee, 2005: 142).

LSP therefore does not take as a given the meaning of literacy in any particular context. Rather, scholars of this tradition try to uncover what these mean to the people in that particular context. Often, one form of literacy is socially accepted as better than other forms. (Barton & Hamilton (1998: 7) corroborated the power play in literacy when they observed that some literacy practices assume more importance than others.

However, as was noted by Kulick & Stroud (1993: 25), in some cases the power play in literacy takes another form as the presumed weaker group take the literacy presented to them and turn it round for their own intended purposes. This example of Kulick & Stroud (ibid) is consistent with the view of Freire (2001:173) who understood literacy as the ways in which learners related to the world. To him, literacy is a process awakening by which learners apply what they read to real life situations and is thus empowered (Freire, 2001: 106).

The concept of power relations as expressed in LSP is also echoed in the People-Centred Development (PCD) model of development. This is seen in the recognition by PCD that communities are not homogenous and that “there will always exist formal or informal power structures within each community which reflect social, economic and political relationships among the members of the community as well as with the outside world” (Burkey, 1993: 207).

2.2.5 *Literacy events and practices*

- Literacy events

Literacy events and practices occupy the epicenter of the social practice theory of literacy. Heath (1982) defined a literacy event as “any occasion in which a piece of writing is integral to the nature of the participants’ interactions and their interpretative processes” (Heath, 1982: 93). Heath (1983: 386) again identified coding and decoding of the written word as an integral part of literacy events.

Building on Heath's definition, Street (2001) gave examples of literacy events that can easily be observed in any situation where they are happening. These included checking timetables and reading road signs. (Street 2001:21).

In my own understanding, literacy events include those moments in the interactions between people in which decoding and encoding of text feature. There are now multiple modes of expression and communication in addition to the traditional written word, such as sending text messages via mobile phones, sending e-mails, chatting with people on Facebook, and more recently Whatsapping which allows chatting and sending of photos instantly. These new developments reflect vividly the local-global nature of literacy, where people can instantly send information from their local locations to global spaces and also instantly receive information from the latter. This phase in the development of technology has enhanced the influence of the global on the local. Whereas literacy events involve the observable acts of doing this with text, literacy practices go beyond the physical act to the more general sociocultural framing that gives significance to particular acts as (Barton 1994; Baynham 1995) observe.

- Literacy practices

Literacy practices have been defined in several ways by different scholars. For example, Street (1995:2) sees literacy practices as referring to how people use literacy and the meanings they attach to what they do.

Barton, Hamilton & Ivanic (2000) shared Street's (1995) view, and linked literacy practices to how people make use of the written word based on their cultural practices (Barton, Hamilton & Ivanic, 2000: 7).

Culture and context are therefore very key elements in any discussion of literacy practices. For example, as Street (1984) found in Iran, against the common expectation that learners taught in the state schools would be the ones to translate what they learned in the classes into commercial activities; it was rather the learners from the Quranic schools that were able to do that. The reason could be that Iran being an Islamic State, the learners from the Quranic schools had more social recognition and clout to undertake those activities. The learners from the state schools were perhaps seen to be oriented outwards and therefore did not enjoy the same social recognition. This shows the importance of identity and social recognition in literacy practice.

Literacy practices go beyond the observable literacy activity. It is linked to the wider environment. As Street (2001a) observed, in a literacy event, we can only understand what is happening when we talk and listen to people, as well as link the activity to other things they do.

For me, this understanding underscores the need for an ethnographic approach to research within the LSP tradition, explaining why I adopted an ethnographic methodology in my research.

It is therefore problematic when researchers and governments use just surveys and other data collection techniques in an attempt to establish people's literacy

status. This approach has resulted in many people who use reading and writing in diverse ways being branded „illiterate“. This is so in the sense that these people may not consider many of the activities they engage in as literacy.

A literacy practice can be observed as a regular, iterative event. Examples of these would include recitations of prayer in the mosque as Street found in Iran (Street, 1984) as well as the liturgy in a Christian church. In both instances the same words are repeated over and over again such that people can recite them off the top of their heads without referring to what is written. A literacy practice is also purposeful (Barton & Hamilton, 2000; Barton et al, 2000). The Quranic recitations as well as the liturgy prayers of Christians are intended for the spiritual upliftment of practitioners. A literacy practice is thus the reason behind what people do in a literacy event.

In literacy practices, the oral and the literate overlap, and reading and writing is seen as a communal resource. This means that possession of this technical skill may not be a priority at the individual level if it is available in the community (Baynham, 1995). For example, people with reading and writing difficulties can be part of development planning committees and contribute effectively as others who can write take the minutes.

Prinsloo & Baynham (2008: 5) observed that in a literacy study, empirical units of analysis are derived from literacy events, while the analytical frame is derived from literacy practices.

Methodologically, researchers in the LSP tradition observe literacy events and link them to the broader contexts to have a sense of what is happening. In line with other research done from the LSP perspective, I will employ an ethnographic methodology for the collection of my data.

2.2.6 *Critique of the LSP*

A number of concerns have been raised against the ethnographic standpoint of LSP as discussed below:

Brandt & Clinton (2002) noted that in its challenge of the autonomous model, LSP places too much emphasis on the local, creating its own dichotomy between the global and the local. This, they argued, make it difficult to take cognizance of what literacy does in local contexts. They again criticized the failure of the LSP to take into account the effect of the global context on the local, arguing that “literacy practices are not typically invented by their practitioners. Nor are they independently chosen or sustained by them. Literacy in use more often than not serves multiple interests, incorporating individual agents and their locales into larger enterprises that play out away from the immediate scene” (Brandt & Clinton, 2002: 2)

Street (2003), in his response to the concern regarding the over-emphasis of the local, argued that being distant does not make a particular literacy autonomous. Rather, they are ideological and should therefore not be thought of as neutral. He cautioned against labeling „distant literacies as „autonomous as being distant or new, or ability to influence local literacies, do not make them autonomous

(Street, 2003:80). Street (2003) again argued that from an LSP perspective, distant literacies do not keep their force and meaning intact when they come into contact with local contexts, contrary to the suggestion of Brandt & Clinton (2002).

Making reference to Kulick & Stroud (1993:25), Street (2003) affirmed that local people make new literacy practices brought to them their own and adapt them to their individual circumstances. In the view of Street, the nature of literacy does not remain the same in the encounters between the local and the global. Rather, a new hybrid of literacy is created in the process and it is this new hybrid that LSP focuses on, rather than on the local or the global.

Similarly, Collins & Blot (2003) were concerned that rather than addressing general questions of theory and practice surrounding literacy, LSP concerns itself with generating descriptions of local literacies. They however, acknowledged that LSP has developed a useful series of ethnographies. However, they expressed concern that the over-emphasis on ethnography makes LSP unable to address broader societal issues (Collins & Blot, 2003:5).

Street (2003), however, again responded to these concerns, noting that LSP was already focusing on the issues raised by the critics. He gave examples as the study of Bartlett & Holland (2002) identities and practice, which linked LSP to broader social theory. Also Street's (2003) focus on literacy and power, and Maybin's (2000) work on situated literacies in which she linked LSP to wider strands of social-critical work.

Street (2003) noted again that Janks (2000) linked literacy studies to broader social theory, in order to pull together the various aspects of critical literacy education.

Finally, (Maddox, 2001; and Stromquist, 2004) raised concerns on the failure of LSP to explore the possibility of literacy enhancing participation in economic, social and political participation activities.

The most recent critique of the LSP came from Boughton (2016). He critiqued the failure of LSP to recognize the benefits of mass literacy campaigns, some of which he had been personally involved (Boughton, 2016:2). He observed that in recent times “academic literature has ignored the extension of literacy via the mass campaign model” despite its benefits. Boughton (2016) critiqued LSP for “relying too much on post-structuralism theory and ethnographic methodology, while paying scant attention to the ongoing political economy of adult education and development in the Global South” (Boughton, 2016:1). The second concern of Boughton (2016) is that the LSP critique of mass literacy campaigns has “strengthened the neo- liberal argument against large-scale state-and social movement-led adult literacy campaigns” (Boughton, 2016:1).

Looking at these concerns that have been raised and Street’s response to them, I share the concerns of Brandt and Clinton regarding the over-emphasis of the local to the detriment of the global. For me, this is more valid especially in this era of technological advancement which allows instant interaction between the local and the global. The use of text messaging, internet and Whatsapp allows

the constant interface between the two worlds, allowing the influence of the global on the local. There are people today in local communities who know and are influenced by happenings in the global world even more than their own local communities. For example, in the area of football, there are people in Ghana who know more about and are emotionally attached to foreign football teams than local ones!

I agree with Street that LSP practitioners need to be aware of this local-global encounter and take into account the hybrid that emerges from the encounter, in their writings. While not over-emphasizing the local, we should also not ignore the influence of the global on the local.

I again identify with Maddox and Stromquist in their concern in the sense that the LSP paradigm, in rejecting the claim of the conventional view of literacy that literacy leads to community development, fails to establish a clear relationship between the two. The relationship between adult literacy and community development, from an LSP perspective has not received much attention and this gap is what my research seeks to fill as I mentioned earlier in the aims and objectives.

The concerns raised by Boughton (2016) are worth considering in the sense that literacy campaigns are vehicles for making necessary information available to the masses. This can be done from an LSP perspective where education is given taking into consideration the social activities that people are involved in. To problematize mass literacy entirely as LSP does is in itself problematic. I argue

for a kind of mass literacy campaign that will help make people more efficient in their social activities and vocations.

2.3 Understandings of literacy in the field of practice

UNESCO and other entities in the international community usually understand „literacy“ as possessing the technical skill of reading and writing. For example, in 1958, UNESCO linked a person’s literacy status to being able to read and write (UIL, 2010:20). In 1978, UNESCO saw literacy as a means to make people function effectively in their groups as well as achieve personal and community development (ibid).

Again, in 2005, UNESCO linked literacy to the achievement of personal goals, development of knowledge and potential, as well as increased participation in community (UNESCO, 2005a: 21).

As was noted by Fransman (2008: 55), policy documents such as the “Dakar Framework for Action and the Millennium Development Goals of 2000 (MDGs)” underlined the importance of „literacy“ in achieving development. The underlying perception in a conventional literacy programme is that literacy can lead to community development. This perception influenced many of the conferences organized by UNESCO on Adult Education which ended with conclusions or recommendations that reflect this assumption. For example, the Montreal Conference on Adult Education, organized by UNESCO in 1960 concluded that increased literacy among the populace was essential for countries to be able to address the challenge of underdevelopment (UNESCO, 1960).

The period 1990-2010 witnessed an increased affirmation in global policy framework that literacy played a role in sustainable development. The World Education Forum held in Dakar in 2000, for example, emphasized the need to promote literacy in order to achieve sustainable development (UNESCO, 2000a). The 2010 Belém Framework for Action recognized literacy as providing learning opportunities for young and old alike (UIL, 2010:17)

In the first Global Report on Adult Learning and Education, UNESCO reported that “young people and adults who struggle with reading, writing and operating with numbers are more vulnerable to poverty, social exclusion, unemployment, poor health, demographic changes, displacement and migration, and to the impacts of man-made and natural disasters” (UIL, 2010:24)

This view of the correlation between literacy and sustainable development was further buttressed by International development agencies. As was reported by Bhola, (2008),

the United Nations Literacy Decade (2003-2012), and United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014) have now reaffirmed that commitment to adult literacy is essential if the dreams of sustainable development and poverty eradication are ever to be realized (Bhola, 2008:11).

However, contrary to the global discourses on the affordances of literacy with respect to social transformation, Bhola (2008) noted that “we should not expect literacy to have a deterministic role in societal change” (Bhola, 2008: 28)

arguing that although literacy is necessary, it cannot effect such changes on its own. He was of the view that congenial socio-political environment was essential for literacy to contribute to societal change.

I share the view of Bhola (2008) on the inadequacy of literacy alone to cause positive changes in individuals and communities. However, I hasten to add that the conceptualization of literacy in the international community has been skewed towards viewing literacy as a technical skill, consistent with the autonomous tradition. This ignores the contextual and social aspects of literacy, giving a clear indication of the influence that the conventional view of literacy has had on development thinking.

2.3.1 Functional literacy and the Experimental World Literacy Programme

Gray (1956: 24) considered a person to be functionally literate if he/she was able to participate actively in activities of his/her group which required the use of „literacy“.

In the 1960s and 1970s, the idea of literacy as a vehicle achieving growth and development became dominant. This formed the basis of the launch of the Experimental World Literacy Programme (EWLP) in 1967 with a view to integrating theory and practice. In collaboration with UNDP, UNESCO established pilot projects in 11 countries, including Ethiopia and Tanzania, with the aim of achieving social and economic growth in these countries (Lind & Johnston, 1989, Valdivielso, 2008.).

Contrary to the prevailing modernization theory in the 1960s which understood development in the peripheral capitalist countries of the South in terms of industrialization and modernization of agriculture, in functional literacy projects development was conceived in holistic terms with economic, social, cultural, educational, scientific and other vital components inseparably integrated. This approach necessitated the integration of literacy and vocational content. In this regard, functional literacy was seen as a catalyst for preparation of individuals for their social, cultural, civic, and economic roles (Dorvlo, 1992). Functional literacy thus entailed economic, cultural, social and political training and awakening.

This understanding of functional literacy was corroborated by the African Development Bank (2003) when it drew a distinction between traditional literacy, and functional literacy. Whereas they saw the former as an end in itself, they perceived the latter as a means of environmental transformation.

It can be seen from the literature that functional literacy provision is not limited to the improvement in the economic lives of learners and their communities. It is expected to lead to the awakened consciousness on the part of the learners so that they will be able to identify their oppressive circumstances and take collective action against those elements that stand in the way of their progress so as to be able to transform their reality (Freire, 1992). The claim of positive impacts on functional literacy on individuals and communities has however, been criticized as rhetoric.

I am of the view that while functional literacy has some merits, drawing a linear relationship between literacy skills acquired by learners and social improvements is problematic. Learners in a functional literacy programme live in environmental, cultural, political and social contexts that their mere acquisition of knowledge will not enable them to penetrate. The translation of their learning into development gains can only be realized with the support of these structures. However, I see a link between functional literacy and LSP in the sense that both conceptualize literacy beyond mere reading and writing and link it with vocations of individuals. The difference I see is the emphasis that LSP places on the social context which is not seen in functional literacy.

2.3.2 *Literacy as a transformative process*

Contrary to conventional literacy, other scholars, Freire being the pioneer, view literacy from a transformative (or critical) perspective (Maruatona, 2001).

Transformative literacy is perceived as a tool for empowering learners so that they can in turn contribute to the transformation of the communities in which they find themselves. The assumption was that through the acquisition of the needed knowledge, skills, attitudes, and awareness, learners would be able to identify and work towards changing the oppressive elements that militate against their progress (Freire, 1970; Freire & Macedo, 1987; Giroux, 1983, 1997; Hernandez, 1997).

This conceptualization of literacy dominated literacy discourse in international organizations including UNESCO. To acknowledge the leading role Freire in the

development of transformative, literacy, in 1975 UNESCO awarded him the Mohamed Reza Pahlavi Prize for literacy. The Persepolis Declaration in 1975 called for the need for literacy to lead to individual development. The Persepolis conference has been described as the turning point in adult literacy (Lind & Johnston, 1989). At that conference, literacy was perceived as a political act to transform social reality (UNESCO 1975)

It would seem from the Persepolis declaration that UNESCO had shifted from the age-old dominant autonomous approach to development to a more ideological approach. However, from a closer observation, one notices that the same old autonomous approaches were in force.

In support of the Persepolis perspective, Rassool (1999) argued for literacy to achieve personal and economic development, the capacity of learners needed to be built to analyze power relations.

Earlier in 1993, Dorvlo (1993) had asserted that the purpose of literacy should be to conscientize the marginalized on the social and environmental forces which have rendered them poor and to develop skills to change the state of their deprivation and poverty.

Transformative literacy, ties in well with the concepts, objectives and principles of self-reliance in people-centred development. As Burkey argues, becoming self-reliant is a question of attitudes. “People must feel and believe that it is their own efforts that are driving the development process” (Burkey 1993: 50). Adult literacy classes are therefore expected to help build the correct attitudes in

people so that they can take responsibility for their own development. People centred development cautions against development practitioners doing things for the people and doling things out. Rather, they are to help the people to analyze and understand what their problems are and how they can be solved.

The critical literacy theory of Freire has similarities with LSP in that he places emphasis on context and rejects a general programme for all learners. However, the concern I have with Freire's theory of critical literacy is that in some cases the political, social, economic and cultural environment of the learners may prevent them from taking action as Bhola (2008) and Burkey (1993) observed.

Comparing and contrasting the different conceptualizations of literacy that have evolved over time, it comes out from the literature that the autonomous view of literacy, functional literacy, literacy as learning, and literacy as a transformative process have one feature in common. This is that they are all expected to have positive effects on the individual learner and society at large. There are however, some marked differences between these conceptualizations. For example, whereas autonomous literacy focuses on a single skill, in functional literacy, the focus is on a set of competencies.

Viewed from an LSP perspective, it becomes clear that all the other conceptualizations fail to appreciate the fact that literacy is multiple and embedded in social activity. Literacy is not a stand-alone concept. Its meaning and uses vary based on the context in which it is used. The multi-modality and semiotic aspects of literacy that come out in literacy as a social practice are

missed out in the other conceptualizations, making them parochial in their understanding of literacy.

Putting all of these conceptualizations together can help broaden our understanding and use of literacy. Literacy can thus be conceptualized as a functional set of skills which use either the written word or other multi-modal or semiotic forms, including sound, image, or visual, which are embedded in social activities. Literacy can have positive effects on individuals and societies if those who use it have the capacity to rightly engage the political, cultural, social and economic forces and structures that resist change.

2.4 What is adult literacy?

There have been varied views on the concept of adult literacy in literacy scholarship. Stromquist, 2009) for example, argued that adult literacy as a set of cognitive skills should enhance a person's capacity to function in his/her environment, as well as lead to social transformation (Stromquist, 2009:2)

In contrast to the view of Stromquist, the UNESCO Institute of Learning (2013), even though they also saw adult literacy as a tool for social transformation, did not dwell on cognition. Rather, they conceptualized adult literacy as developing the competencies of learners to enhance their capacities. According to the UNESCO Institute of Learning (UIL) (2013), adult literacy should go beyond teaching skills to using it to develop the individual and society.

UIL (ibid) notes that individuals sometimes participate in adult literacy programmes because they missed formal schooling and they simply wish “to read and write” (UIL, 2013:15).

Moving away from the expressed views on adult literacy, Anna Robinson-Pant (2008) argued that rather than using literacy as a means to empowerment or access to family planning, it should be used to understand how literacy relates to the daily life experiences of women.

Robinson-Pant’s (2008) view of adult literacy is consistent with that of LSP, a view I also share. The meaning of adult literacy is not a giving. It varies from context to context and is shaped by a society’s or an individual’s history, culture and experience.

In this research, conducted from the LSP perspective, I define adult literacy as a learning process (Hanemann, 2015) geared towards the development and use of skills, competencies, and practices necessary for the day to day effective functioning in society and not merely the teaching of school literacy in classrooms. It is about identifying those multiple and varied social literacy practices embedded in the social activities and vocations of adults and finding practical ways of making learners more efficient in their use.

2.4.1 Adult literacy as a learning process

Parr & Campbell (2013) viewed literacy as a learning process rather than as a limited educational intervention. In the process of learning, both facilitators and learners come to literacy classes with their personal values. It is in view of this

that scholars have argued that adult literacy programmes do not occur in a vacuum; neither are they value-free (Street, 1984, Valdivielso, 2008, Youngman, 2000).

In recognition of this fact, scholars in the field of adult education, such as Knowles (1980) advocated for the use of personal experience in learning. Nabi et al (2009: 8) re-echoed this need of incorporating the experience of learners into the learning process.

This is important in the sense that no learning process ever starts from scratch. Adults bring with them into the learning their past experiences, their beliefs and their values, and for learning programmes to be effective, all of these need to be taken into account.

Freire (1972) in his theory of conscientization emphasized the need for learners to go through a process of critically reflecting on the real issues that confront them and taking action to correct the undesirable (Campfens, 1997: 37).

While Freire's (1972) conscientization theory is very relevant in the learning process, I have a challenge with it. It rests on visions of liberation and social transformation, assuming that all the people in the contexts he deals with share the same experience and understanding of oppression, which in some cases is not so. Within communities there may be diverse views of this understanding.

Consistent with this theory of learning and transformation is the Transformation theory of Mezirow (1990, 1991a) which posits if individuals change their

perspectives of the world through learning from their experiences, they can in turn contribute to societal change

The literature also underscores the importance of the environment in which learning takes place for achieving successful learning. This includes the physical, psychological and social dimensions of the learning environment (Merriam & Brockett, 2007).

Smith (1994) wrote about collaborative learning which sees learning as an activity done with people, not for them. It regards individual learning as a by-product of collective learning. The collaborative type of learning is locally-initiated and locally controlled. In this type of learning people create their own knowledge and examine the roles that power and oppression play in society. Smith observes that both informal conversations among the people and formal discussions can bring about change and learning.

The literature suggests that if a learning process can be successful, and achieve the expected result; the experiences of the participants need to be roped into the process. The notion of collaborative learning as proposed by Smith (1994) ties in well with the critical literacy of Freire where literacy is seen as a dialogue between the facilitator and the learner, and not that of a teacher-student relationship. For me, this is important as in many cases the majority of the learners are older and have more experience in life than the facilitator. Any display of teacher-student relationship which attempts to deposit knowledge into

the heads of the learners without recognition of their prior learning could put some learners off.

Moreover, the notion of locally- initiated and locally- controlled type of learning is in sharp contrast of what happens in many conventional adult literacy classes where programmes are designed and imposed on learners with no input from them. This approach runs the risk of designing literacy programmes that do not reflect the realities of the learners.

2.4.2 Adult literacy and women empowerment

Many international agencies consider adult literacy as an important tool for empowerment of women. The UNESCO Institute of Learning for instance noted that “women face considerable barriers to accessing learning opportunities” (UIL, 2014:3). The institute again noted the limited participation of women in governance, management, political decision-making processes (UIL, 2014:4). “*The Education for All (EFA) campaign, which was launched in 2000*” (UIL, 2014:2) was aimed at addressing gender disparity. Similarly, the 1990 Jomtien education conference saw the education women and girls“ education as a priority (UNESCO Institute of Education, 1996:9).

At both the international and national levels, women“s literacy has received attention and commitment. For example, “the essence of the Education for All (EFA) Goals 4 and 5 is to improve levels of adult literacy, especially for women, and achieve gender equality in education, by 2015 ” (UIL, 2014:2).

Again, the 2009 Belém Framework for Action, governments made renewed commitments towards women's literacy (UIL, 2010:8), cited in (UIL, 2014:2).

As a result of the focus on women described above, UNESCO has reported “stories of success, hope and possibility which show how literacy learning can support the empowerment of women, families, communities, and, ultimately, entire societies” (UIL, 2014:3). For example, “*in Nepal and Brazil, women have been trained as volunteer community facilitators to take on community education*” (ibid: 4). Similarly, in India women were trained to progress from being ordinary members of groups to becoming supervisors (ibid)

UNESCO recognizes that literacy on its own “does not empower women to create and participate in change” (UIL, 2014:4). To achieve this, literacy would need the support of “policies and programmes” (ibid) that creates the needed environment for this to happen, as has been noted by Bhola (2008), Burkey (1993) and Youngman (2000).

The literature attributes a number of positive developments in women to literacy such as improvements in child care, women's health, as well as economic empowerment. However, as I have stated early on, any claim of a direct link between literacy and these outcomes is problematic.

In this research however, I did not focus on literacy and empowerment of women as that was not what I set out to investigate. Additionally, many of the women who had participated in the adult literacy classes were not available in the community at the time of the research. This notwithstanding I involved equal

numbers of women and men who had participated in the adult literacy classes in my research.

2.5 Brief Background information on Ghana

Ghana is a tropical, Anglophone country, located in the West African sub-region. It shares boundaries with three francophone countries and the Atlantic Ocean. To the east, west, north, and south of the country lay Togo, Cote D'Ivoire, Burkina Faso and the Atlantic Ocean respectively. It occupies an area of 238,537 square kilometres and has a population of 25,241,998. The landscape is generally low-lying landscape, divided into three main ecological zones: northern savannah, the forest zone in the centre and south, and the coastal savannah belt. The country is divided into ten regions which are sub-divided into 170 districts. The capital city is Accra, which is also the seat of government. Out of the over 100 different ethnic groups in Ghana, the Akan group, constituting about 45.3% is the largest (African Union, 2015).

2.5.1 The educational system in Ghana

Prior to 1990 when the Government embarked on educational reforms to reduce the number of years of basic education before one could access tertiary education, one had to do 10 years of basic education. This comprised six years of Primary education (Primary one to Primary six). Prior to going to Primary one there were opportunities to go to crèche, Kindergarten and Nursery, but these were optional and not everybody did that.

After primary six, one proceeded to middle school for four years and sat for the Middle School Leaving Certificate (MSLC) examination. After completing

middle school, one could decide not to continue with schooling and look for a job. Those who decided to further their education could proceed to secondary school for five years and sit for the General Certificate of Education, Ordinary Level (GCE „O“ Level) examination. One could also pursue technical education at this point. It was however, not mandatory for one to do all the ten years of basic education before proceeding to secondary school. There was opportunity to sit for the common entrance examination to enter the secondary school after some years of basic education. People normally sat for this and entered secondary school from primary six onwards.

After the educational reforms in 1990, however, the junior and senior high school systems were introduced in Ghana. By this, one did six years of elementary education, three years of junior high education, and three years of senior high education and could either enter the University or do professional training like nursing or teaching. The number of years required before one could enter the University was thus reduced from 17 to twelve years, a reduction of five years.

However, for various reasons including financial not everybody had the chance of going to school in Ghana. Some who got the chance also dropped out for several reasons. Furthermore, it is possible to find people who have had years of basic education but still cannot read and write, either in English or in the local language. This situation led to the introduction of the nationwide NFLP by the government to give a second chance to those who wanted to have some basic

education or to improve their level of „literacy“. The NFLP will be discussed later in more detail.

Having given some background information on the context of my thesis, Ghana to help the reader appreciate better the general context in which this research was undertaken, I describe the provision of Adult literacy in Ghana, starting with a general overview of Adult literacy provision in Africa.

2.6 Political economy and adult literacy provision in Africa

Provision of adult literacy in Africa has been influenced by global political discourses as well as national policies at different times of its provision. In pre-colonial days, Christian missionaries used adult literacy to teach their converts how to read the bible. Similarly, during colonial rule in Africa, literacy was promoted by colonial masters with the goal of perpetuating colonial rule (Omolewa, 2008).

Bhola (2008) reported that in the 1960s and 70s; adult literacy provision in Africa was influenced by the dominant global policies like modernization and neoliberalism. Implemented under the influence of the dominant autonomous view of literacy, economic development was integrated with the teaching of reading, writing and numeracy. Giving the example of Tanzania, he noted that in 1967, the Experimental World Literacy Programme (EWLP) model promoted by UNESCO and UNDP was used in the provision of adult literacy. He noted however, that in practice, the programme was tilted towards meeting the developmental needs of government and not those of the people. He further

reported that the country's 5-year development plan (1961-1966) for example, underscored the importance of functional literacy but focused mainly on how it would raise and improve agricultural productivity, particularly as it related to cash crop production. Eradication of poverty at the individual level and enhancement of living standards were ignored.

Similarly, Carr-Hill & Roy (2001) reported that in Uganda, adult literacy classes were used by the ruling government to give functional knowledge to adults many of whom had attended formal school as children but had not been able to use profitably the knowledge acquired to enhance their lives. The programme integrated the provision of inputs and credit into development training.

These reports by Bhola and Carr-Hill & Roy (2001) confirm the criticism of the top-down approach to delivering adult literacy programmes under autonomous literacy. An approach which always seeks to achieve the agenda of international organizations and governments with no regard to the interests of the people on whom these programmes are imposed. Again, the EWLP programme failed to neither take into consideration the social context as LSP advocates nor put the people at the centre of the intervention as advocated by the people-centred paradigm of development. It is not surprising therefore that it failed to achieved its objectives. Merely teaching people to read and write and giving them functional skills cannot lead to community development as I have argued early on in agreement with proponents of literacy as a social practice. An understanding of the social context and building the capacity of learners to confront the inhibiting structures is very essential.

In like manner, in Botswana, adult literacy provision was under strict government control. Youngman (2000:128) noted that adult literacy was not given priority by the state in the early years after independence. It was only after a government policy paper on education in 1977 stated an intention to consider literacy programmes that the Ministry of Education's adult education section, the Botswana Extension College (BEC) was able to undertake two pilot literacy projects (1977 and 1978), which revealed the social demand for adult literacy tuition, and provided experience in running literacy activities. In 1981, the country launched the Botswana National Literacy programme (BNLP), aimed at eradicating illiteracy and improving livelihoods among adults and youth by 1986. However, according to Bhola (2008), the programme did not have any improvement on individual lives even though it improved the reading and writing skills of the learners. Maruatona (2001), in his PhD dissertation submitted to the University of Georgia, USA, criticized the planning of the curriculum as being top-down, centralized and not reflecting the views of the participants. He argued because the learners were not involved in the planning process, the curriculum did not reflect their interests, rather, those of policy makers. Early on in 1997 in a report submitted to the Gender and Education Committee of the Faculty of Education, University of Botswana, Maruatona pointed to problems in the approach to teaching in which the average class had little dialogue, a tendency towards memorization and even rote learning, with little reference to the local context (Maruatona, 1997).

According to Bhola (2008), Functional literacy provision in Ethiopia, on the contrary, departed from the provision of literacy from a conventional perspective. Rather than using functional literacy provision for economic development, it was used for awareness raising and greater participation of all people in nation building in the tradition of transformative literacy.

The literature has shown that under the influence of the EWLP adult literacy practice in Africa in the main adopted the functional literacy tradition, with expectations of a linear relationship between literacy and social transformation. Unfortunately, however, even though some impacts were made, especially in the area of improved self-confidence among the learners, the claims of social transformation as a result of the work of adult literacy are largely debatable.

2.7 Adult literacy provision in Ghana

Adult literacy provision in Ghana followed the same path as other African countries, in its influence by global discourses and national policies. Adult literacy work in Ghana dates as far back in the eighteenth century when the Dutch Reformed Church introduced adult literacy in Ghana (Amedzro, 2004; Dorvlo, 1993). The primary education techniques of teaching literacy were the alphabetic and phonetic techniques to teach reading. Ghana adopted the Laubach teaching technique which emphasized syllables in teaching reading. Both the primary education technique and the Laubach technique merely taught “illiterate” adults how to read.

After the Second World War in 1948, adult literacy was officially adopted by the British Colonial Government as a component of the national education system. The period 1948-1968 marked the first large-scale literacy programme in Ghana. It was used to prepare people to participate effectively in Ghana's independence struggle. Adult literacy provision featured strongly in the modernization scheme of President Nkrumah in 1957, as „mass literacy“ education programmes were organized throughout the country. The programme lasted up to the end of 1968 and collapsed after granting certificates to about 250,000 participants.

According to Amedzro (2004), the reasons for the failure of the programme included the size of classes; use of inappropriate teaching materials and methodologies. Aoki (2005) corroborated the reasons given by Amedzro, adding supply- driven approaches without participant interest and poor links to occupational and civic needs to the reasons of the decline.

The reasons observed by Amedzro and Aoki are important as they raise questions about how the programme was planned and delivered, as well as how learning materials were developed. These reasons are consistent with the concerns Maruatona (2001) expressed against the design and implementation of the Botswana literacy programme. It points to the importance of involving learners in the design of such programmes. Literacy programmes that do not reflect the interests of learners run the risk of demotivating learners and leading to fall-out. The adult will not commit to anything that he feels will not be immediately beneficial to him, as Knowles (1989) observed.

From 1968-1986 adult literacy was provided by religious and secular organizations, with no support from government (Amedzro, 2004). For instance, the introduction of the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) by the Rawlings regime in 1984 under the influence of neocolonialism, with its accompanying cut in government expenditure, affected adult literacy provision in Ghana.

In 1986, adult and non-formal education was reactivated with the aim of offering basic literacy to six million „illiterates“ by 2000. In 1987, the Non-Formal Education Division of the Ministry of Education (NFED/MOE) was created and charged with the responsibility of coordinating Non-Formal education activities in the country. The aim of the NFED was to eradicate „illiteracy“ in Ghana by 2015 (Aryeetey & Kwakye, 2005). As (Aryeetey & Kwakye, *ibid*: 5) observed, “eradication of „illiteracy“ in Ghana has been considered a strategy for sustainable development through empowering people to develop themselves, participate in the process of development and enjoy the benefits thereof”.

Policy makers wanted to use the NFED to achieve enhanced participation in development by the marginalized in society as well as reduce poverty (Owusu-Mensah, 2008:88).

However, as I have argued early on, the idea of achieving community development and reducing poverty through adult literacy classes as claimed by Aryeetey and Kwakye (2005) and Owusu-Mensah (2008) is nothing but a mirage, a political propaganda which made no significant impact on communities and on the economic status of individuals.

Again, the argument by Owusu-Mensah (2008) that people considered „illiterate“ do not participate actively in development is questionable as the results of my research show that participation in community development is not the result of „literacy“. Rather, it is born out of a person’s commitment to the community, as well as the organizational ability of community leaders to mobilize people for participation. People considered „illiterate“ served on development committees in Saaman. The selection criteria to the committees did not emphasize „literacy“ status, but rather a person’s knowledge of community issues and willingness to serve. The committees needed only one person who could record and read out deliberations to members.

2.7.1 The Ghana National Functional Literacy Programme (GNFLP)

In Ghana, there is no specific policy and legal framework that relates to the provision of adult literacy classes. However, the 1992 constitution of the Republic of Ghana recognized the right of all to basic education. This is what provided the mandate for the implementation of the adult literacy classes (Owusu-Mensah, 2008).

According to Aryeetey & Kwakye (2005), the national functional literacy programme was undertaken in two phases. The first phase of the programme, undertaken under the name, Functional Literacy Skills Project (FLSP), spanned the period 1992-1997. The overarching goal of this phase of the project was to promote equal opportunities for the disadvantaged, as well as equipping participants with basic reading, writing and arithmetic skills. These were

combined with other social and economic activities to build the capacity of learners to function effectively in society.

From 2000-2006 the government implemented the national functional literacy programme (NFLP) as a follow up to the FLSP. The aim was to provide functional literacy training for about one million „non-literate“ adults, with particular focus on rural and poor women (Aryeetey & Kwakye, 2005; Government of Ghana, Ministry of Education, 2000).

According to Aryeetey & Kwakye (2005), the overarching aim of the programme was to use adult literacy as a means of equipping learners for social transformation. The programme was also aimed at ensuring equal access to „literacy“ and life-skills training, with particular focus on rural communities, and the northern regions of Ghana. It also targeted specific groups such as women in particular in order to integrate them into the national development effort, as well as to improve their livelihoods chances

- Implementation of the programme

The NFLP was implemented in all the 110 administrative districts in all ten regions of Ghana. Around three quarters (75%) of classes were located in rural areas. The programme made use of 15 out of the over 79 local languages spoken in Ghana, and the English language as the focus of teaching literacy, using a modified Freirean approach and techniques (Dorvlo, 1993).

Blunch & Porter (2004) reported that in the implementation of the NFLP all the NGO providers came together to combine resources with the aim of ensuring the success of the programme. For instance, the Ghana Broadcasting Corporation (GBC) transmitted lessons to learners throughout the country. Similarly, The Ghana Book Publishing Association, (GBPA), the Bureau of Ghana Languages (BGL), and World Vision Ghana, all supported the development and publication of local language materials.

The World Bank (1992, 1998) reported that the programme reached out to 1.3 million learners, teaching them to read in fifteen Ghanaian languages as well as in community development and economic activities. In the implementation of the programme, volunteers residing in the participating communities were trained as facilitators to teach in the literacy classes, for an initial period of 21 months.

Facilitators were supposed to attend a 12-day refresher course after a year of teaching, but this was not followed through consistently. Each class was composed of a minimum of 25 and a maximum of 30 learners.

Considering the importance of training to the success of functional literacy programmes, it is rather unfortunate that in the Ghana National functional literacy programme, the planned refresher training for the facilitators was not accorded the importance it deserved. This no doubt would have adversely affected the quality of programme delivery.

Averagely, classes were organized for the learners six hours each week. An estimated number of 200,000 were being recruited each year, with about 8,000 volunteer facilitators working in the programme (Government of Ghana, Ministry of Education, 2000).

- Coverage and funding of the NFLP

Aryeetey & Kwakye (2005) reported that the NFLP was implemented in all the 110 administrative districts, in all ten regions of Ghana. Around three quarters (75%) of classes were located in rural areas. Several international agencies including the World Bank, International Monetary fund (IMF) and the Department for International Development (DFID), UK, provided funding for the first phase of the programme. The Ghana government, with support from the World Bank, funded the second phase of the programme (Aryeetey & Kwakye, 2005, Blunch & Porter, 2004).

- Programme impact

According to an impact assessment conducted on the NFLP at the end of 2003, a total of 2, 205,709 learners had been recruited into the literacy programme since 1992. Blunch & Porter (2004) reported minimal impacts of the programme on learners, especially among women. According to Aryeetey & Kwakye (2005), less than 20% of the participants could read after graduation (Aryeetey & Kwakye, 2005).

However, Bhola (2008: 42) reported several positive effects of the NFLP on learners. These included improved self-worth especially among women, as well as improved hygiene and environmental sanitation.

The report by Bhola confirms my earlier assertion of the influence of the autonomous perception of literacy on adult literacy provision in Ghana. The focus was always on what literacy did to people and not what people did with literacy.

The literature reveals that adult literacy provision in Ghana followed the same pattern as other African countries under the influence of the EWLP, combining basic reading and writing with integration of literacy and functional skills. Literacy was not taught in isolation but linked with knowledge and skills development in identified areas such as health, environment, and community development. This approach is consistent with UNESCO's recommended approach. But the question of whether the programme really delivered the claimed results is what needs to be answered. Here again, we see a focus on the autonomous model in the provision of adult literacy.

2.7.2 The Saaman and Juaso adult literacy classes

The adult literacy classes were a product of the NFLP as a tool to realize the national policy of achieving individual advancement and community development through adult literacy.

The classes were organized in both Saaman and Juaso. Participation in the literacy classes in both communities was optional and was open to every

member of the community who wished to participate in them. The Juaso literacy class went through two cycles of 21 months each. The first cycle was from 2005-2007, whereas the second cycle was run from 2008-2010. Each cycle was composed of 25 learners, 15 being women and 10 men, from age 15 upwards. The Saaman literacy class, on the other hand, did not complete a full 21-month cycle. It ran from January- August 2002 and collapsed due to logistical problems. Thus it ran for a period of eight months. The class comprised 30 learners- 25 women and 5 men. The learners in both communities were mainly farmers, traders, and artisans. Majority of them had had some basic formal education but still could not read and write. The dominant local language, Akuapem Twi, was used to teach the learners.

In each community, facilitators were trained to teach learners to read and write, as well as provide training in community development. I did not get the chance to observe the literacy classes in either Saaman or Juaso as the classes in both communities had ended when I got there to collect data. However, through my interviews and informal conversations with facilitators and learners in both communities, I learned that teaching learners how to read and write in Akuapem Twi was the focus of the classes.

2.8 Community development as an evolving concept

The meaning of community development varies from context to context. Scholars have perceived it in many different ways. For instance, Christenson & Robinson (1989) perceived community development as a collective decision by members of a community to change their economic, social, cultural and

environmental situation. This view of CD is consistent with the views of other scholars such as Narayan & Ebbe (1997) who saw the concept as “a process in which community groups initiate, organize and take action to achieve common interests and goals” (Narayan & Ebbe, 1997:4).

Similarly, Flora et al (1992) understood community development in terms of people having a shared objective and collectively organizing to address their shared needs. Hamilton (1992), still in conformity with this view, maintained that community development is about communities using local resources to address their developmental needs, and supplementary these with external resources where needed (Hamilton, 1992:29).

In contrast to these views, Biggs (1999) perceived community development as a joint venture between communities and government to bring about improvements in the economic, social and cultural conditions of communities. The difference between the view of Biggs and that of the others is the role of government in CD. Whereas Biggs conceived CD as a partnership between government and communities, the other scholars saw it as the sole responsibility of communities. The common thread that runs through all the perceptions, however, is the purpose of CD which is directed towards addressing the felt needs and changing the economic, social, cultural and environmental situation of communities.

In this research, I conceptualized CD from a grassroots, people-centred point of view where communities come together to identify their needs, and initiate

actions to address them with or without external support, making use of resources available to them. These needs could be social, economic, political or cultural.

As a concept and form of practice, community development has gone through many changes over the decades within development discourse, different paradigms of the concept being associated with different eras. In this section I give a brief overview of the evolution of the concept.

2.9 Paradigms of community development (CD)

From the 1950s up to the 1970s, under the modernization paradigm, development was perceived in terms of accumulation of capital by increasing agricultural productivity, commercial activity through export, industrialization and human resource development. “Economic growth was measured in terms of gross national product (GNP), and increases in average per capita income” to benefit everyone in society” (Youngman, 2000:54).

During this period, CD was used as a tool for nation-building and poverty alleviation throughout the developing world. This was done under the direction of the UN and its affiliated organizations (UNESCO, ILO, FAO, WHO, UNICEF). CD practice was integrated with adult literacy as the latter was believed to be an effective tool for achieving CD.

In Ghana, for instance, many governments mainly followed the modernization approach to community development, using adult literacy as a tool for achieving CD. However, even though Ghana’s GNP has seen growth with the country

moving from low income country to lower middle income country, people still grapple with poverty. The gap between the rich and the poor keeps widening.

The basic assumptions, upon which approaches to CD and national development were based, as articulated by the UN organizations and their associated „expert groups,“ were soon challenged for their contradictory and culturally biased nature (Galbraith, 1962; Biddle, 1966; Alldred, 1976).

The modernization era was followed by the basic needs approach also known as the welfare model in the 1970s which placed emphasis on meeting people’s basic needs. Economic growth was assessed by gains in public welfare and reduction in poverty. However, by 1970 it had become clear to many observers that economic growth in the aggregate did not necessarily eliminate poverty; leading to the introduction of the basic needs approach. The International Labour Organization (ILO) adopted this approach in 1976. Basic needs were understood as individual needs as well as needed essential services such as sanitation and potable water at the community level.

Rogers (1992) had issues with the basic needs approach. First, he argued that despite the rhetoric, few programmes have been based on basic human needs. Rather, these programmes often have economic needs as the underlying assumptions as a result of the practice of „aid-giving“ by which the rich give to the poor and expect in return economic results. He again problematized the definition of need which is outsider-defined and represents value judgments made against standards which are drawn from outside the community concerned.

He argued further that „basic human needs often come to mean „minimum physical needs“ – „the lowest level of subsistence and services needed to ensure that its people can work efficiently“ (Rogers, 1992:100). He critiqued the basic needs approach as creating „dependency“ and destroying self-reliance of the people (ibid 101). He then proposed a development model of self-reliance whereby nations would build up what is appropriate within the country itself, accepting as valuable and using traditional rather than alien knowledge, structures and practices (Rogers, 1992:101). He argued that people should be helped to take action against the causes of the problems that confront them as much as against the problems themselves (ibid: 114).

The observation by Rogers holds very true to Ghana where even though the government by policy is to provide the basic needs of communities, it is not able to do so, therefore many communities have to live without these basic facilities. This has also created a situation of dependency where many communities hesitate to take any initiative to meet their own needs and rather wait for government to provide those needs which most times do not come.

I share in the criticisms of the welfare state in which the state delivers a top-down approach to CD, assuming knowledge of community needs without consultation of communities in the process. This approach ignores the diversity in the realities of individual communities and their cultural differences, and assumes that the same approach will work in every community. In Ghana, for instance, in areas where this approach to CD has been used it has led to the government providing facilities like market places, community libraries, and

places of convenience which have become „white elephants“. The reason has been that these were done without consulting the communities who would be the ultimate users of the facilities, and because what was provided was not what they wanted, the facilities were not used.

I agree with the suggestion of Rogers on the use of self-help in CD. This is in alignment with the People-Centred Development (PCD) concept which frames my research and is discussed further on. Moreover, drawing from my many years as a community development practitioner in Ghana, I strongly believe that community-owned and led approaches to CD is what will lead to sustainable gains in the effort to achieve development at the community level.

The Neo-liberal era followed in the late 1970s- 80s with development being based on free market capitalism and Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) prescriptions by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank on governments of the periphery. This era of development saw the enforcement of the imposed neoliberal prescriptions on developing countries including removal of trade and investment barriers, and currency devaluation (Youngman, 2000: 69). Emphasis was placed on corporate property rights at the expense of the basic needs and human rights of the population at large (Teeple, 1995; Campfens, 1997).

The effects of neo-liberalism on Ghana cannot be over-emphasized. I still have vivid memories of the effects of SAP as an IMF imposition in 1984 on employees in Ghana who were laid off their jobs in the name of cuts in

government expenditure even though I was just out of my teens at the time. Government expenditure in many sectors was affected including adult literacy provision as I mentioned in the section on adult literacy provision in Ghana.

The People-centred development (PCD) paradigm was formulated in the 1980s in opposition to the modernization and neo-liberal theories which had been the dominant influences on development policies since 1945. In view of the fact that PCD was one of the theoretical frameworks I used for this research, I give below a more detailed overview of the approach.

2.9.1 People-Centred Development Paradigm

The people-centred paradigm of development is an approach to development which emphasizes bottom-up, community-led and owned development which puts the interest of the people at the heart of the development effort.

During the 1980s it became evident that neoliberalism could not address the needs of the majority poor. This led to a variety of critiques of development thinking derived from an analysis of ordinary people's actual experience of the development process. The conceptions of development were regarded as "euro-centric, top-down, damaging to the environment, and destructive of rural society (Youngman, 2000:72). People-centred development thus emerged as an alternative approach to development. Contrary to modernization and neoliberal theories, the people centred model emphasized people-centred, self-reliant, bottom-up approach to development.

According to Youngman (ibid: 73), the people-centred model of development emerged in response to two circumstances. First, the continuing penetration of the capitalist mode of production incorporated into the global market even remote areas of the world, such as the tropical forest zones. The expansion of urbanization and capitalist relations of production affected the mode of existence, ecology and culture of agrarian societies.

Secondly, the economic crises in the South reduced formal employment diminished markets and created a decline in the services provided by the state. These two circumstances led to anti-colonial struggles in many countries of the South, with critiques calling for alternative approaches to development.

In support of the people-centred approach to development, Korten (1990) criticized the modernization and dependency theories for being more interested in economic growth than in people's wellbeing and the environment. For him, development, involved empowering people to lead the process of meeting their own felt needs (Korten, 1990:67).

Youngman (2000) critiqued modernization and neoliberalism for fostering inequalities between developed and developing countries. Above all, all development programmes undertaken under these theories had been „top-down“ and had ignored the voices of the poor (Youngman, 2000:74).

Freire (1970) in his theory of conscientization placed emphasis on “self-reflected critical awareness in people of their social reality and of their ability to transform that reality by their conscious collective action” (Burkey, 1993:55).

Key concepts of the people-centred development paradigm are self-reliance and community participation.

- Self- reliance

Self-reliance, which Burkey (1993) defines as “doing things for one self, maintaining one’s self-confidence, and making independent decisions- either as an individual or within the context of a collective group to which each member has voluntarily allied himself or herself”, is very essential in PCD (Burkey, 1993:50).

To achieve this, there is the need for collective action to identify needs and mobilize resources to address those (Askew, 1984). The practice of people-centred development is however, fraught with challenges as it relies strongly on the voluntary participation of the people (Burkey, 1993).

- Social Cohesion

According to Wenger (2010), at the heart of people-centred development is social cohesion, seen in the emphasis placed on identity building and community building. He noted that PCD embraces human agency through collective reflection and action, resulting in individuals developing bonds with each other and nurturing mutual respect leading to social cohesion. He observed that social cohesion, which is created through social practices in the community and thus help to create bonds, mutual respect and unity among the people is seen in the

level of unity among the people leading to shared objectives and voluntary participation in community development.

Adding to this Oakley (1989) observed that as people in the community engage in cultural practices like funerals and religious practices, it builds community solidarity. He argued that it makes people define themselves in terms of the community and is needed for the realization of unity of purpose, which is essential for the achievement of community development, among community members. The importance of unity of purpose for the achievement of community development has been emphasized in development scholarship.

On his part Freire (1970) argued that as community members engage in collective reflection and action, they develop bonds with and mutual respect for each other, leading to the building of social cohesion. Social cohesion is also the result of social and cultural practices in the community like funerals and religious activities. As people support and mourn with each other during funerals, and also attend religious services together, cohesion is built. This concept is relevant to my study as it affects the practice of CD.

- Community participation

People-centred development recognizes the importance of participation in collective action. According to the United Nations (198), community participation is about ensuring that all members of a community have equal opportunity to take part development endeavours, as well as share in the results of such endeavours (United Nations (1981: 5). Scholars (e.g. Mathur, 1986;

Oakley, 1989; Rifkin, 1985), have argued that active and voluntary involvement of people in decision-making and other community endeavours lies at the heart of community development. For community participation to be effective therefore there is the need for voluntary rather than coerced involvement of the people.

However, all these evolving concepts of CD have their inherent weaknesses. It became apparent that the basic concepts of CD- such as human needs, community, participation, and development- require thorough re-examination. For instance, Alldred (1976) called to attention the complexities and unequal realities of rural and urban communities, and questioned the popular notion of unrestricted, self-reliant development by local communities. He perceived that politically disquieting inequalities emerge as a consequence of different communities pursuing their own development priorities at their own pace and with unequal resource base to call upon. He argued that to achieve balanced development at the community (local) level, or for that matter at the regional and national levels, some directive planning by central authorities is necessary

For me, the argument of Alfred is very valid especially in the case of Ghana where almost everything is linked to party politics. The support that a local community leader gets from outside the community/ state bodies in terms of resources to a large extent depends on which party the leader belongs to. People who would be in a position to help would withhold the support because they belong to a rival political party to that of the community leader. The failure of a community to mobilize its own resources to meet its priority development needs

would mean that the community will not experience growth over a long period. This could bring significant development disparities even between neighbouring communities. Moreover, it is possible that some communities, for example refugee communities, may not have any local resources to mobilize. Government support therefore becomes very critical.

This situation can actually be avoided if government resources, however small it would be, are managed in a manner that ensures every community gets its fair share devoid of party politics. This can best be achieved within the local governance structure of Ghana in which every community or a cluster of communities is represented by an Assembly member at the district, municipal or metropolitan level where development planning takes place. A promising practice being spearheaded by some NGOs and which has seen success to some extent is facilitating local communities to develop Community Action Plans (CAPs). These CAPs, which represent the prioritized development needs of the community, are then integrated into the development plan of the District or Municipal Assembly, for possible support.

I hasten to say though, that much as I argue for government direction and active participation in the development communities, communities need to be encouraged to own and lead the development process.

The People-centred approach to development also has its challenges. Proponents of this approach assume that communities are homogenous and that it is easy for an entire community to reach consensus and pursue a common development

agenda (Burkey, 1993, Youngman, 2000). This is indeed based on an idealized notion of the community as a „unitary“ concept (i.e., village or city neighborhood) (Campfens, 1997: 21). It undervalues the role of conflict and disadvantage within communities (Campfens, 1990; Werkerly, 1996). Moreover, in many communities, power is not evenly distributed between the genders. Men, in most cases have dominance over women and women’s participation in decision making processes of communities, as well as representation in governance structures is very minimal.

In their over-emphasis of processes at the local level, proponents of PCD fail to see that community development cannot be achieved in isolation from the global world in this era of interdependence between nations. At the local level as well, local communities are part of the nation as a whole and their development is greatly affected by what happens in the overall political economy of the nation. Having said this, I am of the view that despite the challenges of people-centred development, it is the approach that best answers the developmental needs of communities.

2.10 The historical perspective of community development in Ghana

The practice of community development in Ghana started in 1948, with the establishment of the Department of Social Welfare and Community Development. A number of CD projects were implemented by government from 1948-1957. In 1952, when Kwame Nkrumah became prime minister of the British colony under the ticket of the Convention People’s Party (CPP), he gave CD (then known as mass education) top priority, adopting the universal

education programme that had been developed by the colonial administration in 1951 (Abloh & Ameyaw, 1997).

Abloh & Ameyaw (1997) attribute a number of reasons to the success of CD during this time besides the commitment of the government. The first was the farmers' experience with cooperative societies that had been in operation from 1929- 1931. This has exposed majority of the cocoa farmers to self-help, a strategy that was promoted by the CD approach (Abloh & Ameyaw, 1997:279-280)

Secondly, rural communities lacked basic amenities and as such the people embraced the CD strategy as it held the promise of meeting their needs.

From 1951-1957, the Department of Social Welfare undertook many CD programmes through adult literacy, women home economics in which adults and young women were trained in basic hygiene and skills (Abloh & Ameyaw, 1997:284)

The history of the origins of CD in Ghana shows clearly that it was influenced by the autonomous view of achieving CD through adult literacy classes. However, this was combined with women home economics training and self-help village projects. This approach marks a shift from traditional conventional literacy which assumes that literacy alone can have positive developmental impacts on communities. One wonders therefore why in later years, emphasis was placed on the teaching of reading and writing alone to achieve CD in Ghana, an approach which has been proven to be a great failure.

2.11 Theoretical and policy perspectives of CD in Ghana

2.11.1 Structural Adjustment Programme

Before the introduction of the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) in Ghana as an IMF condition for loan acquisition, the state was the most active player in articulating the needs of the poor through national and local programmes. This meant that village projects, acquisition of clean water, and road building were integrated into national economic development plans. Under SAP, however, the state functioned as a regulator and controller, with a focus on macro-economic reforms such as trade liberalization, improved private access to foreign exchange, relaxation of controls, and infrastructure rehabilitation (Ake, 1990)

With the implementation of SAP, the government of Ghana lost its authority to the IMF and its allies so far as decision on CD projects was concerned. This led to the state being forced to cut down on its public expenditure to the disadvantage of the Ghanaian populace. State supported CD thus greatly suffered and communities were left on their own to find solutions to their problems. As the state was forced to implement a retrenchment policy which saw many workers being laid off, unemployment and poverty increased bringing in its wake increased crime.

2.11.2 Mediating organizations and institutions

A number of organizations and institutions have been working to fill the gap created by the state in the practice of CD. These include grass roots social action groups, NGOs and training institutions. There are also a number of civil society

organizations based at the community level. These groups focus on many different objectives all aimed at improving the lot of rural dwellers.

Besides the grass roots social action groups, International NGOs such as UNICEF, OXFAM, and World Vision have played an advocacy role between the rural poor and donor agencies, as well as governments. Some of these NGOs focused on building the capacity of the rural people so that they could in turn contribute to the development of their communities. Training institutions such as the Institute of continuing and adult education, has linked research and action in the pursuit of community development (Ameyaw, 1997:317)

The Ghanaian experience of CD is in alignment with the observation of Drucker (1994) that nations immersed in social transformation need to expand their two-sector notion of society (government and businesses) to include a third sector comprising NGOs, grass roots organizations, and the multitude of volunteers. These should assume a significant share of the responsibility for taking on the social challenges facing modern societies.

2.12 Literacy and community development: Ideological debates.

There are conflicting ideologies on how literacy relates to development. For decades, the dominant model of literacy, christened the „autonomous“ model, Street (1984:1) dominated international discourse on adult literacy and profoundly influenced national decisions (Mpofu & Youngman, 2001) with its rhetoric on the impact of adult literacy on CD (Bhola, 1999, 2008; Valdivielso, 2008). All the global summits organized by UNESCO also reflected this view as

has been mentioned early on. For example, in the Hamburg declaration of 1997, adult literacy was “:... broadly conceived as the basic knowledge and skills needed by all... a catalyst for participation in social, cultural, political, and economic activities...” (UNESCO, 1997:2)

Carey (2002) for instance, argued that the inability of people to read, write and compute limits their capacity to engage effectively in development activities. He believed that providing literacy promotes enhancement of community solidarity and collective capacity to work with development partners to improve their well-being and reduce poverty.

Literacy is again seen as one of the major universal issues linked with reduction in poverty, creation of wealth and growth in national economies, so the literacy competence of a population is consequential to economic development of countries. Literacy is believed to empower and facilitate the utilization of freedom to redress and ensure consistent emergence from poverty (UNESCO, 2008; UNDP, 1997).

This perspective on the interface between literacy and CD was also reflected in the way it was conceptualized within the different development models that evolved over the years. The modernization paradigm of development, for example, had a functional notion of education in which literacy was mainly perceived as specific technical skills (Burkey, 1993). People who did not have those skills were labeled illiterate, and considered as barriers to development (Ong, 1982).

In like manner, during the era of neoliberal and globalization paradigms, a period that saw the growth of the information, technology and communication industry, development was based on global capitalist market economy and literacy was viewed in terms of efficiency to meet the demands of the market (Youngman 2000).

At the national level provision of adult literacy by governments was influenced by the assumptions of the autonomous view of literacy. The World Bank funded several large-scale adult literacy programmes in developing countries across Africa, Asia and the Caribbean to help them achieve their development goals. These included countries such as Tanzania, Botswana, Ghana, Zimbabwe, Uganda, India, Chile, Peru, and Cuba (Bhola, 2008; Lind & Johnston, 1990).

For example, in Uganda, adult literacy was used to give functional knowledge to adults, many of whom had attended formal school as children but had not been able to use profitably the knowledge acquired to enhance their lives. The approach was the same as the one used by the EWLP described early on. Reported results included improved family health, food security, and increase in family income, ability to participate in civic activities in their communities, self-confidence, and self-esteem (Carr-Hill & Roy, 2001).

Like in other African countries, in Ghana, literacy was understood by the government in a functional sense. It was meant to be a tool to “eradicate illiteracy” and to promote socio-economic development. This is evidenced by the implementation of the two-phased nationwide literacy programme, the

Ghana National Functional Literacy Programme (GNFLP) described earlier. The perceived effects of adult literacy in Ghana were reported by Bhola (2008) as mentioned earlier. There have been claims of the positive effects of literacy on women. For instance, in many developing countries, as Robinson-Pant (2000) observed, *“literacy has been seen as the key to 'women's development' resulting in a proliferation of women's literacy programmes run by both governments and Non-Governmental Organizations”* (Robinson-Pant, 2000:1)

While adult literacy classes have been claimed to have positive effects on participants, is it really justified claiming that CD is the result of adult literacy classes? Such a claim would be assuming that communities that have experienced more literacy would have more development. But does this simple, linear correlation between literacy and CD really hold water? From where I stand as a community development practitioner, I have encountered many communities where adult literacy classes have been organized but are still experiencing development. The observation in the field thus runs in conflict with the theoretical claims.

However, the claims on the effects of adult literacy on CD have been supported by some case studies undertaken in Ghana. For example (Addo-Adeku, 1992; Adjei, 2009; Aggor, 1992; Aoki, 2005; Arko & Addison, 2009) all reported that adult literacy enhanced individual lives and also contributed to community development. The impacts of adult literacy on community development claimed by these studies included: acquisition of reading, writing and numeracy skills, improvement in the livelihood activities of the learners, improved knowledge in

health, environment, and civic awareness and improvement in the educational standards of the children of the learners.

For example, Aoki (2005) reported in his assessment of the Ghana National Functional Literacy programme that as a result of the programme, there were improvements in the livelihood activities of the learners, knowledge in health, environment and civic awareness, and improvement in the education of their children.

Similarly, in their case study on functional literacy and socio-economic development in Ghana, Arko & Addison (2009), reported positive impacts of functional literacy in the social and economic lives of learners.

Consistent with these two studies described above, Adjei (2009), conducted a case research of the Yebongo adult literacy class in the Northern region of Ghana. He reported that the literacy class initiated many development projects in the community including the construction of three wells in the community, the initiation of a number of income generating activities in the community such as basket weaving, livestock production and bee-keeping, establishment of a day care centre, a clinic, and the construction of a communal place of convenience.

Even though the research ascribes the community gains to the literacy classes, the currency of this claim is doubtful. This is so because the research did not describe the prevailing environmental conditions in the community, as well as what the learners actually learned. One therefore begins to wonder whether the

community development achievements reported by Adjei (2009) are a direct result of the literacy classes without other intervening factors.

In all these studies the researchers operated within the autonomous model of literacy, looking for effects of literacy on people instead of what people use literacy for (Baynham, 1995; Prinsloo & Breier, 1996; Street, 1995). Even though all of the studies conducted in Ghana claim that literacy classes have some gains, especially on the development of the individual, and in some cases the development of the community, my research problematizes these claims as I will show later. My critique of these studies conducted from the autonomous perspective is consistent with the views of scholars in the LSP tradition. Other scholars, for example, Amin (1975) and Freire (1970) critiqued the autonomous view of literacy and its claims, and called for a critical kind of literacy that would lead to liberation.

The influence of the critiques of the conceptualization of adult literacy within modernization theory was seen in the Persepolis Conference of 1975 as I mentioned early on. Other critics of the developmental claims of the autonomous model include Wagner (1995) who described the claims as “*myths about literacy and development*” (Wagner, 1995:35), and Winchester (1990) who referred to them as “the standard fare of UNESCO seminars” (Winchester, 1990:21).

In the same vein, proponents of LSP challenged these claims, seeing such a claim of direct relationship between literacy and development as illusory and simplistic (Baynham 1995; Prinsloo & Breier, 1996; Street, 1995).

Case studies conducted in other countries outside Ghana on adult literacy reported results that stood contrary to studies done in Ghana and agreed with the arguments of the critics of the autonomous model.

2.12.1 Related ethnographic case studies

Robinson-Pant (2001) in her study, "*literacy and women's health- A case study in Nepal*," looked at the link between literacy and women's health in Nepal. She challenged the dominant assumption that had been almost universally accepted in developing countries that the well-being of families was dependent on the literacy levels of women. Sharing her experiences of introducing an ethnographic approach to an American agency implementing literacy and health programmes in Nepal, she revealed that the women's own perspectives on literacy and development were set against the planners' definitions of „empowerment“ and women's development. Robinson-Pant (2001), reports that the meaning that the women attached to literacy was different from the research assumptions of literacy.

The researchers assumed that women who visited health facilities needed literacy skills. However, it was found that the women did not even need to sign their names. They did not need to be able to read the prescriptions or receipts they were given at certain health posts because they would take them straight to the pharmacist to read. The women associated reading and writing with identity and confidence rather than the functionality of it.

She questioned how issues like empowerment or impact of literacy on women's lives can be analyzed through asking women to answer yes/no to a range of questions. The findings of Robinson Pant's (2001) study thus show that adult literacy classes need to address the felt needs of learners rather than attempting to achieve the assumed impacts of literacy on learners.

The findings of Robinson-Pant (2001) are consistent with those of Dyer & Choksi (2001) who did an ethnographic research among the Rabari nomads of India. These also had a view of literacy different from what the researchers had assumed. Dyer & Choksi conducted several ethnographic action research experiments with literacy teaching and learning over a two-year period among the Rabaris of Kachchh, Gujarat, India. The Rabaris are a caste of transhumant pastoralists who were traditionally camel herders, but diversified to husbandry, sheep, goats, cattle and occasionally, buffaloes. Being a nomadic group, their way of life precluded them from making use of any of the static modes of educational provision offered by the state, even though they were unanimously in favour of „literacy“.

Under this circumstance, Dyer and Choksi opined that peripatetic adult literacy teaching was the most logical form of provision for nomadic groups who cannot remain at the same place for longer than three weeks at the most. Armed with this assumption, they made arrangements to migrate with a group of Rabaris over a two-year period so as to be able to provide them with adult literacy. They envisaged that the literacy work would interest the Rabaris in several ways as being able to read and write would assist for instance in reading bus destination

boards, tickets and prices; and dosage instructions on modern veterinary medicines. The project went on well at the beginning but interest among the Rabaris waned with time.

Dyer & Choksi (2001) found that their perception of literacy was far different from that of the Rabaris. While the Dyer and Choksi (2001) thought of literacy as reading and writing skills, to the Rabaris literacy was a whole way of life that went beyond reading and writing. The Rabaris were more interested in issues of power, which they believed could be achieved through formal schooling and not through adult literacy classes. These findings confirm the argument of LSP that literacy is interwoven into the socio-political lives of people, while problematizing the autonomous view. It also draws the attention of ethnographic researchers to the dangers of entering research domains with pre-determined definitions of concepts.

Again, in an ethnographic research on literacies, languages and development in Peruvian Amazonia, Aikman (2001) in her conclusion put emphasis on the importance of analyzing the political and economic contexts in which literacy programmes are undertaken. She again confirmed the LSP argument that „development is a contested concept. This was demonstrated by the perception of development among the Harakmbut which was different from what the researcher had assumed.

These studies confirm the contention of the ideological model of literacy that literacy is not concerned with acquisition of technical skills but rather how people view literacy and what they do with it.

What counts as literacy and community development varies from time to time and in different contexts. In any given society the understanding of the people of what literacy means changes with time (Street 1984).

This gives credence to my decision to explore what the people of Saaman and Juaso understand by adult literacy and community development and also how they use the literacy they have acquired, to see if there is a link between the two.

2.13 Theoretical framework

Two theories, Literacy as a social practice, and the people-centered model of development, described in detail early in this chapter, guided me in the collection, analysis and interpretation of data. These two were selected because I believe they would help me in the design of the research and in the analysis of the data. Other concepts that framed this study in addition to these two were: adult literacy and community development, also described earlier in this chapter. In the sections that follow, I describe how the two theories relate to my research.

2.13.1 Relevance of the LSP to my research

As I noted in the introduction to my research, many of the studies that have been undertaken in Ghana on literacy and community development have been from the perspective of autonomous model of literacy which I have described earlier in this chapter.

However, the LSP, focusing on literacy as a social practice (Barton & Hamilton, 1998, Heath, 1982, 1983, Prinsloo & Baynham, 2008, Scribner & Cole, 1981, Street, 1995), provides a rich conceptual resource which is very useful to my research.

In the first place, the theory is helpful in conceptualizing literacy in its multiple forms and thus being able to identify the various literacy practices in the two case communities. Under the illumination of this theory, I will be looking out for the literacy practices that are being used in Saaman and Juaso.

Secondly, the theory provides that the meaning of literacy and by extension, community development, is not a given. Rather, these vary in time and place. The implication of this is that literacy could mean different things in Saaman and Juaso, which may also be different from how it is conceptualized globally. This thus influenced my research design, making me use an ethnographic approach to get from research participants what counts as literacy and community development for them through the use of observations, informal conversations and interviews.

The theory also recognizes that literacy is contested in power relations. This will help me to explore how learners use what they learn in literacy classes to achieve their own aims which could be different from the stated objectives of the literacy classes.

In summary therefore, I will use this theory to explore:

- What counts as literacy in the two communities
- How learners use reading and writing in their day to day social activities and the reasons for doing what they do
- The role literacy plays in CD practices

These will also be used for the analysis of data.

2.13.2 Relevance of People-Centred Development to my research

My research explored the role of adult literacy in community development. The working definition of community development in this research is development that is initiated and managed by the community, with or without external support. People-centred development as an approach to development best fits this definition and thus helped me to understand whether the kind of development practised in Saaman and Juaso fit into it or are influenced by other development approaches. It also helped me to understand why more development takes place in one community more than the other and to suggest ways of achieving successful community-led, people-centred development.

2.14 Conceptual framework

The following concepts from literacy as a social practice and people-centred development were used as frames to guide this research. These have been described in detail early on in this chapter. These are:

2.14.1 Literacy events

I adopt the definition of literacy events by Heath (1982:93) as “any occasion in which a piece of writing is integral to the nature of the participants’ interactions and their interpretative processes.” I reinforced this with Heath’s (1983) definition of literacy events as “any action sequence, involving one or more persons, in which the production and/ or comprehension of print plays a role” (Heath, 1983:386).

By this concept, I will be looking out for those occasions among the research participants in which reading and writing are used.

2.14.2 Literacy practices

Literacy practices are “the general cultural ways of utilizing written language which people draw upon in their daily lives” (Barton et al, 2000:7). That is, what people do with literacy? This includes reading and writing.

I reinforce this with the definition of literacy as given by Perry (2012) that literacy is “what people do with reading, writing, and texts in real world contexts and why they do it” (Perry, 2012:54). Here, I went beyond the physical observation of reading and writing in the day to day activities of participants and try to understand their reasons for wanting to be able to read and write.

2.14.3 Literacy and power relations

I used this concept to help me to identify power relationships between community leaders and other community members in Saaman and Juaso. This was done in terms of how decisions are made in these communities, and the

cultural dynamics of power between men and women vis- a- vis holding of leadership positions in the community. Finally, the relationship between programme designers and learners of the literacy classes, as well as how learners used the literacy acquired in ways other than what the programme stipulated, for their own benefit.

2.14.4 Social Cohesion

This helped me to understand the level of social cohesion in Saaman and Juaso to see how they contribute to the practice of CD.

2.14.5 Self-reliance

The understanding of this concept helped me to see whether it was practised in any of the case communities.

2.14.6 Community participation

By this concept, I was able to identify the kind of participation that took place in the case communities.

2.14.7 Adult literacy

This concept helped me to analyze the implementation of the adult literacy classes to see how they interfaced with community development.

2.14.8 Community development

This helped me in my analysis of community development as practised in Saaman and Juaso.

2.15 Chapter summary

In this chapter, I reviewed literature relating to adult literacy and community development, beginning with a discussion of literacy as perceived by different theorists, particularly those from the opposing camps of autonomous literacy and literacy as a social practice. I gave a little more detail on LSP as that framed my research in conjunction with PCD.

The chapter also reviewed the understandings of literacy in the field of practice, led by UNESCO and its allies, which were mainly influenced by the conventional view of literacy. The concept of adult literacy was also examined in detail to provide a clear understanding of what it means.

Having done this, I proceeded to provide some background information on the Ghana-the context of the research- including information on the educational system in Ghana, I went on to discuss the political economy of adult literacy provision in Africa as a whole and Ghana in particular, as well as a discussion of the Ghana National Literacy Programme and the Saaman and Juaso adult literacy classes which were part of the national literacy programme. This was done to facilitate an appreciation of the issues that would be raised in this research. I then touched briefly on adult literacy and women's empowerment as it was not the focus of the research.

On community development, I discussed in this chapter the evolution of the different paradigms of CD, analyzing in much more detail the theory of people-centred development for its role in this research as stated early on. I then

proceeded to provide some insight into the historical perspectives on Cd in Ghana, touching on the theoretical and policy perspectives.

Having discussed the two key concepts in this research, I moved on to discuss the ideological debates on the connection between adult literacy and community development, interspersing it with case studies conducted in Ghana, Africa, Asia and the Caribbean. The chapter ended with a discussion of the relevance of the theoretical frameworks used for the research as well as the conceptual frameworks.

From the literature reviewed, it comes out that literacy and community development are contested concepts and there is no consensus among theorists as to whether adult literacy has a linear link with and community development.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Scope of the research

As outlined in chapter one, the main purpose of this research was to explore whether adult literacy plays a role in community development, using the Saaman and Juaso communities as case studies.

As indicated in the problem and purpose, the scope of the research goes beyond the adult literacy classes that were organized in Saaman and Juaso to explore whether the identified social literacy practices among the learners and in the community in general led to community development. Participants in the research included learners and facilitators of the literacy classes, as well as community leaders who participated in the community development process.

3.2 Research design

This was a qualitative case study design aimed at exploring and analyzing whether adult literacy plays a role in community development. The qualitative methodology was used to enable me to collect data in a natural setting and understand the focus of the research from the perspectives of the research participants (Prinsloo, 2005). Unlike quantitative approaches which focus on applying measures using numbers and striving to have findings that are generalizable to the relevant population (Bryman, 2008), words and actions of the participants became the data for analysis (Hancock et al, 1998; Maykut &

Morehouse, 1994) and these are not intended for generalization. Bryman (2008) argued that the qualitative approach to research was developed to address the shortfalls of the quantitative approach. He argued that the latter approach had limitations in accounting for the context in which research is undertaken as well as social issues. In view of the foregoing, I considered the qualitative tradition an appropriate approach to answer my question.

3.2.1 The case study approach

I used a comparative case study research method to help me to collect in-depth data in the two communities which I then compared during the analysis stage. As the research was aimed at providing an insight into people's perceptions and experiences, it required the use of a design that allows collection of data from people, documents, and observation of activities of people in their natural settings.

3.2.2 Case study methodology

There are different ideas about what a case study is. Johansson (2003) noted some of the common ideas put forward by scholars including (Gillham 2000; and Yin 1994). These are that "the case study should have a „case“ which is the object of study. The „case“ should: be a complex functioning unit, be investigated in its natural context with a multitude of methods, and be contemporary" (Johansson, 2003:2).

These commonalities notwithstanding, different researchers emphasize different features of case studies. For instance, whereas Stake (1998) argues that what is crucial to case study research is not the methods of investigation, but rather

interest in individual cases, other researchers such as Yin (1994) place more emphasis on the method and techniques that constitute a case study.

In this research, I will be guided by the dispositions of both Stake (Ibid) and Yin (Ibid), focusing on both the method and techniques used as well as interest in individual cases.

Yin (2003) gave instances in which a researcher could decide to use a case study design. One of such instances which apply to my research is when the researcher wants to cover conditions in the context that he deems relevant to his/her study. As I wanted to examine how learners and other community members involved in community development use literacy in their natural social contexts, I considered the case study design appropriate for my research.

3.2.3 *Important features of a case study*

In a case study methodology, triangulation of data is used to ensure the validity of the research.

Normally, data collection methods are triangulated (many methods are combined), but in addition to this, data sources, theory, or investigators might also be triangulated (Denzin 1978).

According to (Johansson, 2003),

The case might be given and studied with an intrinsic interest in the case as such. In such a case the researcher has no interest in generalising his or her findings. The researcher focuses on understanding the case. If the

findings are generalised, it is done by audiences through “naturalistic generalization” (Johansson, 2003:8).

Johansson (2003) noted that case studies could also be selected through purposeful or analytical considerations.

A case may be purposefully selected by virtue of being, for instance, information-rich, critical, revelatory, unique, or extreme (as opposed to cases selected within a representational sample strategy used in correlational research) If a case is purposefully selected, then there is an interest in generalising the findings (Johansson, 2003:8).

The cases for this research were selected by virtue of what they could reveal to add to available knowledge on the research question. These were purposefully selected and even though generalizing my findings is not my intent, I believe that they could guide adult literacy and community development programme design in other contexts.

Another important feature of the case study methodology is case binding, which helps researchers to focus their studies. There have been several suggestions on how to bind a case. These include: by time and space (Creswell, 2013); by time and activity (Stake, 1995); and by definition and context (Miles & Hubberman, 1994).

My research was bound by activity, which is participation in adult literacy classes and community development, as well as by context, Saaman and Juaso.

3.2.4 Types of case studies

There are several types of case studies. These are explanatory, exploratory, and descriptive (Yin (2003; Stake, 1995). A case study could also be single, holistic, or multiple; intrinsic, instrumental or collective (Stake, 1995).

According to Yin (2003, quoted in, Baxter & Susan 2008:547), explanatory case studies explain “causal links in real life interventions”. An exploratory case study is used when the question being explored could yield multiple outcomes (Yin, 2003:548). Similarly, a descriptive case study is used to describe an intervention or phenomenon and the real-life context in which it occurred. A multiple case study enables the researcher to explore differences within and between cases. An intrinsic case study, according to Stake (1995, quoted in Baxter & Susan, 2008:548) is used when the researcher wants to better understand the case he or she is studying

Collective case studies are similar in nature and description to multiple case studies (Yin, 2003, quoted in Baxter & Susan, 2008:459).

A case study design could be single or multiple depending on which will provide a better understanding of the phenomenon being explored. Yin (2003:47) describes how multiple case studies can be used to either: predict similar results (a literal replication); or predict contrasting results but for predictable reasons (a theoretical replication)”. It has been argued that though multiple case studies produce reliable findings, they are expensive to conduct and time-consuming (Baxter & Susan, 2008:550).

Guided by the discussion of the types of case studies above, I used the exploratory, descriptive and multiple case study designs for my research.

3.2.5 Data sources

The use of multiple data sources in case study research enhances data credibility. Interviews, direct observations, participant observations and document review are among the data sources used in case study research. Triangulating data from all these sources provide a better understanding of the phenomenon and makes the research findings robust. However, one challenge of collecting data from multiple sources is the overwhelming amounts of data that makes management and analysis difficult (Patton, 1990; Yin, 2003). The data sources for my research included interviews, direct observations, participant observation and document review.

The case study research design was appropriate for my research because as Yin (2003) put it, case study research designs allow flexibility and can be used to collect a wide range of evidence. Willis (2007) suggested that case studies are about “real people and real situations... rely on inductive reasoning ...illuminates the readers” understanding of the phenomenon under research”. Willis, 2007:239). He further outlined three attributes of case studies which informed my decision to use the case research approach in this research:

1. “It allows you to gather rich, detailed data in an authentic setting

2. It is holistic and thus supports the idea that much of what we can know about human behaviour is best understood as lived experience in the social context
3. Unlike experimental research, it can be done without predetermined hypotheses and goal” (Willis, 2007:240.)

Thus the case study research method would not only help me get in-depth insight into social processes in real life situations, but also its holistic approach would help me to explore the role of literacy in community development within a complex but bounded system.

3.3 Location of the research

The research was located in Juaso and Saaman, two rural communities in the Eastern region of Ghana. These are neighbouring communities with similar characteristics in terms of language, occupation, and governance structure. The distance between the two communities is one kilometre and one has to drive through Saaman to get to Juaso.

3.4 Rationale for case selection

The choice of Saaman and Juaso from among many potential communities was informed by:

1. The difference in community efforts towards development in the two communities

2. The fact that I did some field work in the two communities over a period of two years, though not resident there and observed these differences
3. The proximity of the two communities
4. Language considerations (I understand the local language used there)
5. Accessibility (Both communities were easily accessible because they were located along the main road to Accra, the capital city of Ghana and getting transport to go there was comparatively easy.

3.5 Rationale for choosing two cases

The choice of two cases as said in my introduction was informed by:

1. The fact that they both had the same kind of literacy classes,
2. The variable ways in which community development was initiated in the two communities. Additional factors that informed my decision to use two case studies were to:
 3. Give a comparative dimension within the research
 4. Allow for some breadth as well as depth of focus
 5. Generate tentative generalizations that might be tested further in future research if common findings are revealed in the two communities (Rule & John, 2011).

3.6 Gaining access into the communities

Hammersley & Atkinson (1983) noted the problem of gaining access to settings as a result of people having pressing personal issues to attend to and thus seeing no reason to cooperate with the researcher. Fortunately for me, I did not face the problem of gaining access into the two case communities. There were a number of factors that helped me to gain quick and smooth access into the two communities. Firstly, I am a Ghanaian and I speak the same local language that is spoken in the two communities – Akan. Again, some of the people knew me because I had worked there before and had trained them in the development of Community Action Plans (CAPs).

Secondly, I used an overt means of gaining access. That is, I did not conceal the focus of my inquiry from my research participants in the process of enlisting their collaboration. I entered the communities through key individuals and gatekeepers, with whom I shared the focus of my inquiry.

Finally, I involved research participants in locating other individuals relevant to the research. I was aware that the community entry approach used and the factors that helped me to get smooth access also held the potential for bias. I describe later the measures I took to counter the issue of bias

3.7 The data collection process

3.7.1 Methods of data collection

In this thesis, I conceptualized literacy from the perspective of literacy as a social practice (Barton & Hamilton, 1998; Baynham, 1995; Heath, 1983; Prinsloo, 2005; Scribner & Cole, 1981; Street, 1984, 1995).

As a result, I used four ethnographic methods to collect data from research participants in the two communities. These included:

1. In-depth interviews (Focus group and individual). In the interviews I used the semi-structured interview guide.
2. Participant observation
3. Informal conversations
4. Document review.

The ethnographic methods used made it possible for me to have a holistic/contextual, comparative and cross-cultural picture of the research question. Use of this method thus helped me to compare and contrast the role of adult literacy in community development in the two communities.

I stayed in Juaso for a period of 10 months - though not continuously. There were times I moved out for a while and returned there - collecting data from research participants both in Juaso and Saaman. I was given accommodation in Juaso by the leaders of the community. I had thought that the data collection process was going to be smooth and that participants were going to be readily available. But that was not going to be. I had to schedule and reschedule interview appointments, sometimes more than twice before I would get the chance to interview. This was particularly so in the case of Juaso. Because I was staying in Juaso, I had intended to finish collecting the data in Juaso and then I would start data collection in Saaman. I had to change my strategy due to the

unavailability of respondents in Juaso. I decided to work concurrently in both communities based on who was available to be interviewed.

3.7.2 Language used in data collection

All data was collected using the Akan language except on two occasions in Saaman where English was used. Interviewing in Akan and writing in English was not a challenge for me because I am an Akan myself and I speak and write the language very well. The essence of what people said in Akan during interviews and conversations were therefore accurately captured without fear of losing information. However, where proverbs were given in Akan, I maintained the Akan rendition of it to preserve the originality of what was said.

3.7.3 Selection of research participants

Different sets of participants were selected to be part of this research. These included those that attended the literacy classes in the two case communities, the facilitators of the literacy classes as well as community or opinion leaders who play active roles in community development activities in the communities and had not necessarily attended literacy classes. I had informal conversations with the literacy class participants either in their places of work or in their homes. The literacy class facilitators and the community leaders and opinion leaders were interviewed, whereas the observations covered the general social activities in the communities.

To ensure maximum variation in participation (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994), the purposive sampling technique was used to select a total number of 22 people (6

women and 16 men) from the two communities, 11 from each community, consciously including both men and women in the research.

At Saaman, 10 of the women who had participated in the Adult Literacy programme were still available in the community. Out of these, 3 were selected to participate in the research. Similarly, 9 of the men who had participated in the class were still in the community. Out of these, 3 agreed to participate in the research. In addition 1 literacy facilitator, and 4 key people closely involved in community development activities took part in the research.

In like manner, at Juaso 3 men and 3 women, who had participated in the literacy class and the literacy facilitator, (male) were purposively selected to participate in the research.

Thus I included 7 out of the 18 participants in the literacy programme still available in the community in the research. For involvement in community development activities, I included people in the community who were closely involved in the development activities in the community. This included the Assembly member, Unit Committee chairman and two opinion leaders.

Equal numbers of men and women who had participated in literacy classes were interviewed. The predominance of men in the research in positions of power was due to the fact that both communities are patriarchal societies and men occupy all the leadership positions. For example, the literacy class facilitators, the Assembly members, the Unit Committee chairmen and opinion leaders in both communities were male. This did not affect the results of my research as my

focus was not on women but rather on adult literacy and community development in general as I stated in the literature review. However, being conscious of the gender imbalance, I sought to rectify this by interviewing women in the community who were social entrepreneurs. Moreover, in my literature review I sought out case studies which involved women so that I could compare with my case study. In this way I tried to deepen my understanding of the findings. Table 1 below shows participants in the research in Saaman and Juaso.

Table 1: Research participants (Field data, 2012)

Sample	Saaman	Juaso	Total
Women participants in adult literacy class	3	3	6
Men participants in adult literacy class	3	3	6
Adult literacy class facilitator	1(male)	1(male)	2
Assembly member	1(male)	1(male)	2
Unit Committee Chair person	1(male)	1(male)	2
Opinion leaders	2(males)	2(males)	4

Total	11	11	22
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As shown in table 1 above, 22 participants from the two communities were purposively selected to participate in the research based on their availability and willingness to participate.

For each group in the two communities, the same questions were asked. For research participants who participated in the literacy classes, I asked them questions on what motivated them to join the literacy classes, what they learned, what they used the knowledge acquired for, whether participation in the literacy class helped them to contribute more towards community development. I also asked them about situations in their daily lives in which they used or felt the need to be able to use reading and writing. In addition to these questions asked during informal conversations with them, I observed in their homes and work places what literacy practices they used in their day to day social activities.

The facilitators of the adult literacy classes were asked questions about the objective of the literacy classes and these were triangulated with the objectives spelt out in the policy document which established the literacy classes to see if the understanding of the facilitators and that of the programme designers was in tandem. The facilitators were also asked questions on the content of the classes, how the classes were organized, the duration of the classes, and whether in their view the literacy classes helped the learners to contribute more towards community development.

For the research participants who were selected based on their involvement in community development, I asked them questions on what they perceived community development to be, how community development is practiced in the community and community development activities undertaken in the community. I also asked who, in their view had responsibility for community development.

For purposes of triangulation, I conducted one focus group discussion in each community involving most of the research participants prior to the individual interviews or informal conversations. In the focus group discussions, I explored what literacy as well as community development meant to the people, how community development is practised and what development activities have been undertaken in the community. I explored these questions more during the one-on-one interviews.

3.7.4 My position as researcher

To reduce reactivity which could bias the results of my research, I spent more time in the communities as stated earlier and participated in some of their activities – funerals, church services, and committee meetings. As I mentioned in the introduction, I had had prior experience in the two communities as a development practitioner. I however, only made working visits to the two communities and did not stay there. Nonetheless, this experience helped me in getting access to the two at the time of the research. To make the research participants appreciate the fact that I was there this time as a researcher and not as a development practitioner; I took time to explain to them my new role as a

researcher and the objectives of the research. This was necessary so that they would not give responses to my questions in expectation of development support. From their responses, I could see this objective was achieved. Again, to show respect to them and also show that I appreciate the role they played in the research process, I plan to report back to them the results of my research.

3.7.5 Focus Group Interviews (FGI)

The reason for using the focus group interviews (FGI) was to use the group interaction dynamic to gather data from different perspectives in one setting. I used this data to triangulate those collected from observations and informal conversations, as well as from the individual interviews (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994). In each community I conducted one focus group discussion involving nine participants. I purposively selected participants in the focus groups using the maximum variation strategy to include people from different social domains as shown in the sample. The groups were homogenous to ensure maximum participation (Ritchie & Spenser, 1994). I used homogenous groups because the literature confirms my personal experience in working with rural communities that within homogenous groups there is more interaction and therefore more effective in gathering data.

This does not however, mean that the data collected through this means was standard. There were variations in them.

Participants in the focus group interview included the following as shown in table 2 below.

One limitation I was confronted with was the fact that many of the research participants were male, making the research gender unbalanced. This was because both Saaman and Juaso are patriarchal communities, with men occupying almost all the leadership positions. The Assembly member, Unit committee chairperson, opinion leaders and the literacy class facilitators were therefore all men. Table 2 shows participants selected to participate in focus group discussions.

Table 2: Participants in focus group discussion (Field data, 2012)

Participant	Number
Assembly member	1
Unit Committee Chairperson	1
Opinion leaders	2
Literacy Facilitator	1
Participants in adult literacy class	4
Total	9

I used the FGI to explore the perceptions of the people on literacy, and on community development, and how community development projects have been conceived and implemented in the community. This helped me understand what

counts as literacy and community development to them and the role literacy played in the community development projects undertaken in the communities.

Through the interactions in the focus group interviews I was able to decide which participants to follow up in the in-depth interviews, as well as to know which areas to follow up on with particular individuals.

The focus group discussion at Saaman was easier to organize than that of Juaso, which I had to reschedule twice because key participants were not available.

3.7.6 Individual in-depth interviews

These helped me gather more in- depth data and ask probing questions or inquired about contradictions that arose in the FGI.

I used a semi-structured interview guide (see appendix 1) to help me focus on the research question and to be able to probe interviewee responses further, seek clarifications, as well as be able to observe and follow up on non-verbal cues. (Creswell, 1994)

The in-depth interviews were used to triangulate data from the observations and informal conversations, as well as from the FGIs. In each community I interviewed 4 people as shown in table 3 overleaf.

Table 3: Participants in in-depth interviews (Field data, 2012)

Interviewee	Saaman	Juaso	Total
Assembly member	1	1	2
Unit Committee Chairman	1	1	2
Opinion leader	1	1	2
Literacy class facilitator	1	1	2
Total	4	4	8

3.7.7 Participant observation and informal conversations

These were additional data collection tools and they helped me to see the literacy practices of the people in their natural settings. I participated in the activities of the participants I was observing when it was possible. In the process I engaged in informal conversations with them in various social domains to identify what literacy practices they used and how the practices related to community development. These included their places of work, their homes, church and other social domains. For example, I accompanied Lemuel, a participant in the literacy class in Juaso and Dennis, the literacy class facilitator to a funeral in the community. I used the open-ended format of participant observation to take note of all literacy events and what these meant to the people (Rule & John, 2011). I

kept detailed field notes as well as a journal of emerging issues and insights. My observation focused mainly on the 6 people in each community who participated in the adult literacy programme, as well as community development practices in the two communities. With respect to the participants in the adult literacy classes, I looked out for:

1. What literacy practices they used in the day to day activities.
2. How the identified literacy practices related to CD practices

Besides the participants in the literacy classes, I also looked out for CD practices used in project implementation like community forums, committee meetings, communal labour, community mobilization, and fund-raising to understand the role of literacy practices in these.

3.7.8 Document review

It would not be complete to talk about the role of adult literacy in community development without talking about the adult literacy classes held in Juaso and Saaman. Even though my focus in this research is not to evaluate the success or otherwise of the literacy programme, I felt it was important to review the literacy programme. I got access to and reviewed the hand-out used in training the adult literacy facilitators. The title of the document is: Initial and Refresher Training for NFLD Facilitators. The manual was developed by the Non Formal Education Department of the Ministry of Education. I reviewed this document as it would help me understand the objective of the government in designing and implementing the adult literacy classes. Having done that, I would then be able

to compare the motivation of the learners for participating in the classes to see whether the objectives of the programme designers and those of the learners are in sync. Comparing the contents of the training manual and the content of the literacy classes held would also help me understand the possible / intended impact the literacy programme would have on community development.

3.8 Data analysis process

I used the interpretive methodology to analyze my data, using the words, views and experiences of my research participants for the analysis. I approached the data analysis stage of my thesis with the understanding that there are many different ways of analyzing qualitative data and as Pope & Mays (1996) noted, qualitative research is an interpretative and subjective exercise, and the researcher is intimately involved in the process, not aloof from it. I therefore needed to make decisions on how I wanted to analyze my data. To do this, I needed to decide what I wanted to get out of my data.

Based on the focus of my research, I aimed to get insights on my research questions as outlined on page 9 from my data.

Having found data to understand these, my purpose was then to describe and interpret what I have found in the data, I needed to decide on what theoretical approach to adopt for the analysis of my data, bearing in mind my research question. I used an inductive approach in generating meaning out of my data. I developed propositions inductively derived from a rigorous, systematic, objective and critical analysis of the data (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994).

Then using the constant comparative method, which I will describe shortly, I compared and contrasted categories emerging from the data for Saaman and Juaso and tried to establish relationships between the categories. I found this theoretical approach very suited for analyzing my data as my purpose was to describe, interpret and report.

I went through a number of stages in the data analysis process. These included:

1. Transcription of tape-recorded interviews
2. Organization and indexing of data for easy retrieval and identification
3. Familiarization with the data through reading and listening to recorded data
4. Coding
5. Identification of themes
6. Development of provisional categories
7. Exploration of relationships between categories
8. Refinement of themes and categories
9. Interpreting the data
10. Report writing, using excerpts from the data where appropriate.

I used the notion of on-going analysis (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994) as I started the data analysis process concurrently with data collection. This helped me to “cycle back and forth between thinking about the existing data and generating strategies for collecting new – often better quality-data (Miles & Hubermann, 1984, p. 50). As I analyzed the data collected, I was directed to new areas to explore, new questions to ask, and new strategies to use in collecting the needed data.

After the data had been collected I began the coding process with the aim of beginning to focus on the potential meanings of the data. I followed three basic procedures in the coding process given by as Coffey & Atkinson (1996) which I describe later under the coding sub-heading.

3.8.1 Data organization

Before commencing the data analysis process, I prepared the data for analysis by putting them in a state that would ease analysis. Thus I transcribed all recorded interview data, typed out informal conversations, field notes and researcher’s journal. I saw the need to transcribe the interview data because as Hammersley (2010) observed, using actual transcription is a more rigorous form of evidence than field notes because it offers a more accurate presentation of what happened. Looking at the volume of interview data to be transcribed, which included focus group data, I considered getting someone to do the transcription on my behalf. However, I resolved to do it myself because as Bailey (1994) argued, transcribing is not just a straightforward and simple task, but involves judgment questions about the level of detail to include, the researcher should do the work. After organizing the data, I coded data pages to their sources and familiarized

myself with the data by reading through several times (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994).

3.8.2 Coding

I used the generic approach to coding in which I analyzed the qualitative data collected for themes and then reported on the selected themes (Creswell, 2009). Following the observation by Saldana (2009) that generic coding (both first and second cycle) includes attribute coding and descriptive coding as well as coding for patterns, I set out to identify what was important in the data and what themes were recurrent. During the coding process I was guided by Coffey & Atkinson (1996) who suggested that coding basically entails three procedures:

1. Noticing relevant phenomena
2. Collecting examples of these phenomena
3. Organizing those phenomena in order to find commonalities, differences, patterns and structures (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996:29).

I kept my mind very open at this stage so I will uncover from the data all potential insights. I was careful not to apply any pre-established codes to the data but rather use the process of coding to unravel all potential meanings from the data. I did the coding in two stages:

1. Open coding
2. Focused coding.

3.8.3 Open coding

I began the coding process by first doing an open coding. I worked intensively with the data, reading through it line by line, to identify themes and categories that seemed of interest to the research (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Using the constant comparative method described on page 92, I inductively coded data into themes and compared themes for further coding into categories. At this stage, I remained open to whatever I saw in the data, and took note, even if they did not seem relevant to the original research problem. I was careful not to impose my own sense of what should be in the data.

I chose to work with the soft copy of the data on my computer instead of printed hard copies because I found the data easier to manipulate this way. I did the open coding using a word processor. I used the comment function of micro-soft word programme to insert identified codes in the margins. This was a move from what Maykut & Morehouse (1994) suggested that photocopies of the data be used for this. I felt using soft copies of the data for this process instead of hard copies was easier and cost-effective. I initially decided to highlight all data units corresponding to the same code with the same colour to make unitization of the data easier.

However, when I started the coding process, I realized that there were not sufficient colour choices as against the number of codes emerging from the data. I however, used colour highlighting to link data units to codes just for the purpose of identification, I preferred this to having to cut up data units from photocopies of my data and writing the code behind the pieces (Maykut &

Morehouse, 1994) still for reasons of cost-effectiveness. At some point when no new themes were emerging, I knew I had reached conceptual saturation. I however, proceeded to code the remaining data to be sure all themes in the data had been identified.

3.8.4 Development of categories

After coding all the interview transcripts and informal conversations, I noticed that some themes/codes were recurrent in the data. I used the strategy of theoretical propositioning, which was based on the research question, the literature review, and the theoretical frameworks used, to identify emerging themes in the data. This strategy helped me to focus attention on the data that was relevant for the research and ignore others (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996, Maykut & Morehouse, 1994).

I then picked the identified themes and put them in broad categories, bringing all similar themes together under a broad category name (Goertz & Lecompte, 1981). Category names were selected based on knowledge of the focus of inquiry. I selected names that represented all the themes grouped under each category name. I went over this several times, going back and forth, changing the group into which I placed certain themes, changing category names, merging categories, omitting certain categories and creating new categories. One other key challenge I faced here was that some data units fitted into more than one category. When that happened I used my discretion as a researcher to place the data unit where I considered more appropriate. After all the back and forth, the following categories were identified which guided the analysis of my data. For

example, I had recurrent codes like, „Perception on literacy“, „Reading and writing“, „Literacy a communal resource“, „ability to read and write engenders respect“, „ability to read and write very important, „perception on reading and writing“, among others. I initially created two categories: perception on Literacy, and perception on reading and writing. There were times I was not sure in which of the two categories to put certain units of meaning.

3.8.5 Focused coding

Having done the open coding and identified the relevant themes and categories, I did focused coding (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996). To do this, I went over the data again, line by line, looking out for quotes in support of the identified categories. For each quote, I noted the type of data, the source, the community, and the page and line number. For example, I use I/B/S-1: 14 to mean interview transcript of Ben from Saaman, page 1, line 14. At this stage, I created a word processing document in which I compiled all the quotes in support of each identified category. This helped me to go back to the data quickly anytime I needed to.

Table 4 overleaf is an example of the process I used.

TABLE 4: Example of focused coding

Unitizing the data

Theme: What counts as literacy?

Question: What does it mean to you when we say someone is literate?

- There are different types of knowledge. There is book knowledge, health knowledge, for example a medical doctor. Some people have knowledge in farming. Farms of such people do well where others are failing because they have knowledge about what they are doing. Others have knowledge about how to talk. They know how to talk to people. There are many different types of knowledge (I/KNJ-1: 34-38). **This means interview of Ken, Juaso, page 1, and lines 34-38.**
- Community development is when the people in a community have one mind, one objective and agree to do something that will be of benefit to the entire community. (I/DS-5: 201-202) **Interview transcript of Daniel, Saaman, page 5, lines 201-202**
- . Literacy is not only about being able to read and write. During the interview I told you about a man who used to buy cocoa here for Farmers Council. He had never been to school. He would represent each bag of cocoa with a stone and calculate the number of bags of cocoa by the number of stones. These days, educated people rely on calculators (I/KNJ-2: 56-60).
- Ehh, in ordinary sense when we say someone is literate it refers to someone who has the ability to read and write. But we can go beyond. Someone may not be able to read and write but may have knowledge in certain aspects of issues and we cannot describe that person as illiterate (I/NS-1: 33-36). **Interview with Nathan from Saaman, page 1, lines 33-36.**
- A literate person is someone who has learned something, known how to do it and is able to work with it for all to see. He is also able to teach other people (FG/S-2: 67-68). **Focus Group, Saaman, Page 2, lines 67-68.**

Source; Field data, 2012

3.8.6 The constant comparative analysis method

The constant comparative analysis (CCA) method is used to inductively reduce data collected through constant iterative recording (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Through the process of open coding, categories are developed by iteratively comparing different types of data collected (Charmaz, 2001; Glaser, 1978; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Goetz & Lecompte, 1981; Strauss, 1987).

According to O'Connor et al. (2008: 3), the constant comparative method was originally used by Glaser and Strauss (1967) to generate theory under the grounded theory method. Lincoln & Guba (1985:339) offered four steps in the data reduction process, namely: “comparing incidents applicable to each category, integrating categories and their properties, delimiting the theory, and writing the theory”.

As O'Connor et al. (2008: 2) note, the constant comparative method assures a systematic comparison of all data in the data set. It is not a grounded theory design though it uses grounded theory methods.

Consistent with this observation, my use of the CCA method is not geared towards theory building. I rather adopted the method to help me do an effective analysis of the data I collected.

3.9 Validity and reliability

The validity of research refers to the extent to which an account accurately represents the social phenomena to which it refers (Hammersley, 1992). Similarly, According to Hammersley (1992) reliability has to do with “the

degree of consistency with which instances are assigned to the same category by different observers or by the same observer on different occasions” (Hammersley, 1992:67). In the view of Seale (2004) and Silverman (2000), the degree of consistency should reflect accuracy of data and credibility of judgment. Silverman (1993) points out that checking the reliability of ethnographic research is closely related to assuring the quality of field notes and guaranteeing public access to the process of their generation. To ensure the reliability of my research, I strove to show evidence of the consistency with which data was gathered. Typed copies of my field notes, interview transcripts and researcher’s journal are also available for public scrutiny (Silverman, 1993: 146-148).

Carspecken (1996, quoted in Cooper, 2005:94) noted that validity rests on whether: 1. Data or field records produced were true to what occurred; 2. the analysis was conducted correctly; and 3. the conceptual basis of analytical techniques was sound. In the conduct of the research I was careful to meet the validity criteria as outlined by Carspecken as closely as possible.

3.9.1 Truthfulness of data or field records to what occurred

Carspecken (1996) argued further that the principal way of making a „truth claim“ in the production of the primary record is by showing that the data was collected objectively, which is achieved through:

- Data triangulation (the use of multiple sources);
- Prolonged engagement by the researcher with the site of research;

- The use of low inference vocabulary in the written record;
- The use of peer debriefing to check for possible biases.
- Measures to reduce possible distortions that could result from unequal power relations between researchers and respondents

To ensure the validity of the data collected, I used the method of triangulation in the data collection process by using four different methods to collect data-informal conversations, participant observation, in-depth interviews (one-on-one and focus group), as well as document review. I constantly compared the data I was collecting from all these sources to check for similarities and contradictions. Where contradictions were noticed between the different tools, I conducted further probes to ensure consistency.

Moreover, with the permission of my research participants, I tape-recorded the one-on-one and focus group interviews which I then transcribed verbatim to retain the originality of the data collected. Informal observations were also recorded in my field notebook with dates.

3.9.2 Correctness of data analysis conducted.

Using Carspecken (1996) as a guide, I made a conscious effort to ensure the validity of my thesis by purposively selecting research participants who were appropriate for the research. Guided by the research question therefore, the criteria for the selection of research participants included participation in the adult literacy classes and/ or involvement in community development. In the

analysis process, I looked for contradictions and exceptions in the data, as well as exploring alternative sources of interpretation.

I made sure that my research design, my approach to analysis and the final report I presented were in tandem. In the presentation of my analysis, I adequately and systematically used original data, quoting directly from several research participants. Moreover, the approach to and procedures for data analysis have been thoroughly described in the methodology, justifying the appropriateness of the approach to the research. I have also clearly indicated in the methodology the process I used in generating themes and categories from the data. Where I expressed my own views and thoughts, I clearly separated that from the views of my interviewees. I also made sure the process was consistent and rigorous, paying particular attention to the methods used.

3.10 Ethical considerations

The issue of ethics in the conduct of research is a very essential matter and I adhered to the policy as set out here I painstakingly observed the ethical principles as outlined by authors such as (Bailey, 1994; Babbie & Mouton, 2001; De Vos, 2002). The generally agreed ethical principles adhered to include informed consent (voluntary participation of respondents), no harm to participants as a result of the research process, respect for anonymity and confidentiality in the presentation of research findings, avoiding deception of research participants, objectivity in analysis and report writing, and appropriate ascription of authorship.

3.10.1 Ethical clearance

As a point of departure, I applied for and obtained ethical clearance from the University of Cape Town before engaging in the research in Ghana. Once in Ghana, and because the research was to be conducted in two rural communities, I followed the right community entry and exit protocols. Before the commencement of the research I paid courtesy calls on the chiefs and opinion leaders of the two case communities to brief them on the research and ask for their permission to conduct the research in the community. Even though in Ghana this is just a formality, it could be interpreted as disrespectful if the chiefs were to find out that I was doing research in the community without their knowledge. Similarly, when the fieldwork was finished I informed the chief and community leaders of my exit from the community.

3.10.2 Informed consent

In the process of enlisting participants for the research, I sought the informed consent of all the research participants by first explaining the nature and purpose of the research (contribute towards a PhD), discussing benefits- that I will be the primary beneficiary as it will lead to a qualification. I explained to them why they had been selected to participate in the research. I also explained to them that there would be no payment involved and that participation in the research was purely a voluntary activity. Their expected roles were then explained to them. Participants were informed that they could withdraw from participating in the research without any consequences at any time. After they had understood what was involved and their expected role, I asked them to sign consent forms which I adapted from the sample provided by UCT Faculty of Humanities (see appendix

E). Those who did not know how to sign their signatures made marks on the form to represent their signature. It was only after this point that I negotiated date, time, and venue with them ahead of time to enable them before for the interview.

3.10.3 Anonymity and confidentiality

To minimize possible harm in any form and embarrassment to the research participants, their real names were not used in the research. Rather, each participant was given a pseudonym which was used. This also was explained to them.

3.10.4 Avoiding deception of research participants

In keeping with the ethical principle of no deception to research participants, my identity as a researcher was made known to them and the purpose of the research explained. The participants were made to understand that the research was mainly for academic purposes, which could be beneficial to policy makers and programme designers.

3.10.5 Objectivity in analysis and reporting

In the analysis of the data, I have maintained objectivity as far as humanly possible. I did not impute my own opinion and expectations on the data. Instead, themes that formed the basis of the analysis were inductively derived from the data. Similarly, in the reporting of the findings of the research I maintained absolute objectivity.

3.10.6 *Appropriate ascription of authorship*

To avoid plagiarism and to give recognition where it is due, I acknowledged all sources of literature cited or consulted in the conduct of this research. In the transcription of the interview data, I clearly separated my personal comments from the direct verbatim transcriptions of the research participants.

On the strength of my observance of these generally agreed ethical principles, I can say with a degree of confidence that I have taken the necessary steps to ensure the validity of this research.

CHAPTER 4

DESCRIPTION OF THE CONTEXT OF THE INTERFACE BETWEEN ADULT LITERACY AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

4.1 Introduction

This is the first of four chapters that present the findings on the research question and sub-questions as stated on page 9. To help the reader to better appreciate the findings emerging out of the research therefore, this chapter presents an overview of the context in which the research was conducted. It begins with the profiles of the two case communities, Saaman and Juaso, and the research participants. It then proceeds to give a description of the national literacy policy context within which the adult literacy classes were situated, before giving a description of the Saaman and Juaso literacy classes. The chapter ends with a description of the educational system in Ghana to help learners understand why people needed to participate in the literacy classes.

Upon setting the context of the research, the findings are then presented from chapters five to eight, based on themes generated inductively from the research.

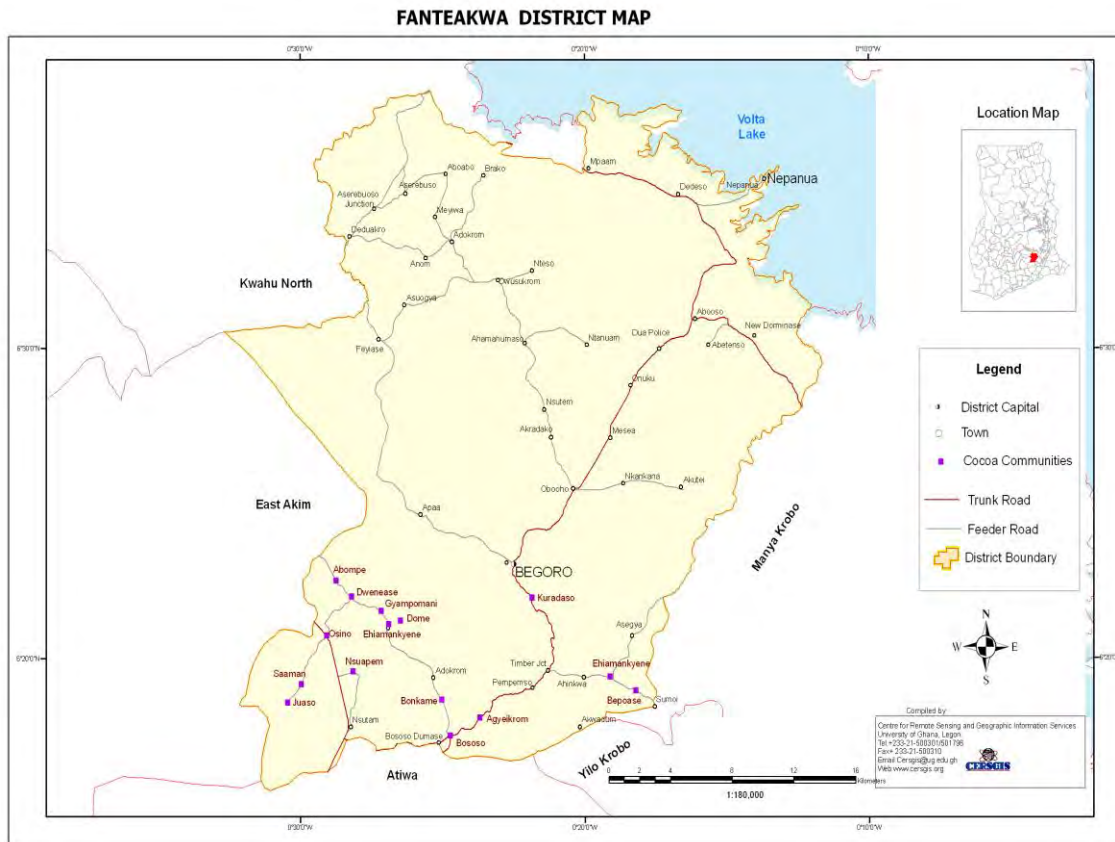
4.2 Profile of case communities

Saaman and Juaso, where the research was undertaken, are two rural communities in the Eastern region of Ghana. These are neighbouring communities with similar characteristics in terms of language, occupation, and governance structure. The distance between the two communities is one kilometre and one has to drive through Saaman to get to Juaso. The next big town from Saaman, Osino, is about five kilometres away where both communities do their banking transactions. There is no community beyond Juaso. Both Saaman and Juaso have similar characteristics as I describe below.

4.2.1 Location

Saaman and Juaso are located in the Fanteakwa district in the Eastern region of Ghana, lying one kilometre away from each other, Juaso lying next to Saaman. Inhabitants in the two towns freely walk to and from each. The regional capital is Koforidua and the district capital is Begoro. The distance from Saaman and Juaso to the district capital is Kim and Kim respectively, whereas the distance to the regional capital is estimated to be about Kim and Kim from Saaman and Juaso respectively. Saaman is 138 km away from Accra, the capital city of Ghana, whereas Juaso is 139 km away. To access Saaman and Juaso from the district, regional or capital city, one branches off the main road at Osino, and travel a distance of two (2) kilometres to get to Saaman and then to Juaso, which lies one kilometre away from Saaman. Figure 1 overleaf is the map of Fanteakwa district, showing Juaso and Saaman at the bottom left corner.

Figure 1: Map of Fantekwa district showing Saaman and Juaso at the bottom left corner.



Source: World Vision Ghana, 2012

The means of transport from Osino to Saaman is by taxi. Though the road is tarred, portions of it are bad and there are pot - holes on it. The taxis pick three people at the back and one in front. But sometimes, especially at night when there are lots of passengers at the taxi station, the drivers, with the understanding of the passengers pick two people in front and four at the back. The taxi fare from Osino to Saaman is one Ghana cedi (equivalent to 50 US cents). The fare is

the same for Saaman and Juaso. The road is narrow and due to its bad state, drivers are not able to drive fast even though some dangerously do.

On each side of the road are farms belonging to individuals or families. These are mainly maize, cassava or plantain farms, with a few palm plantations.

Figure 2: Taxis that ply the road from Osino through Saaman to Juaso.



Source: Field data, 2012

On entering Saaman from Osino, the first thing that would catch the eye of a stranger would be the classes going on under trees on the right side of the road and the chapel which serves as a classroom on the left side, if school is in

session. This is the result of the collapsed Junior High School (JHS) building which the community was trying to re-construct at the time of the research.

Once inside the town, you will see houses constructed on each side of the road- houses built with cement and roofed with corrugated iron sheets. Food vendors, dressmakers' shops, hair dressers salons and other shops where general goods are sold are seen on each side of the road.

Towards the end of the town, on the left side of the road is the chief's palace. This is a big house with a big yard where community gatherings are sometimes held. The roof of the palace is old and rusted. The chief lives in the palace but was not in town throughout the period when the data was being collected.

The picture is not different from Juaso. Houses look the same and like Saaman, the narrow road runs through the town, dividing the town into two. The JHS lies to the right of the road whilst the Primary School lies to the left, the two being opposite to each other.

On entering Juaso from Saaman, one comes across the big fetish shrine (This is a shrine where gods represented by inanimate objects are invoked and worshipped and people go there to present their needs for solutions) where the fetish priest and his family live. It is a big compound house built with cement and roofed with corrugated iron sheets, like all the other houses in Juaso.

The chief's palace at Juaso is equally big and old and the chief lives there, unlike in Saaman

4.2.2 Population

Saaman has a population of about 3,000 whereas Juaso has about 1,600. Saaman is thus bigger and has more residents than Juaso.

4.2.3 Infrastructure

- Educational infrastructure:

There are four schools in Saaman, one (1) Nursery school, two (2) Primary Schools, and one (1) Junior High School (JHS). It was the JHS which had its roof razed off and the community was making efforts to build a new one because the old building itself was very old and weak, built with mud and roofed with corrugated iron sheets by the community itself many years back. After the collapse of the JHS building teaching and learning at the JHS was undertaken under trees and in the chapel. Besides the Nursery, which is a community school, all the other three schools belong to the government. The two Primary Schools used to be Mission schools, belonging to the Methodist and Roman Catholic Churches respectively before the government took over the ownership and management of all Mission schools in Ghana.

Juaso, on the other hand, has three schools, a Nursery, a Primary School and a JHS.

Figure 3: Pictures of educational infrastructure in Saaman and Juaso



Saaman JHS building
with roofrazed off



Juaso Primary School



Juaso JHS



Saaman JHS students
having classes under
trees

Source: Field data, 2012

- Water and sanitation

Like many rural communities in Ghana there is no availability of pipe-born water and the people have to content themselves with mostly using water from streams and rivers for washing, drinking and bathing. Mostly, these streams and rivers dry up during periods of drought, creating problems associated with water for the people. In some places schools have to be closed down due to non-availability of water. This situation has led to the government and NGOs providing boreholes and hand-dug wells in rural communities. However, not every rural community is fortunate to have this facility.

Saaman is among the rural communities which have benefited from the provision of boreholes by NGOs. The Ghana Rural Water Project of World Vision Ghana drilled five boreholes for the community in the 1980s. However, at the time of the research only one of these boreholes was functioning. Even though the community repairs these boreholes, they break down again, as was explained by the Assembly member in a conversation I had with him. The functioning borehole and a stream, called “Akusu” served as the sources of water for the people of Saaman. “Akusu” flows at the outskirts of the town, on the way to Juaso. In the mornings and evenings, one would see women and children fetching water with buckets and basins from the stream. They carry the water containers on their heads, balancing it with great skill without it falling. Almost every Ghanaian knows how to do this. Unlike in other parts of Ghana, especially in Northern Ghana where men fetch water in rubber containers and tie them at the back of their bicycles, in Juaso and Saaman, men do not fetch water. This is considered the responsibility of women and children. The people of Saaman hold the “Akusu” stream in high esteem because according to the Assemblyman, it has served them faithfully over the years, never drying up even during periods of drought.

In many homes at Saaman and Juaso, water is stored in barrels, buckets and pots made of clay. The “Akusu” stream runs through Juaso as well and serves as the source of water. However, at Juaso the stream is not as close to the community as it is in Saaman.

Figure 4: Akusu stream at Saaman



Source: Field data, 2012

Figure 5: Girls washing in Akusu stream in Saaman



Source: Field data, 2012

At the time of the research Juaso also had two boreholes and a mechanized solar water system which added to the “Akusu” stream as their sources of water. A tap was fixed to the mechanized solar water system from which they fetched the water. According to the adult literacy class facilitator, Dennis, the Member of Parliament (MP) for the area drilled four boreholes for the community in 1998. In 2002, the MP who succeeded the former MP also mechanized two of the four boreholes into the solar system for the community. The two remaining boreholes broke down and were repaired for them by an NGO, the Cadbury Cocoa Partnership in 2010.

Figure 6: The mechanized solar pump at Juaso



Source: Field data, 2012

In the urban areas in Ghana, there is a toilet in every home. In Saaman, Juaso and other rural communities in Ghana, the story is different. Places of

convenience are mostly communal, with partitions for men and women. However, some homes have family type places of convenience known as the Ventilated Improved Pit latrine (VIP). Saaman has two KVIP's and 20 VIP's, whereas Juaso has one (1) KVIP, seven (7) VIP's and four (4) Pit latrines. The acronym KVIP is derived from where it was designed, Kumasi which is the second largest city in Ghana. It therefore stands for Kumasi Ventilated Improved Pit Latrine. The difference between the KVIP and the VIP is that whereas KVIPs have more seats and are for communal use- mostly used by a section of the community-, VIPs have fewer seats and are for household use.

- Health facility

There is only one health facility, located at the outskirts of Saaman, near the boundary between Saaman and Juaso that serves the health needs of the two communities. The facility is a one-room facility adjacent to the chief's palace. It is known as a Community-based Health Planning and Services (CHPS) compound, a health arrangement for rural communities introduced by the Ghana Health Service (GHS). By this the community makes a room available for the service and the GHS posts a community health nurse there. In addition to treating minor illnesses, the community health nurse provides preventive health education to the people. There was one community health nurse manning the CHPS compound at the time the research was being done. She was based in Juaso and worked at the facility in Saaman. She also did home outreaches to take the services closer to the people. However, for complicated health services she

referred the people to the government hospital at Osino, two kilometres away, or to the district hospital at Begoro.

Figure 7: Sign board to the CHPS compound serving Saaman and Juaso



Source: Field data, 2012

- Housing

In both Saaman and Juaso houses are built with cement and roofed with corrugated iron sheets. Houses are owned by individuals. It is not uncommon to find large houses with big compounds housing extended family members.

Figure 8: An aerial view of Saaman community. The road leading from Saaman to Juaso, dividing the community into two.



Source: Field data, 2012

Figure 9: A section of Juaso community



Source: Field data, 2012.

- Electricity

In the past it was uncommon to find a rural community in Ghana connected to the national electricity grid. But thanks to a mass rural electrification campaign undertaken by the then ruling National Democratic Congress (NDC), many rural communities are connected to the national electrification grid. Thus both Saaman and Juaso have electric power. Though there are street lights in Saaman, there are none in Juaso, making the place quite dark at night.

4.2.4 Governance

In both Saaman and Juaso, there is a dual governance system. Traditionally, each community is governed by a chief who has ultimate power in the community. The chief is supported by a council of elders. Ascension to the throne by the chief is not by election, but rather inheritance. The chief has the power to reward or to sanction any member of the community depending on what the person does either good or bad. This traditional governance system was the only system in rural communities in Ghana until the 1980s when the ruling government introduced the Local Government system in Ghana. Under this system, towns and villages were grouped into districts or municipalities according their numbers and level of development.

A District Chief Executive (DCE) or a Municipal Chief Executive (MCE) is the head of local government at either the district or the municipal level. These are democratically elected positions and they are responsible for the overall development of the district or municipality. Then at the community level, there

is a democratically elected member of the community who represents the community on the local government administration called the District or Municipal Assembly where the DCE or the MCE is head. The community representative is called the Assembly Member and she/he is supported by a democratically elected 5-member Unit committee at the community level. These are responsible for development initiatives in the community with the support from the chief and his council of elders. Among the responsibilities of the Unit Committee is the mobilization of the community members for communal labour whereas the Assembly Member presents the developmental needs of the community to the District or Municipal Assembly and solicits for support. This is the governance structure running in both Saaman and Juaso.

Unlike Juaso where the chief resides in the community, in Saaman the chief does not live in the community and many decisions are taken by the Assembly member and his team in consultation with the members of the community. The position of the Assemblyman is very important in the community. Prior to the creation of the position, the chief and his council of elders were responsible for the development of the community. But since the creation of the Assembly member position and the Unit Committee system, the powers of the chief seem to have been reduced. In some communities in Ghana, there has been role confusion between the two offices, some chiefs feeling that the Assembly members are usurping their powers. However, in other communities, the two have worked together, complementing each other for the development of the community.

In the case of Saaman, there seemed to be role confusion between the Assemblyman and the Unit Committee on one side, and the chief and his elders on the other, on issues relating to the mining of gold on the land of the community. This apparent confusion emerged during the focus group discussion at Saaman. Talking about responsibility for community development, the Assemblyman argued that the chief did not have the power to stop any development initiative the Assembly member and the Unit Committee undertook. . A private gold mining company had obtained papers from government to mine for gold in both Saaman and Juaso. Whereas in Juaso, the company did not face any challenges with the community, the gold mining activity created a division in Saaman where a section of the community on the side of the chief approved of the activity and the other section, on the side of the Assemblyman, did not. The latter section argued that the mining activity would destroy their farm lands, cocoa farms and water bodies and deprive them of their livelihoods, since they were mainly farmers.

4.2.5 Language

The majority of the people in both Saaman and Juaso speak a local written dialect called Akuapem Twi. These are the indigenous people. There are however, other settlers who speak other languages, like the Guans, the Ga Adangbes, and the Ewes. But they are in the minority.

Akuapem Twi is part of an umbrella written language called Akan, comprising dialects like Fante, Akuapem, and Asante. Speakers of these dialects understand each other. Akuapem Twi is the language used in oral communication in both

Saaman and Juaso. Church services, community forums and committee meetings are held in the Akuapem Twi dialect. However, when it comes to writing, it is mostly done in English. Even though the Akuapem Twi dialect is written, it is not everyone who speaks the dialect that can write it. Akan, including Akuapem Twi, is taught in schools in Ghana from the Primary to the University level.

However, the official language in Ghana is English, which is also the language of instruction from Upper Primary right through to University. The people of Saaman experience English in their daily life situations when they travel outside their communities. For example, when they go to the bank to do banking transactions and they have to fill in bank forms in English. Also when they go to the District Assembly or attend meetings organized by NGOs in the community or at the district level. Even though during such meetings, the use of English and Akuapem Twi are mixed, there is some amount of reading and writing in English that is required.

4.2.6 Public Communication

In both Saaman and Juaso, there is a room they call „information centre“. In this room is a public address system which is used to make announcements to the hearing of all members of the community. Announcements made from this room are heard throughout the community. It is used primarily to mobilize the people for communal labour, and to inform the people about meetings and other public gatherings.

In each community someone had been made responsible for making the announcements but community leaders are also allowed to use the facility if they need to give information to the people themselves.

Beyond these uses of the public address system, individuals were also allowed to use it for their own purposes at a little fee. For instance, an individual who has had his or her item stolen could ask the announcer to warn the culprit to return the item by a certain date or face the consequences for their action.

4.2.7 Occupation

Majority of the people in Saaman and Juaso are farmers, cultivating both cash and food crops. The main cash crop cultivated in each community is cocoa and these are not large plantations. The majority are subsistence farmers, cultivating food crops mainly for family consumption. Farms in most cases belong to the men and their wives and children support them on the farms. Unlike other parts of Ghana, especially in Northern Ghana, where the men cultivate cash crops whereas the women do food crops, in Saaman and Juaso both men and women work together on both cash and food crops. There is no sharp divide here.

Figure 10: A farmer in Juaso drying his cocoa beans in the sun



Source: Field data, 2012.

Other occupations besides farming are dressmaking, hairdressing, carpentry, masonry and petty trading, the petty trading done mainly by women.

4.2.8 Land tenure

In both Saaman and Juaso, land is owned by either families or individuals. Family lands are owned by men. Individuals, both men and women can lease lands to farm on. By legislation, land cannot be sold outright in Ghana, but rather leased for a period of 99 years after which time it is to revert to its original owners. Land can also be rented for farming. There is also a share cropping system, called “abunu” or “abusa” where land is rented from its owner farmer and then the farm produce is divided into two between the one renting and the owner (abunu) or divided into three, the land owner taking one-third and the one

renting taking two-thirds. Whatever arrangement prevails depends on the agreement reached between the two.

4.2.9 Religion

Like many communities in Southern Ghana, both Saaman and Juaso are predominantly Christian, with a number of churches in each community. Churches in Saaman include: Methodist, Presbyterian, Roman Catholic, Seventh Day Adventist and Pentecost. At Juaso churches include: Methodist, Presbyterian, Roman Catholic, and the New Apostolic Church. There are also pagans in each community. However, there is no Muslim presence in both Saaman and Juaso. The majority of the people who participated in this research are Christians.

4.2.10 NGO activity

Not much NGO activity has taken place in Saaman and Juaso. The two NGOs working in the two communities are World Vision Ghana (WVG) and the Cadbury Cocoa Partnership (CCP). Whereas WVG works on a child sponsorship programme in which children from the two communities are linked to sponsors abroad who commit some funds to help in the development of the community in which the sponsored child lives, CCP works with cocoa farmers, providing technical assistance as well as inputs to increase cocoa production and productivity.

4.2.11 *Life in Saaman and Juaso*

Majority of the people of Saaman are farmers and therefore go to their farms during the day, leaving only a few women and children at home. Both men and women participate in farming activities.

Life in Saaman, like many rural communities in Ghana, is communal. Average family size is six. The man is the head of the family. By this, he has the responsibility of providing for the needs of the family. Marriage is mainly monogamous, with a few polygamous marriages, practised mainly by non-Christians.

Life at night in Saaman is very active. There are street lights and people come out of their homes to socialize. You see people in groups either playing cards or dominoes at spots close to the road. Food vendors, selling „kenkey¹“, fried yam, or rice also line the sides of the road. You see people in town as late as 10pm.

The people of Saaman are very friendly and will easily spot a stranger. Like many parts of Ghana, a person greets when they meet other people and the other party responds.

Life at Juaso is not very different from that of Saaman. One key difference is that Juaso is far smaller than Saaman. During the day the town is very quiet as many of the people would have either gone to the farm or to the small-scale mining site to work.

¹ A staple food in Ghana prepared from unfermented maize

Unlike Saaman, Juaso is not very active at night. There are a few food vendors and the street is virtually empty. However, there are a number of drinking spots and some of the nights you see a few people taking drinks at these spots.

4.3 Profile of research participants²

Two criteria were used to select participants for the research in the two communities. These criteria were participation in the adult literacy class, either as learner or facilitator, and role in the development processes in the community. Based on these two criteria, 22 participants were selected to participate in the research, 11 from each community and their profiles are presented below.

4.3.1 Participants selected based on their participation in the adult literacy class

Under this category, seven participants were selected per community³. These included the facilitator of the class of and six learners. Of the six learners, three were men and the other three women. I selected some who participated in the class and stopped along the way to help me find out the reasons of the drop-out, as well as others who completed the programme. All participants in both Saaman and Juaso speak the local language, Akuapem Twi.

² To protect the identity of study participants, pseudonyms were created and used for all participants throughout this study.

³ The number of learners per community was informed by availability of learners in the community at the time of the study as many had left the communities.

4.3.2 Profile of Saaman research participants who participated in the literacy class:

- Kingsley:

Kingsley was the adult literacy class facilitator at Saaman. He is 50 years old and had ten years of Basic formal education. Kingsley is a farmer. He is not married.

- Hayford:

Hayford is a 48- year old farmer and mason living at Saaman. He completed elementary education obtaining the Middle School Leaving Certificate (MSLC). He is a member of the Unit Committee.

- Frank:

Frank is a 46-year old black smith, steel bender, farmer and a hunter living at Saaman. He had ten years of basic education, obtaining the MSLC.

- Peter:

Peter is a 46-year old pastor of a local church, as well as a farmer living in Saaman. He had ten years of basic education. He is Akan, the dominant ethnic group in Saaman. He lives with his wife in a rented apartment. He joined the adult literacy class because he wanted to better his ability to read the Bible in the Twi language.

- Abena:

Abena is a 40-year old farmer and petty- trader living with her husband at Saaman. She had 10 years of Basic Education, obtaining the MSLC. She joined the literacy class because she wanted to be able to read in Akuapem Twi which is her mother tongue. She held no leadership position in the community at the time of the research.

- Grace:

Grace is a 35-year old mother of two living at Saaman. She is a dressmaker by profession and had elementary education up to primary six.

Hayford, Frank and Grace joined the adult literacy class with the aim of learning how to read and write in English.

- Patience:

Patience is a 40-year old food vendor at Saaman. She completed ten years of basic education, obtaining the MSLC. Patience could read and write but not to her satisfaction. She participated in the adult literacy class for two months and dropped out because she felt it was not going to help her. They were being taught things she knew already.

4.3.3 Profile of Juaso research participants who participated in the literacy class

- Dennis

Dennis is a 46-year old farmer at Juaso. He went through formal education up to Senior High School. He is the secretary to the chief and his elders. Dennis was the facilitator of the adult literacy class that was organized in Juaso. He is also the secretary to the chief and his elders.

- Alfred

Alfred is a 38-year old farmer living at Juaso. He had only three years of formal primary education and dropped out due to financial constraints on the part of his parents. He joined the adult literacy class because he wanted to be able to read and write so he could help his eight-year old daughter who was in class one with her homework. .

- Lemuel

Lemuel is a 48-year old farmer living at Juaso. He had formal school education up to Primary six and dropped out. He has three children. He plays no leading role in the community.

- John:

John is a 41-year old farmer living at Juaso. He completed Middle School (IC: ten years of basic education) and participated in the adult literacy class for one year. He occupies no leadership position in the community.

- Comfort:

Comfort is 28 years old and has four children. She lives with her husband and two sisters in a rented house at Juaso. She has no formal education. She works with an environmental sanitation company as a cleaner in addition to engaging in farming activities. She holds no leadership position in the community.

Whereas Lemuel and John had joined the literacy class to learn how to read the bible, Comfort wanted to acquire the skill of reading and writing in general.

- Gladys

Gladys is a 38-year old farmer and a native of Juaso. She also produces local soap for sale. She lives with her husband and their two children. She had a little primary education, going up to Primary four. Gladys holds no leadership position in the community. She joined the class because she wanted to be able to read and write so she could read sign boards when traveling and also to be able to read the bible.

- Rose

Rose is 36 years old. She is a farmer and a trader, a native of Juaso. She is a mother of four boys and she lives with her husband and the boys. She had some formal education up to Junior High School (JHS) and dropped out. Rose takes her foodstuffs, some of which are from her own farm and others that she buys, to Accra to sell. Rose joined the adult literacy class because even though she had had some basic education, she still could not read and write very well. She

wanted to improve her reading and writing skills so she could write things herself.

4.3.4 Participants selected based on their role in community development

Under this criterion, four participants were selected per community. These included the Assembly member, the Unit Committee chairman, and two opinion leaders.

4.3.5 Profile of Saaman participants based on their role in community development:

- Nathan

Nathan is the Assembly member of Saaman. He is a teacher by profession and a farmer. He is 45 years old and holds a diploma in statistics. He lives with his wife and three (3) children in Saaman and heads the Primary School at Juaso. By virtue of his position as Assemblyman, Nathan has a role of being the link between the community and local government. He participates in decision-making at the local government level and lobbies for development projects for his community. He is the representative of the community at the local government level- on the District or Municipal Assembly. The District or Municipal Assemblies represent central government at the district or municipal level. They have the mandate to plan and support the development of the communities in the district or municipality. At the community level, he is the representative of local government and thus the political head. He spearheads the growth of the community with the support of the Unit Committee as well as the

chief and his elders. The Assembly member is a respected individual in the community.

Nathan was seen to be very confident, forceful and knew what he wanted at any point in time. He would travel anywhere to meet with whoever he thought could support the community. The people of Saaman held him in high esteem.

- Daniel

Daniel is the Unit Committee chairman at Saaman. He is 55 years old and a farmer by profession. He had formal school education up to MSLC. He lives in Saaman with his family.

By virtue of his position as Unit Committee chairman, he has the responsibility of planning the development of the community together with the other members of the committee, the Assembly member, the chief, and opinion leaders in the community. He and his committee members are responsible for mobilizing the people for communal labour, supervise it and give a record of defaulters in communal labour to the Assembly member or the chief for appropriate action to be taken.

- Joshua

Joshua is a 55-year old Senior High School teacher living in Saaman. He holds a diploma degree in the Akan language which he teaches. He is an opinion leader. He is the chairman of the Works committee, a member of the planning committee, the funeral committee as well as the plot allocation committee.

- Martin

Martin is a 67-year old retired teacher and farmer living at Saaman. He holds a Bachelor's degree in Education. He is an opinion leader in the community, chairperson of the School Management Committee (SMC), the community treasurer, and a member of the development committee. Martin plays a very active role in the development initiatives of the community.

An opinion leader is a respectable member of the community, based on their age, good character, level of education, or his contribution to the growth and development of the community. These are people who come together with the traditional leader of the community- the chief-the Assembly member, and the Unit Committee to plan the development of the community and take important decisions.

4.3.6 Profile of Juaso participants based on their role in community development

- Thomas

Thomas is the Assembly member of Juaso. He is 55 years and a farmer. He spends part of his time in Juaso and part in Accra, the capital city of Ghana. He completed the then "Advanced" level of the West African Examinations Council (This is equivalent to the present Senior High School). Thomas is the counterpart of Nathan in Saaman and is expected to play the same roles as Nathan.

- Kofi

Kofi is 57 years old and chairman of the Unit Committee at Juaso, which is a democratically elected 5-member committee. He is the counterpart of Daniel in Saaman and is expected to play the same role as Daniel in the Juaso community. At the same time as being the Unit Committee chairman, Kofi is the purchasing clerk at the community level for a cocoa buying company headquartered in Accra. He is also a cocoa farmer.

- Ken

Ken is a 70-year old farmer and an opinion leader at Juaso. He is an adviser to the chief and deputizes for him in his absence. He had seven years of basic education. He participated in the focus group interview that I conducted prior to commencing the individual interviews.

- Newman

Newman is an opinion leader in Juaso. He is the secretary to the Unit Committee, as well as a member of the Funeral and Plot Allocation committees. He is 67 years old and a farmer by profession. He had formal education up to the MSLC (Thus 10 years of basic education).

4.4 Chapter summary

This research sought to investigate whether the provision of adult literacy really led to the achievement of community or national development, using two rural communities in Ghana. In this chapter I situated the research within the

geographical context in which it was undertaken by describing the location of the two communities, as well as their profiles. Then the research participants were presented. In the chapters that follow, I present and discuss the findings of the research, using the research questions as a guide and drawing on data from one-on-one interviews, focus group interviews, informal conversations and observation.

CHAPTER 5

PERCEPTIONS ON WHAT COUNTS AS LITERACY

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter I present the findings on the perceptions of the people of Saaman and Juaso who participated in the research on what counts as literacy. The findings in this chapter answer sub- question one of the research as presented in chapter one. The data that led to the findings in this chapter were focus group and one-on-one interviews, as well as informal conversations with research participants. Findings from all these data sources are presented in an integrated manner for purposes of triangulation, comparing and contrasting findings from all sources. To give voice to some of the people of Saaman and Juaso I include direct quotes from interview transcripts and informal conversations.

Again, to allow for contrast and comparison between the two case communities, findings from the two case communities are presented thematically and are juxtaposed, highlighting the similarities and the differences in their perceptions. The research revealed that literacy meant different things to two distinct groups of people: opinion leaders and the adult learners in both Saaman and Juaso.

5.2 Perceptions on literacy

5.2.1 *Opinion leaders' perception on literacy*

Daniel, the Unit Committee chairman of Saaman, said in an interview that he perceived literacy as knowledge and skill. He used his own farming experience as an example to illustrate his point. He said, as an experienced farmer, he has knowledge as to what to do at what time. According to him,

From 15th August to 15th September if you plant maize for the lean season you will get a good harvest. If you go beyond these days the maize may fail because it may not get the needed rainfall.

Dennis, the literacy class facilitator in Juaso agreed with Daniel. He observed that there are people who can combine two or more colours to create a new colour, combine wires to create electricity or to spark a vehicle. Others who have never been to school are able to weave baskets from palm branches as a means of earning income or use those same palm branches to make „Ajokuo“ (used in trapping fish and crabs in the river). According to him, these skills place literacy into two categories, „Efie nyansa“ (home literacy) and „sukuu nyansa“ (school literacy) as was explained by Dennis during the focus group discussion at Juaso.

To further buttress this point, Ken, a 70-year opinion leader at Juaso gave this anecdote during the focus group discussion at Juaso:

... There was a man called Kofi Mensah⁴ who used to buy cocoa from farmers for the government. He had never been to school. But he would

⁴ Name changed to protect identity

use stones to represent every bag of cocoa he filled. When he had finished, the number of stones would show him the number of bags filled and he would pay the farmers accordingly. He never worked at a loss...

Thomas, the Assembly member agreed with Daniel, Dennis and Ken. He said he believed knowledge and skill are innate and a gift from God. He gave this example to prove his point:

In the past there were carpenters who had never been to school but they could sit and design things which were very neat. Those carpenters produced better quality wooden products than carpenters who have had formal training.

Nathan, the Assembly member of Juaso, however, said he agreed that literacy is innate but it has got nothing to do with religion. He said people are born with talent which can be advanced through learning. But for the learners in the adult literacy class who were interviewed, literacy meant only one thing as described in the section that follows.

5.2.2 What literacy means to learners

In contrast to the perception expressed by some of the opinion leaders, the research revealed through informal conversations with some learners both in Saaman and Juaso that for most of them, what counts as literacy is nothing but the ability to read and write in English. A few of them, like Abena and Peter, wanted to be able to read in the Twi language.

Most of the adult literacy learners in Saaman and Juaso that participated in the research indicated that the desire to be able to read and write in English was

what motivated them to join the literacy class. They needed the ability to read and write to cope with day to day practical situations outside the community such as doing banking transactions which require filling in bank forms, keeping records, and reading sign boards when traveling, so they would not miss their way. They also linked the ability to read and write to status. Some participants even dropped out of the class because even though they had been promised they would be taught how to read and write in English that was not happening. They felt bad they could not read and write in English. For example, Grace, a participant in the literacy class in Saaman told me that she felt inferior to other ladies who could speak English because she could not. In her words,

Anytime I go to the bank and see those ladies speak and write English with so much ease, I feel inferior to them and embarrassed that I cannot do same... Who knows, if my parents had not died, I would also be working in a bank or at some other place, taking big pay and not a common dressmaker.

It is clear from the words of Grace that ability to read and write in English is linked with feelings of self-worth and hope for better job prospects.

Hayford, also a participant in the literacy class in Saaman said he felt embarrassed that he could not read and write in English, especially when he went to the bank and he had to fill forms in English but he could not.

Similarly, in an informal conversation with Rose, a participant in the literacy class in Juaso, she told me that she joined the literacy class because she wanted

to be able to read and write so that she could read the bible and write things herself without always having to depend on other people.

5.2.3 *Literacy conceptualized as wisdom*

It came out from the research that in both Saaman and Juaso, some people perceived literacy as wisdom which is expressed in the way a person communicates. People endowed with this kind of wisdom are believed to be deep thinkers and are able to provide valuable advice on issues when approached. This came out during focus group discussions and one-on-one interviews both in Saaman and Juaso. As Newman observed in an interview I had with him in Juaso, „sometimes, even when something is wrong the way the person puts it across indicates to all around that he is wise“. He referred to this kind of skill in communication as “nyansa kasa” (wisdom talk, literally), what Dennis, the literacy class facilitator, in a focus group discussion, referred to as “Efie nyansa” (Home literacy), differentiating it from “sukuuu nyansa” (School literacy).

After all the conversations in the two communities, it came out clearly that the perceptions on what counts as literacy for some people in both communities were the same. For some of the opinion leaders, literacy is functional and is synonymous with knowledge and skill. It goes beyond ability to read and write. However, ability to read and write is part of literacy and for majority of the learners that were interviewed, to be able to read and write in English in order to cope with day to day life situations, was all that literacy meant. This leads me to

exploring what perceptions people in the communities hold on the importance of reading and writing.

5.3 Perceptions on the importance of reading and writing.

In Saaman and Juaso, as in many rural communities in Ghana, communication is mainly verbal and is done in the local language, in the case of Saaman and Juaso, Akuapem Twi. There is thus little need for reading and writing so long as people are within the confines of the community. However, once outside the community, situations arise which call for the ability to read and write. In Ghana, the official language is English and most writing is done in the English language. It should therefore be understood that when people talk of reading and writing, they are by default talking about reading and writing in the English language.

5.3.1 Coping with daily living

During a focus group discussion in Saaman with research participants, Daniel likened inability to being blind. He gave the anecdote below as an illustration:

My own grandmother and her husband, none of them went to school. In those days during church fund- raising every member is given an envelope into which to put money. The church wrote the names of the members on the envelopes. It happened that in the process the envelope bearing the name of my grandmother was given to my grandfather and vice versa. . None of them noticed this mistake because they could not read and write. Because my grandfather was rich he had put more money into his envelope. However during the fund -raising each envelope was opened

and the amount each person contributed announced. It came out that my grandmother contributed more than my grandfather.

This generated a long quarrel between the two back at home. (All laughing). If they knew how to read and write this would not happen.

Hayford, a participant in the literacy class at Saaman said:

If someone has knowledge but does not know how to read and write it affects him a lot... someone may have a lot of information that he may want to document. However, because he cannot read and write, he may ask someone to write for him. If the person does not agree with him about what he is saying, he can write different things from what he says. Therefore, if you have knowledge but cannot read and write it affects you negatively.

In my interactions with the research participants at Juaso through focus group discussions and one-on-one interviews, I gathered that perceptions held by the people of Juaso that I interviewed on the importance of reading and writing was in the main not different from those I interviewed in Saaman. Ability to read and write was considered important for purposes of reading and writing letters, making banking transactions, reading inscriptions when traveling, making profit out of business, wealth acquisition, and being respected in the community.

There are no banks in either Saaman or Juaso. People who have to do banking transactions travel to Osino. At the bank, officials complete the forms for those

who cannot read and write. Using this as an example, Dennis observed during the focus group discussion that it is important to be able to read and write so people are not cheated out of things of value to them. He said that bank officials who fill bank forms for people who cannot read and write can steal their money from them.

5.3.2 *Communication and record keeping*

During a focus group discussion in Saaman, there was consensus among the participants that ability to read and write engenders confidence, increases knowledge, as well as enhances record keeping and sending of information.

Daniel, the Unit Committee chairman for Saaman agreed to this during a one-on-one interview I had with him, when he said:

Being able to read makes the person confident...There are people who, because they have not had formal education, they do not know how to do certain things. But if you have been to school you know what to do and you are confident in yourself.

Daniel's assertion that having had formal education is tantamount to knowing what to do is debatable and unrealistic. Education does not teach all things. A person who has not had formal education but has had experience and exposure to certain things would be better placed to those things than one who is educated but not experienced in what needs to be done. In the same vein, assumption that being able to read and write engenders confidence is also debatable. I see these

perceptions as effects of negative hegemonic influences from the West which made people who could not read and write feel inferior to those who could.

Again, some of the participants in the focus group discussion saw the importance of record keeping in the sense that what is documented can be referred to even after a hundred years because as Nathan put it, „tekrema mpro“ (the tongue never decays). Hayford agreed to the importance of being able to read and write for purposes of record keeping because it is not everything that one can commit to memory. Moreover, if one cannot read and write and asks another person to document something for him, the person can misrepresent the facts if he does not agree with him.

5.3.3 *Life outside the community*

During the focus group discussions in Saaman and Juaso, it came out clearly that one way reading and writing is important is to be able to read inscriptions in order to know where to pass and where not to pass. As Dennis from Juaso put it, “we don’t miss our way if we know how to read and write”

Moreover, they agreed that as most information is written, one needs to be able to read and write to have access to information, as Nathan put it, „anibuei saafee ne akenkan“ (Meaning ability to read and write is the key to civilization).

Peter said:

... if in your old age you want to prepare a will for your children and you can’t read and write, the one who does it for you can change what you say. But if you are able to write these things down yourself it will be difficult

to lose the property you have worked hard with your children for many years to acquire to someone else.

On the importance of reading and writing to community development, Joshua, an opinion leader in Saaman noted that Saaman is an old community and traditionally well known in the area. Their forefathers made a name for themselves through conquests in war. As Joshua observed,

...But because our forefathers did not help posterity in terms of reading and writing, a time came when this community was „flopping“ and Akutu (name changed) was developing more than us... when we started sending our children to school we have seen that even today Akutu people are afraid of people from this community who are knowledgeable and can read and write.

5.3.4 Reading and writing and respect

Research participants from both Saaman and Juaso clearly expressed the view that ability to read and write engenders respect. Life in Saaman and Juaso, like many rural communities in Ghana, is communal. Everybody is known by all in the community and everybody's business is everybody's concern. It is therefore very easy to lose or gain respect in the community by what one does or does not do. The ability to read and write was linked to respect in both communities. During the Saaman focus group discussion, there was a general agreement among participants that people who can read and write are more respected than those who cannot. As another participant in the focus group, Lemuel, a

participant in the literacy class from Juaso noted, “Even in this community when there is a meeting and a person who has been to school arrives he is given the highest seat”. However, the group also agreed that the link is not that straightforward as a person’s character would determine whether he should be respected or not.

5.3.5 Commercial activities

Ability to read and write was also thought to be important for trading purposes. In the focus group discussion at Juaso, participants agreed that reading and writing was important to enable trade between blacks and whites. Using the silent trade era to support his point, Newman, a farmer, an opinion leader and secretary to the Unit Committee believed that it is important to read and write English which is the white man’s language so that blacks can trade with whites.

Again, reading and writing was seen as important for making profit out of business and acquiring wealth. Two of the participants in Juaso expressed this perception during the focus group discussion which was also confirmed in one-on-one interviews. Lemuel, a participant in the literacy class, for instance, believed that,

People who have not been to school, especially traders, they can engage in their business for more than ten years but you don’t see any profit accruing from the business. All because they do not know how to read and write.

In the view of Alfred, as well, a person can only make money if he is financially literate. But even then another person may steal the money from him if he does not know how to read and write.

During the one-on-one interview I had with Ken, he corroborated the view of Alex when he argued that a trader who cannot speak English would have difficulty dealing with customers who spoke only English.

From the conversations with research participants from both Saaman and Juaso, one can see the influence of the autonomous model of literacy on the perspectives of many of them on their understanding of literacy. For many of them ability to read and write is of prime importance and is even linked to respect and confidence. This perception is problematic as in a community the factors that generate respect and confidence in reality go beyond ability to read and write. There are people in communities who cannot read and write but due to their character, they command the respect of all and are very confident in all they do.

CHAPTER 6

PERCEPTIONS ON WHAT COUNTS AS COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

6.1 Introduction

The concept of community development is contested in development scholarship, its meaning differing from context to context, as I indicated in the review of related literature. The way people perceive development affects how they go about achieving development. In this chapter I report the research findings on the perceptions of the people of Saaman and Juaso on what community development means to them and how it is practised. I begin the chapter with a brief historical insight into the developmental experience of Saaman and Juaso. The data sources for the findings are from focus group discussions and one-on-one interviews. The findings, which answer sub-question 3 of the research questions, are presented in an integrated way to allow for triangulation.

6.1.1 *History of development in Saaman and Juaso*

The research showed that both case communities had very good communal spirits in the past and initiated many development projects on their own. For instance, in Juaso, the old school block was built by the community in the early 1970s and they mobilized funds to pay the teachers themselves for years before

government stepped in to support with the payment of the salaries of the teachers.

Again, from 1990-1995, the community initiated an electrification project. Even though the government helped them in this project, it was initiated by the community and they raised funds to buy the needed poles through levies paid by community members. The communal spirit in Juaso was compromised in 2004 when the leadership of the then Unit Committee failed to account for monies collected for community development to the people, resulting in the refusal of the people to pay any levies for development since then.

The history of Juaso again shows that since 1998 they had received a lot of support from government. These included the drilling of two boreholes by government through the influence of a Member of Parliament (MP) in the area in 1998, mechanizing one of the boreholes in 2004 through the support of another MP in 2004, the construction of a new school building by the government in 2007-2008.

Similarly, in Saaman, the communal spirit had existed from the past. In 1912, the community built its first primary school and has been renovating the structure by themselves ever since.

The old school building that collapsed had been constructed using the community's own resources and through communal labour in 1954, building one room every year for four years. There was a Town Development Committee (TDC) in the Community appointed by the chiefs. This committee was in charge

of organizing communal labour until 1992 when the constitution established the Unit Committee system to take over the work of the TDCs.

The community started building the new school building in 2012 through their own efforts.

Unlike, Juaso, Saaman had over the years enjoyed no support from government in their developmental efforts. This explains why my question on whether they had received any support from government during the focus group discussion I had with opinion leaders in Saaman elicited laughter and a firm „NO“. This again explains why they would not wait for government to get what they need.

6.2 Perception on community development

6.2.1 Knowledge and community development

Community development was conceptualized in many ways in Saaman and Juaso.

In a focus group discussion in Saaman, among the participants composed of community leaders and participants in the literacy class, the following perceptions were expressed:

Frank, a participant in the literacy class said, community development means the presence of knowledgeable people like teachers, doctors and lawyers in the community. “ ... If we have all kinds of knowledgeable people found in Ghana in the community, then the community is developing”, he said.

Peter, a community leader and participant in the literacy class agreed. He said education is the key to development, adding that most often when we talk about

education we think of schooling. However, even though schooling is part of education, development is learning, either in school or out of school. He added,

You learn something that makes you advance from one place to another. Talking about community development, it is when a community realizes that they lack something or another community has something that has helped them to develop so we must also start learning from them so that we can also move forward, because we learn from others. So as for community development, it is recognizing where we are and taking the necessary steps to move forward from there, if it is one, moving to two, three or four.

Kofi, the Unit Committee chairman of Juaso also agreed. In his words:

All that we are saying about community development is about education. Any community without educated people will have difficulties in development. That is all I have to say.

He gave the following anecdote to buttress his point.

I will use my own town Kwasikrom (name of town changed) as an example. I remember the first chief of the town, even though he had been to school, the level was not high. So he rejected most of the ideas that people brought. But the current chief because he has been to school and has knowledge he knows what is good for the town. If you go to Kwasikrom today it is as if you are in Kumasi (Kumasi is the second biggest city in Ghana and very developed). So you see the presence of

people who have completed university and other educated people in the town is making the town develop. They are bringing every good thing from every corner into the community. So everybody is taking their children to school. So if we are in the community and we don't send our children to school, the community will not see development, we will forever be where we are today.

Thomas, the Juaso Assemblyman also shared this view. He said whenever there is knowledge there is development. He said if people learn things from outside the community and these things are documented, when the community needs something, they can combine all the knowledge and develop what they want. He added that, "So as for community development it can only take place when there are people with knowledge in the community".

Martin, an opinion leader in Saaman added that any community that does not have knowledgeable people cannot develop. According to him, this is because people might not have the knowledge to mobilize people to think about what will bring development to the community.

In addition, if it happens that we have to put up a school building and we do not have people with knowledge in masonry and carpentry in the community we cannot do anything in the community. So a community without knowledgeable people cannot develop", he said.

Nathan, the Assemblyman of Saaman agreed saying:

What will make a community like ours develop is knowledge. By knowledge, I mean both formal and informal. In this community, informal learning has helped us a lot. When we go to discuss things, even those who cannot read and write are able to express their opinions towards the success of whatever we are doing.

However, Hayford, a member of the Unit Committee and a participant in the literacy class in Saaman did not agree that the presence of knowledgeable people in the community will lead to community development.

He said somebody could be a doctor and have money but will not help the community. Another person may not have been to school but is always willing to contribute financially towards the development of the community.

6.2.2 Basic Needs

During a focus group discussion at Juaso Newman, an opinion leader said:

If we say a community is developing, if for instance there is a school in the community, it helps the community to develop. When our roads were not tarred and were muddy, as soon as the roads were tarred we said the community had developed.

Alfred, a participant in the literacy class in Juaso added that three things bring community development. According to him, the first is education. The second is electricity. The third is road networks.

Lemuel, a participant in the literacy class in Juaso agreed, saying:

The things that we need to get to make this community develop are things like hospitals and businesses. If a business is opened here, it will make the community develop.

Joshua, an opinion leader said that for him, community development is “when we are able on our own to provide the necessary things without depending on anybody outside the community”.

In a separate interview with him, Thomas, the Assemblyman, said:

Hmmm, as for community development, as we speak now we know the things that the community needs. So getting the things the community needs to progress is community development. Now, we do not have any public place of convenience in the community... We don't have durbar grounds this refers to a place where the community assembles for community meetings, funerals and other communal activities in the community...Our school for instance is not growing...

In both Saaman and Juaso, most of the people interviewed perceived community development as the availability of basic infrastructure in the community. The basic necessities were seen to include street lights, school buildings and other physical infrastructure.

4.2.3 Working together to achieve community needs

Lemuel, literacy class participant in Juaso said during the focus group discussion that before any community can develop the first thing that is needed is for all the

people to be one. He said everybody needs to be involved in whatever the community decides to do. He said,

For example, if the community decides to undertake a fund raising event this year to rehabilitate a school building or undertake some other development activity, we must all help. We must all be willing to contribute financially, be committed to the task and show love so we will be able to raise the funds. When this is done we will be able to do what we set out to do

Martin, an opinion leader agreed with Lemuel and said that community development means the entire community agreeing that they need to move from their current state, identifying what they need, and working together to achieve what they need. It could be providing some needed infrastructure in the community or solving a problem that hinders the growth of the community.

Hayford agreed and gave this anecdote in support:

I remember one elder said there was no school in the community. Children were going to school at Bonkro and Boakra.⁵ At that time there were no educated people in this community: no doctors, no lawyers, and no teachers. But the elders themselves met and agreed that the lack of school in the community was not helping them. True to their word they came together and constructed a school building in the community and withdrew their children who were going to school in other communities to

⁵ Names changed

the community school. This marked the beginning of development in the community.

In agreement with Hayford, Daniel, the Unit Committee chairman said that if people unite and with one mind decide to do something and work towards that goal, there will be development. But if there is lack of unity there is no way we can have development

In like manner, in Juaso, this perception was shared by three participants during the focus group discussion, Lemuel, Newman, and Kofi.

Using the Akan adage, “se yeka prae bo mu a, yentumi emmu mu, nanso se yepaepae mu a, yetumi bu mu” („if the broom is put together it cannot be broken but if they are separated each can easily be broken),“ Newman observed that that the key to development is unity and togetherness, stressing that „knowledge without unity and self-sacrifice is useless“. He re-echoed this in a separate interview with him when he noted that without unity, understanding and love in the community, the community cannot develop.

Kofi said:

...If you have that knowledge and stay in your house can the work go on?
No. So if there are people with knowledge in some areas and they don't use their knowledge to help the community, the community will not develop. This is what we mean by unity. Each of us here has his own

talent, if we are united and put our talents together towards the development of the community; that is when the community will develop.

4.2.4 Responsibility for community development

Frank, a participant in the literacy class in Saaman said that it is the responsibility of every community member to ensure that there is development in the community. He argued that no matter what the leaders do if the individual people in the community do not support it will not succeed.

Hayford agreed and said:

I agree with those who are saying that the development of the community is the responsibility of every individual in the community. This is because if I am a chief and I have some knowledge to do something, if my people do not add their knowledge to mine we cannot achieve what I want for the community.

Martin, an opinion leader in Saaman added that if every individual makes up his mind to help with whatever knowledge they have there will be *development*. “But if we rely on the chief or a leader in the community or a group and we don’t work hard, be united, everybody doing his part, there cannot be any development”, he said.

Peter, a participant in the literacy class in Saaman said that the leadership of the community has number one responsibility for the development of the community. In his words,

... In every community there are leaders. And if these leaders are not truthful to the community members, the community will never develop. Because it is when the leaders take the initiatives that the community members lend their support. So it all comes back to the leaders of the community.

Hayford agreed:

There is an adage in the Akan language that “yensan kokromoti ho emmo po” (meaning one cannot tie a knot without the thumb). So if you have some knowledge and there is a chief in the community who cares about the community, you cannot on your own mobilize people and share your ideas with them. You will first discuss it with the chief for him to agree with you before you meet the entire community. So if you fail to do this and go straight to meet the people, the chief will be angry with you and feel that you do not show him due respect. You want to take his glory. So you cannot do anything without first discussing with the chief, except where the chief does not care about the community and kicks against any good idea. In that case, you might mobilize the people yourself to do what you want to do. Even in that case you first inform the chief about what you are going to do. Otherwise you will be seen to have breached the law of the community.

Joshua, an opinion leader in Saaman corroborated this, saying that every community has its head and that even though the chief does not live in the community (the chief lives and works in the regional capital), anytime the gong-gong is beaten what they say is “This is what the head of this community says” even though sometimes they used the name of the Assemblyman to beat the gong-gong.

But if we want development for the community, if Assemblyman goes for the Community Action Plan and the chief says no, I don’t agree, that development activity cannot be carried out. So in my view the development of every community depends on the leadership of the community, the chief and his opinion leaders, he added.

Daniel added that leadership does not refer to the chief alone. Rather it refers to every leader in the community like the Assemblyman, Unit Committee Chairman. He said these constitute the leadership of the community. So if every leader stands firm, it brings development.

In an interview with him, Thomas, The Juaso Assembly member said that development in the community is the responsibility of the Assemblyman and the Unit Committee.

However, Kofi, the Unit Committee chairman for Juaso believed the development of the community was the responsibility of the government. He said:

For a community to develop, the government must ensure that there are jobs and business for women in the community. If through the help of the government the youth in the community have jobs and there are businesses for women, the community will develop.

6.3 Chapter summary

This chapter reported findings on the perceptions on community development in Saaman and Juaso. The research revealed that even though the perceptions were similar in many respects in the two communities, there were instances where there was no consensus, confirming the argument in community development scholarship that the concept is contested.

Community development was perceived by many of the opinion leaders interviewed, in terms of movement from one stage of development to another, availability of knowledgeable people in the community, shared objectives, and availability of basic infrastructure.

One key point of departure between the two communities, however, is the perception on whose responsibility it is to provide the basic necessities needed in the community. Whereas in Saaman the people believe that it is their responsibility, in Juaso, the responsibility is laid at the doorstep of government.

CHAPTER 7

THE ADULT LITERACY CLASSES AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

7.1 Introduction

The preceding section reported findings on the importance of reading and writing in Saaman and Juaso. In this section, I report findings on the adult literacy classes and how they related to community development in the two case communities. Data sources used were from review of documents, informal conversations with learners and one-on-one interviews with the facilitators in the two communities. The findings from all the data sources used are integrated and findings from the two communities are again juxtaposed to allow for contrasts and comparisons.

7.1.1 Conflicting objectives

The objective of policy makers with regards to the adult literacy classes was not in tandem with that of majority the participants in the adult literacy classes in Saaman and Juaso.

From my review of the hand- out used in training the Adult literacy facilitators- Initial and Refresher Training for NFLD Facilitators- I got to know the government's vision and objective of the National Functional Literacy Programme (NFLP) which gave birth to the establishment of the adult literacy classes, as well as the planned content of the literacy classes. According to the document, the vision of the NFLP was to establish classes in 15 local languages

to reduce „illiteracy“, ignorance, disease and poverty in the country, with special attention for the rural poor, especially women. The objective was to make 5.6 million „illiterate“ adults and 2.8 million „illiterate“ youth become“ literate“ and also acquire some vocational skill for social change.

Besides facilitating learners to be able to read and write, facilitators were also to teach learners what Income Generating Activities (IGAs) are, how to plan and implement IGAs, as well as teach learners how to engage in „Development Activity“. Each literacy class was to go through a full cycle of 21 months.

From the perspective of government therefore, the objective of the literacy classes was to teach the participants to be able to read and write in the local language and also to acquire vocational skills for social change.

The objectives of the NFLP show that the adult literacy classes were established from an autonomous perspective of attempting to use adult literacy with a focus on reading and writing to achieve social change.

From my interviews with the literacy class facilitators in Saaman and Juaso, I noticed that they both placed more emphasis on teaching the learners to read and write and played down on teaching the learners IGAs and how to engage in development activity.

According to the facilitator of the Saaman literacy class the objective of the class was to help people who could not go to school to be able to read and write. „I think government made this programme so that everybody will know how to

read and write. That is all that there is to it”, he noted. Thus according to him, the literacy class was all about teaching the people how to read and write.

Similarly, the purpose of the Juaso literacy class was according to the facilitator:

To help people who did not get the chance to go to school at all and were thus losing some things to be able to read and write. The majority of them also was not able to read the bible at church, or could not read well. We wanted to help such people to be able to read and write.

From the perspective of the two facilitators therefore, the purpose of the classes were to teach the people to read and write. They also revealed that they taught the learners how to read and write in the local language, Akuapem Twi and not in the English language.

The research revealed that most of the learners had a completely different objective for participating in the literacy classes. Majority of them were motivated to participate in the classes because they had been promised that they would be taught how to read and write in the English language. They needed this to cope with life outside the community.

Grace, the dressmaker, living in Saaman who had had elementary education up to Primary Six joined because she wanted to be able to read and write, especially in English. Grace said to me,

... When I heard about the literacy programme, I decided to join so I would be able to read and write. I wanted especially to be able to read and write English, but the facilitator said we would start with Twi so I went.

Like Grace, Frank wanted to be able to read, write and speak English as a way of boosting his self-pride. According to him, “it would give me a sense of pride to be able to read, speak and write in English. I see little children rattle in English and I feel bad that I cannot do same”.

Abena and Peter had joined the class because they wanted to be able to read and write Twi but for different reasons. Whereas Abena wanted to read and write Twi in order to be able to help her daughter with her homework, Peter being a pastor, wanted to be able to read the bible in Twi in church as church services were conducted in Twi.

Hayford, on his part, wanted to be able to keep record of his experiences and to write things in English that would make sense to other people.

Similarly, on the part of the literacy class participants at Juaso, the motivation for participating in the class differed from one participant to the other.

Rose joined the class because she wanted to be able to read the bible as well as write things herself without always having to depend on other people to do these for her.

Gladys said she wanted to be able to read and write so she could read sign boards when traveling, as well as be able to read the bible.

According to Comfort:

We learned how to read in the Twi language. I can now read the Bible. I participated in the class for one year and because I really wanted to be able to read and write, I achieved my aim. But even though I can now read the Twi language, I would have preferred if it was in the English language because in most places the writings are in English.

Whereas both Lemuel and John wanted to be able to read the bible, Alfred had joined the class because he wanted to be able to help his daughter with her homework. Alfred also wanted to be able to read sign boards and names of towns when traveling. As he told me: “I also wanted to be able to read sign boards bearing names of towns when travelling so I won’t miss my way. Now I ask somebody in the vehicle if I don’t know where I am”.

7.1.2 Content of the classes

The research revealed that facilitators did not teach the entire content of the literacy classes as were laid out in the primers developed by government. Two primers were developed by the Non-Formal Education Division of the Ministry of Education, Ghana for the National Functional Literacy Programme. These primers were used in the literacy classes in both Saaman and Juaso. The title of Primer 1 is: „Akuapem-Twi Mfiase Nhoma. Nhoma a edi kan (Translated as Akuapem-Twi Beginners Book 1). The title of the second primer is: Akuapem-Twi Mfiase Nhoma. Nhoma a eto so abien (Akuapem- Twi Beginners Book 2).

A review of the primers revealed that several themes were developed out of which words and sentences were formed to be used in teaching the learners how to read and write in the Akuapem Twi. There were sessions also that were to be used in teaching the learners numeracy.

Themes in primer one included: Farming, potable water, cocoa farming, teenage pregnancy, animal rearing, sanitation, breastfeeding, malnutrition, among others. Themes in primer two included: Pottery, food processing, tree planting, health care, development, and drug abuse, Soap making, writing wills, property, land tenure, chieftaincy, HIV/Aids, and funerals.

However, it came out of the study that the facilitators did not discuss these themes in detail but rather only focused on teaching them the words and sentences generated from the themes.

In my interview with Kingsley, the literacy class facilitator at Saaman, he noted that

Ehhh, ours was the first year so we taught them reading and writing in the Twi language and numeracy. That was the main thing.

Kingsley further told me that they would have taught the learners how to read and write in English the following year if he had not been taken ill. He thus confirmed that the main thrust of the literacy class in Saaman was to teach the learners how to read and write.

In like manner, in Juaso, the content of the literacy class was reading and writing in the Akuapem-Twi language and numeracy as Dennis, the facilitator told me. This was confirmed to me in my informal conversations with the participants. Rose, for instance, told me,

We met in the evenings. The facilitator would write words on the blackboard pronounce them and ask the class to repeat after him. He had a book that he wrote from.

Additionally, the learners were taught how to make soap but not into detail, as I learned from Gladys who had to learn the skill from somewhere else to make soap production her business.

They also learned about potable water, hygiene, sanitation, and farming as well as do some communal work by cleaning the pump where they fetch water, according to Lemuel and Alfred.

The research revealed that the content of the classes in the two communities were the same. The learners were basically taught how to read and write in the Twi language, as well as other things like hygiene, sanitation, farming, and soap making. But these were not treated into detail as they were not the focus of the facilitators. They were merely themes that were used to teach the learners how to read and write.

7.1.3 Duration of the classes

The Saaman literacy classes lasted for a period of about eight months whereas the Juaso one went through a full cycles of 21 months.

According to Abena, a participant in the Saaman literacy class, during an informal conversation I had with her, they had the classes for about eight months and stopped because the facilitator travelled. Another person came to replace him but he did not get learning materials from the district office. He also stopped coming because he was not getting any incentives.

Dennis, the facilitator of the Juaso literacy class told me,

It lasted for twenty one months. Or (thinking) eh, let's say one year plus nine months. Yes. We started in 2005 and ended in 2007 but the months did not end equally. But we covered a full year and another nine months, making it twenty-one months

Unlike the Saaman adult literacy class which lasted only eight months, the Juaso class successfully went through a full cycle of 21 months.

7.2 Participation in the adult literacy classes and community development

During my data collection in Saaman, I observed that the community had initiated and was implementing a number of development projects. These included the construction of a six-unit classroom structure and the construction of a day nursery block. They had also laid the foundation for the construction of accommodation for teachers. Majority of the members of the community were actively participating in the development projects in many ways. These included people who had participated in the adult literacy classes as well as those who had not.

Through my informal conversations with research participants, I tried to find out whether they participated in the development projects being undertaken in the community and whether their participation was due to their participation in the adult literacy class.

In Saaman, Frank, a blacksmith, and Hayford, a mason, both participated in the literacy class. Both of them said they participated in development activities in the community because they knew that the development of the community was the responsibility of every member of the community.

Hayford said, “I have always believed that the development of the community is the responsibility of every member of the community” .He noted that at the literacy class they were told to take part in the development of the community. But it is something he would have done even if he had not attended the class. „You see, we were many in the class but not everyone who attended the class gets involved in the development of the community“, he intimated. Thus, like Frank, participation in community development is born out of a personal sense of responsibility and not something engendered by participation in the literacy class.

Other adult literacy class participants I had conversations with expressed similar sentiments. Peter, the pastor at Saaman said he participated in community development because he believed that as a pastor, the bible enjoined him to do so. Abena, Grace and Patience all said they participated in community development by going for communal labour and paying their levies. With the

exception of Abena who indicated that she participated in community development because they were taught in the class to do so, the others did not attribute their participation in community development activities to their participation in the literacy class. In the words of Grace,

We were taught to be good citizens but as for going to communal labour and paying levies, every member of the community is expected to do whether they participated in the class or not.

The words of Grace make clear the fact the community expected every member to take part in development activities. Participation is therefore not optional and has nothing to do with participation in the literacy class.

In the same way in Juaso, out of the six adult literacy class participants that I chatted with, only one said she participated in community development because she was taught in the literacy class to do so. One did not participate in community development at all, the remaining four participated in community development but they all stated categorically that their participation in community development was not the outcome of their participation in the literacy class. They all participated in community development activities because they considered it their responsibility as members of the community.

Echoing the sentiments of the other four, John said to me during my conversation with him,

I participate in communal labour. I know as a good community member I have to participate in the development of my community. But I did not learn this from the literacy class.

Asked in what ways he thought the literacy class helped participants to contribute to community development, Kingsley, the Saaman facilitator, stated he could not say for sure that participating in the class had helped anybody to contribute to the development of the community. According to him, in Saaman participating in development activities is obligatory for all community members so one has to take part whether he/she participated in the literacy class or not.

Similarly, in my interview with Dennis, the Juaso literacy class facilitator, he could not state with confidence that the literacy class had made the learners contribute more to community development. Asked whether learners were contributing to the development of the community after their participation in the literacy class, he responded, „Mmmm, yes. We have some people like that“.

I asked what those people did as their contribution to community development, to which he replied,

Ehh, (Hesitation). Some of them joined the Unit Committee or other groups and were given the position of treasurer. They were able to record monies that were given to them

Dennis maintained that some learners in the literacy class were able to occupy positions in the community as a result of their participation in the class. I

observed however, that he did not make this submission with the same confidence with which he normally spoke.

7.3 Literacy events and practices in the day to day social activities in Saaman and Juaso

The identification of literacy events and practices in the day to day activities of the people of Saaman and Juaso was to answer sub-question four of the research question which seeks to explore what literacy events and practices are used by the learners in their daily activities and whether these lead to community development.

This section seeks to explore what the literacy class participants in the two communities did with reading and writing in their day to day social lives outside the literacy classes, as well as the general community-wide literacy practices, and how these related to community development. The data collection tools used were observations and informal conversations.

7.3.1 Literacy events in social activities of learners

A number of literacy events were identified among the learners. These were found in the vocations of learners such as blacksmithing and sewing.

- Frank the blacksmith

Frank is a 46-year old blacksmith, hunter and a farmer living at Saaman who participated in the literacy class. I visited Frank at his blacksmithing workshop.

I had first met Frank during the focus group discussion in which he participated. It was there I learnt Frank was a blacksmith and a hunter.

Figure 11: Frank at the blacksmithing workshop



Source: Field data, 2014.

At the blacksmithing workshop, I saw a fireplace and several metal and wooden instruments. I saw also several patterns cut out of wood. I learnt later from Frank that those patterns were different parts of the local gun used for training apprentices who could not read and write. What Frank did for those was to cut patterns of all the parts of the gun for them. When an apprentice was asked to cut any part, all he needed to do was to trace the pattern on a piece of paper and use it to cut the part. In the words of Frank,

I once got an apprentice who did not know how to read and write so I made patterns of all the parts. All he had to do was to place the pattern on a frame,

trace it and use it to cut the pattern. He did not need to write anything. If I ask him to cut a trigger, he goes for the trigger pattern, trace it and cut. But if I am doing it myself, I cut it direct. I don't need any pattern and I don't need to write anything down. I have everything in my head.

This way, they did not need to use any measurements. This thus is an innovative way of going round reading and writing. Here is an example of the use of symbols as part of literacy mentioned in the literature review.

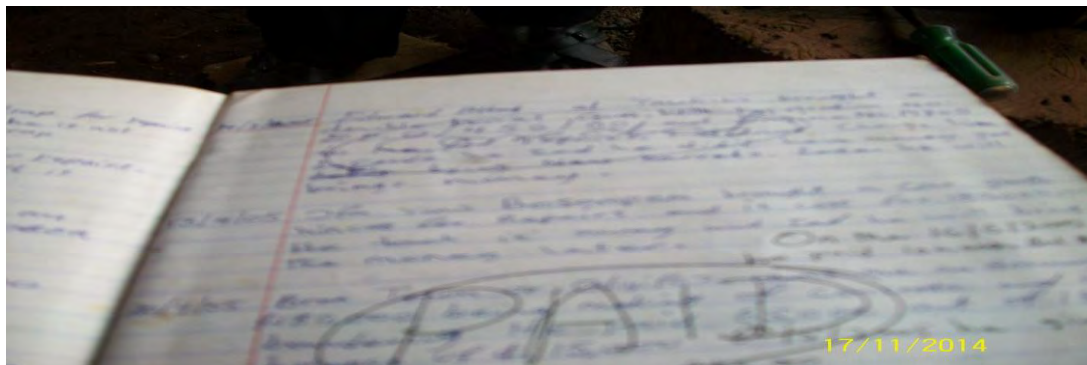
I saw many wooden guns too at the workshop. Frank manufactured and repaired local guns and was working on one when I got there.

Because he received many guns from different people for repair, he had to find a way of differentiating one from the other. He did this by writing the engine and butt numbers of each gun he received in a notebook against the name of the owner. He would write "paid" against the name when the person collects the gun and pays for it. Frank explained the blacksmithing work to me in a conversation I had with him saying,

... In the blacksmithing work, like this gun I am working on I have written the engine number and the butt number in a note book. I do this for every gun that is brought to me to work on. I do this because one could die at any time and if that should happen people can identify their guns.

Figure 12 is a picture of the notebook used by Frank for recording the butt and engine numbers of clients.

Figure 12: Notebook in which Frank records the butt and engine numbers and keeps record of payment



Source: Field data, 2014.

Frank trained some people in the blacksmithing work, even though there was no apprentice with him at the time of the visit. I asked him whether it was therefore necessary for the people he trained to be able to read and write so they too could record the engine and the butt numbers of the guns they worked on. He responded:

(Laughing) Not necessarily. I told you I write my class one English and I understand what I write. So those I train can also write what they need to write the way they will understand. They can even write in the Twi language if they know how to do that.

Frank told me that every part had to be cut in the correct size and measurement to fit with the other parts. He was able to cut all the parts off the top of his head without any written down measurements because he had been doing this for many years and had the experience. However, his apprentices could not do that. They therefore needed to use already cut patterns to get the correct measures they needed.

Literacy in blacksmithing, as was explained to me by Frank demonstrates the cultural ways of going around reading and writing for people who do not have the skill.

It also shows how people who are not “literate” keep records. Frank did not have school education, so he kept records of guns he received by writing the way he would understand. He expected his apprentices to do same. They could write in the local language if they knew how to do so and not necessarily in English. It also demonstrates the description of literacy as knowledge and skill that comes from practice. Frank could cut any part of the gun off the top of his head without referring to any measurement book. Blacksmithing is thus a literacy event which elements of literacy practice embedded in it.

- Grace the seamstress

Grace is a 35-year old mother of two living at Saaman. She is a dressmaker by profession.

I visited Grace in the kiosk where she did her sewing and engaged her in conversation in the Akuapem Twi language. The kiosk was situated close to the road. In the kiosk I saw a large paper hanging with several pictures of women's dresses in different styles. Grace sewed only ladies' dresses and explained to me that if a client chose a style she wanted from any of the styles in the picture, then she would look at the picture and make a similar dress for the client.

I also saw several unsewn materials on a large table which, as Grace explained to me, were materials that her clients had brought to her to be sewn.

When I entered the kiosk, I saw Grace writing some measurements with chalk on a piece of cloth off the top of her head without referring to any written down measurements. She was going to sew a dress. Curious about what she was doing, I asked her how she was able to know the correct measurements to put down. Laughing, apparently amazed at my question, Grace responded:

(Laughing) I don't always have to take down measurements. I have been sewing for 10 years. If you ask me to sew a dress for you, I can look at you and sew it for you without taking your measurement. If at the end you try it and it does not fit you I make adjustments. But most of the time it fits. It comes with experience. But when I started I always needed to have the person's measurement.

It was interesting to learn that Grace could just look at a person and without taking any measurements, sew a dress to fit the person. The measurements she

was writing with chalk in the cloth were the measurements of a client who had asked her to sew a dress for her.

I asked her how she was able to write down the measurements. I was to learn that her limitation in reading and writing had been taken care of during her apprenticeship as a dressmaker. Her trainer had taught her how to read the tape measure and also how to represent different parts of the body with letters. For example, she would represent Bust with a „B“, Waist with a „W“ and so on and write the measurements against the letters. As Grace told me,

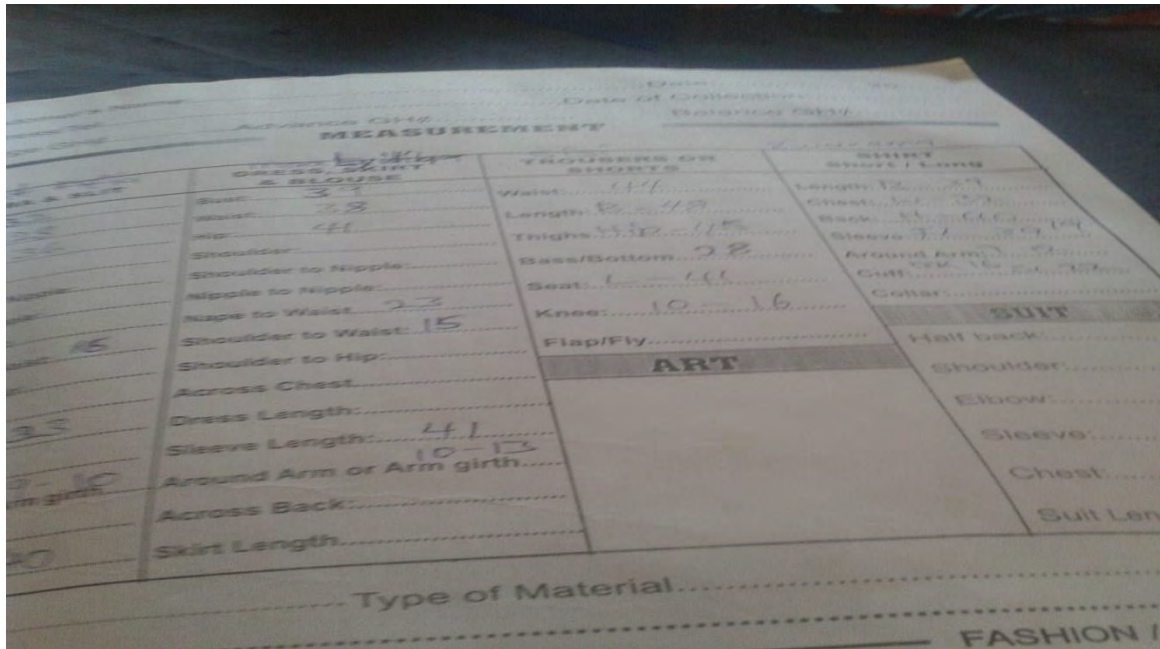
My madam taught me how to read the tape measure and record the measurements. I didn't have to write in full. She taught me to use letters to represent different parts of the body. For example, B = bust, W = waist, H = Hip. Later she went and brought a measurement book in which all the different parts are written. She taught us how to read the words in the book and which parts they represented. So I only wrote the measurements against the corresponding parts.

Grace went on to show me the measurement book she used. In the book there was a column for personal details of the client like the name, the address, the telephone number and then the letters representing the parts of the body against which the measurements would be written. I asked Grace how she was able to write down the contact details of the clients. Grace explained that,

If the customer can write I give the book to her to fill those portions and then I enter the measurements against the different parts. If the customer

cannot write, I write her telephone number on a piece of paper, stick it to a piece of cloth and fix it on the page where she has her measurements. When I see the number I know who it belongs to.

Figure 13: Sample measurement book for sewing



Source: Field data, 2014.

I asked Grace how she is able to sew different styles for different clients. She responded pointing to the picture calendar hanging on the wall that,

When a customer comes here she looks at these picture calendars, selects which one she wants and looking at the pictures I can sew the same thing for her. If, on the other hand she does not want any of the styles here and she describes to me what she wants I can sew it for her. When I go to

town and I see someone wearing a new dress, I only have to look at it briefly and I can sew the same thing. This also comes with experience.

Expertise in one's vocation comes with experience and not from the person's ability to read and write.

Figure 14: Sample dress styles for sewing



Source: Field data, 2014.

The literacy event of sewing, like the blacksmithing, shows cultural ways of going around reading, writing and numeracy. It demonstrates how people who cannot read and write are able to record measurements using measurement books with alphabets representing parts of the body. It also demonstrates literacy as a knowledge and skill by showing how sewers can look at different styles of

dresses and sew the same thing or look at people and sew dresses to fit them without taking their measurement.

- Hayford the farmer and mason

In my interactions with several of the research participants in Saaman I noticed that a lot of them showed evidence of record-keeping literacy in their day to day activities. For example, in his farming activities, Hayford sometimes hired labour to work on his farm. In an informal conversation I had with him, he told me that he recorded the number of people he hired, when he hired them, for how many days, for how long, and how much he paid them. If he bought chemicals to spray his cocoa farm, he recorded how many containers he bought and how much it cost him. He recorded every expense on his farm and compared the total amount with the amount he got from the sale of his produce to know whether he made profit or he lost.

Hayford did the same in his work as a mason, recording expense against income to know profit:

In my work as a mason too I write. When I get a contract even though the person buys his own materials, before I charge for workmanship I have to make an estimate to know how much I will pay people I recruit to help me do the job. So I can pay them and still make some profit but I determine the charge.

Hayford explained to me that he used two notebooks, one for his farming business and the other for his masonry business. Even though he did not move

around with these notebooks, he kept all transactions in his memory and every evening before he went to bed he would record farming issues that needed to be recorded in the farming notebook as well as the masonry transactions in the masonry notebook.

He kept these notebooks in his cupboard where they would be readily available to him whenever he needed to write something.

- Frank the farmer and hunter

Frank also recorded expense and income in his farming activities as he told me during the informal conversation I had with him. Like Hayford, Frank had a notebook in which he recorded the dates of all the major activities he undertook on his farm. For instance, he recorded the date of clearing the land, sowing, and applying fertilizer. He also recorded the amount he used to purchase planting material, and hiring labour. According to him, doing this helped him to know how much he had spent on his farm so that when he had harvested and sold the farm proceeds, he would compare the total amount he got with his expenditure to know how much profit he made. Frank told me that he did not learn this in the adult literacy class, but rather from NGO training, he had attended.

Other uses of reading and writing by the learners included completion of forms at the bank where learners who could not read and write relied on the services of bank officials or other people to go through their banking transactions. The use of mobile phones in sending text messages was also common among many of the learners.

7.4 Literacy practices among learners

A number of literacy practices were found among some participants in the literacy classes. These included hunting and commercial literacy. In this section, I describe these practices in the two communities. I have presented some of the practices by means of vignettes so that readers will hear the research participants in their own words as a way of giving a voice to the participants.

7.4.1 *Frank the hunter*

Frank described to me how he did the hunting with these words:

Vignette:

If I decide to hunt at a place at night, I first go to patrol the area during the day and make some signs that will help me trace my way back at night. Some people make paths, others cut trees, but I make marks on trees. So at night anywhere I see the mark on a tree I know that is where I passed during the day. You see, if as a hunter you don't do this and you don't know the area very well, you can get lost in the forest. A man from Asiakwa got lost in the forest for three days. Everything he had on him got finished – food, water, and even his mobile phone battery ran down. Announcements were made on the local FM that he was missing. It was after three days that my brother met him in the bush and brought him home. (Asiakwa is another town in the Eastern Region very far from Saaman).

If two people go hunting together there are things they do. They identify a converging centre in the day time, usually along a river. Then each surveys the area and makes marks to help him get back to the centre before they separate at night.

We agree that if one is tired and wants to rest he should not sleep anywhere but come back to the centre to rest. If you don't do this and sleep anywhere your partner may mistake you for an animal and shoot you especially if your torch is on. I once stayed in the bush for three days with my brother hunting and nothing happened to any of us because we knew what to do. In case you get lost you fire three successive bullets and your partner will know you are lost. He will then in the morning trace where he heard the gunshots to come and find you.

Different people have different signs. Some blow air into the empty bullet but that sound does not go far. If two people go hunting and one decides to spend two nights in the bush and the other three nights, before the one who will spend two nights leaves the bush, he must leave a sign for the other. Some would cut a branch, sharpen it and stick it to the ground at the centre. Then he would split the top into two and put another stick in between indicating that he has left. He points the stick in the direction of home. Others collect leaves. The direction in which he would put the leaves will indicate to you that he has left. The other hunter will understand the sign (Frank, a hunter at Saaman).

The import of the account of Frank to this research is how in the cultural practice of hunting, people are able to communicate using local symbols like sticks and other forms like sounds to communicate. This is in line with my argument as I have shown in chapter two, that even though reading and writing are at the centre of the understanding of literacy from an LSP perspective, semiotic forms like symbols and sounds, used as a communicative practice, also form part of literacy.

7.4.2 *Patience the trader*

Patience is a 40-year old food vendor at Saaman. I visited her in her shop which was a two-room cement structure roofed with corrugated iron sheets. She cooks and sells fufu, (a local dish made from plantain and cassava which is eaten with soup).

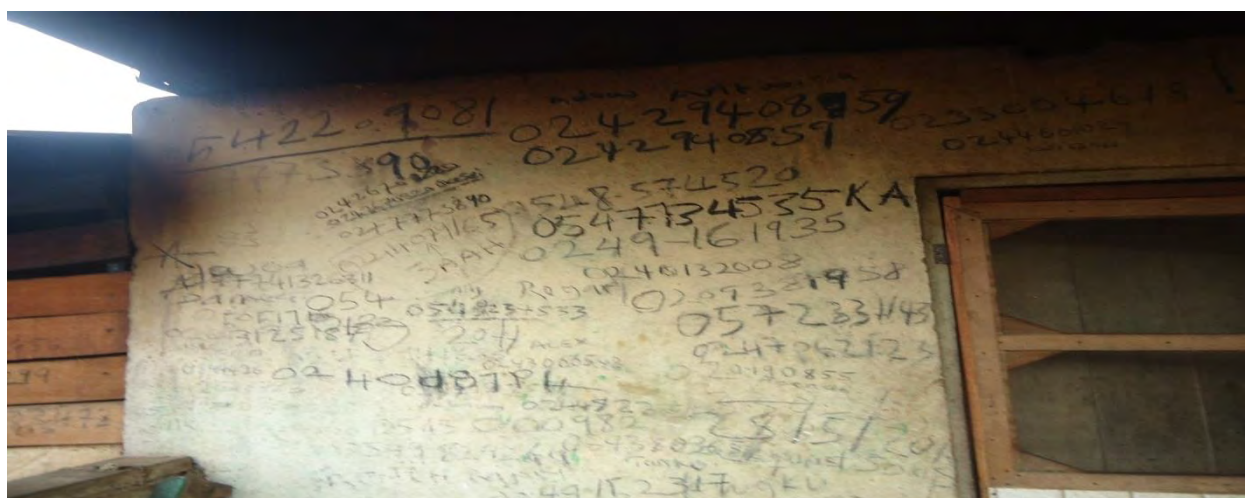
On entering the shop, I noticed that Patience had used charcoal to make marks on the wall and written amounts of money against the marks. I also saw some telephone numbers written with charcoal on the wall. I asked Patience what that meant and she explained that the marks and the amounts were to track how much food clients had ordered to avoid misunderstanding as people paid after they had finished eating. This is what she said:

(Laughing) Most people finish eating before they pay me. So to avoid misunderstanding as to how much they have to pay me, before I dish out the food to them after they have made their orders, I write it on the wall. I mark the number of bowls they ordered and write the amount involved.

So that when they challenge the amount I am asking them to pay, I will show them what I have written on the wall.

On the telephone numbers on the wall, she explained that they were the contact numbers of her suppliers so that she could call them anytime she needed supplies of foodstuff. She further told me that because she had been doing the business for over ten years, she had customers in the surrounding villages so each time she needed supplies she knew who to call. At times too she went herself to the surrounding villages to buy what she needed.

Figure 15: Contact numbers of patience's clients written on her wall



Source: Field data, 2014.

In response to my question on how she knew whether she was making profit of losing, Patience said that she compared the cost of ingredients used in preparing

the food and total sale to know whether she made profit or not. These were her words:

I know how much I invest into the ingredients I use so anything above that is my profit. If I don't get the amount involved, then I know I have run at a loss. At the end of every day, I check how much money I made for the day. I save ₦5.00 every day and I consider that to be my constant daily profit.

It is clear from my conversation with Patience that even though she does not have much school literacy, in her business she knows what to do at any point in time.

7.4.3 Gladys the farmer

Gladys, a 38-year old farmer, and producer of soap living in Juaso and Rose, a farmer and petty trader, are living examples of commercial literacy in Juaso. She participated in the adult literacy class. She had a little primary education, going up to primary four.

I learned from Gladys that she bought the ingredients she used in making the soap from a shop in Koforidua, the regional capital. Contrary to my thinking that she would go to the shop holding a long list of ingredients to be bought, Gladys told me, (Laughing). *"I know the things I need from memory. So I see them in the shop and buy. I don't need to write them down"*.

Gladys identifies a shop outside her community, travels there without a shopping list and is able to buy all the ingredients she needs for making her soap in the

correct quantities. Then I asked Gladys how she was able to mix all the ingredients in the correct proportions. To this she replied,

I have cups and buckets that I use to measure. I know what quantities of each to mix. When I was learning how to make the soap, the woman who taught me used the cup and bucket to show me the quantities to mix.

Gladys is able to mix all the ingredients in the correct proportions without having to follow a written down recipe, this again comes with experience. Ordinarily, she would have written down the measurements and referred to from time to time. But rather the correct measurements were in her head and she did not need to write anything down.

In response to my question on how she was able to know whether she was making profit or not, she answered,

In my mind I know how much of each ingredient I have used and how many cakes of soap I have produced from the ingredients. That way I know how much profit I have made.

So without writing down income and expenditure, Gladys is able to calculate mentally the amount of ingredients she has used, and use that to know her profit based on the number of cakes of soap produced. Profit and loss are thus calculated mentally without having to write anything down.

From this informal conversation I had with Gladys I learned that she is able to travel outside her community to buy all the ingredients she needs for making her

soap without a shopping list. She is able to mix all the ingredients in the right proportions without any written down recipe, and calculate in her head how much profit she has made without keeping any written down record of her expense and income. I was yet to gain new insights into commercial literacy from the experience of Rose described below.

7.4.4 Rose the farmer and trader

Rose, also a native of Juaso, is a farmer and a trader and the mother of four boys. I paid her a visit in her house to have a chat with her. Rose told me that she cultivated plantain and after harvesting she bought some more to add to hers as well as banana which she took to Accra, the capital city of Ghana to sell. Standing in some corner of the house was a kitchen constructed of wood and roofed with old iron sheets. On the wood of the kitchen structure, charcoal had been used to write some figures. When I asked Rose about the figures, she said:

(Laughing) I use that to keep record on how much plantain or banana I have bought. I write the price of every bunch of banana or plantain I buy with charcoal on the wooden plank of the kitchen. When I buy an additional bunch I clean the figure with water and write the added price of the new bunch bought.

According to Rose she separates the plantain from the banana. That way she knows how much money she used to buy the plantain and banana. Before she goes to the market, she transfers the figures on the wooden plank into a small notebook she keeps. She separates the plantain from her farm from the ones she

buys. If she gets 30 bunches of plantain from her farm, she writes the number of bunches against her name in the notebook. Then if she bought 20 bunches extra, she numbers 1-20 in her notebook and each bunch she sells she writes the amount against the list till she has an amount against the last 20. After sales she checks the total amount of money she has got, calculates how much profit she has made, and then after she has checked everything, she takes money out to buy things she needs for herself.

Thus in a very innovative way, Rose is able to work out how many bunches of plantain she got from her own farm for sale, how much she got from that, how many bunches of plantain she bought in addition, how much she bought them and how much she sold each bunch. She also separates the plantain from the banana to know how much she bought and sold each. She would only take money out to buy things for herself after she had checked her profit.

7.4.5 Patience the food vendor

Patience, the food vendor, saves five Ghana cedis everyday which she gives to a “susu” collector⁶. To ensure that the „susu“ collector does not cheat her, she keeps the record book which she gives to the collector to do the recording any time she was making payment. She also crosschecks the last entry before giving the book out.

The accounts of Patience, Gladys, and Rose are clear examples of commercial literacy among some of the learners. Patience and Rose used charcoal to write in

⁶ A „susu“ collector is one who goes round collecting savings from willing clients for a fee. The contributor can ask for their money any time

wooden surfaces to keep track of meals ordered, contact numbers of suppliers as in the case of Patience, and number of suckers of plantain harvested from her farm for sale and number bought to be sold as in the case of Rose. Both Patience and Gladys are able to calculate mentally profit made out of their businesses by comparing ingredients used and total amount of money made at close of business.

Like Frank in the blacksmithing business who used patterns, Gladys is able to mix correctly all ingredients used in her soap making without a written down recipe, using cups and buckets. These show cultural ways of going around numeracy by people who cannot read and write.

7.5 Community-wide Literacy practices

A number of literacy practices were also found to be in use, embedded in the day to day social activities of the people both in Saaman and in Juaso. The practices were similar in the two communities. These included:

7.5.1 Religious literacy

During church services in many orthodox churches in Ghana, the one leading the service would read from a liturgy book in either English or in a local language depending on where the church is located. At certain points in the liturgy, the leader would read from the book and the congregation would respond either reading from their own copies of the liturgy book or off the top of their heads. There are readings also from the bible either in English or in the local language or both. In most urban towns, English church services are held for people who can read, write and speak English, while a different church service is held in the

local language for those who do not understand English. However, in Saaman and Juaso, church services were held in Twi and only one service is held for those who can read as well as those who cannot.

I noted that inability to read and write did not prevent people from playing leading roles during church services. In my informal conversation with Peter, the local pastor of a charismatic church in Saaman, he indicated that such people are taught bible verses which they memorize and use in leading aspects of the service.

For instance, those who lead the praise and worship sessions, we teach them bible quotations that have to do with praises and worship. They memorize these verses and with time they are able to use them when they are leading praises and worship even though they can't read, said Peter.

I accompanied Comfort to church in Juaso and observed how church service was organized. The leader of the service read from a liturgy book and the congregation responded out of memory. I noticed that Comfort and other members of the congregation were not holding copies of the liturgy book. They just knew how to respond off the tops of their heads. People who could read and write as well as those who could not were able to do this. This showed the literacy practice of how church members could recite long responses from memory due to the iterative nature of the practice.

As the people began to pray a lady raised a local song and they all joined in, singing from memory. The Bible readings had been written on a black board

placed in front of the church where the pictures of Jesus hang. Four Bible lessons were read in all by four different people all in the local language. The majority of the people, including Comfort, were not having bibles. So they just listened as the reader stood in front of the podium and read aloud to the congregation. This again demonstrated the literacy practice where the bible is read out loud in a language that everybody in the congregation understands for the benefit of those who cannot read and write.

After the reading of the bible lessons, the leader read a prayer from the liturgy book and the people repeated after him. This was another practice of the leader reading from a book and asking the members to repeat after him. Apart from the leader and the readers of the bible lessons who read from the liturgy book and the bible respectively, the congregation either just listened to the reading without looking into the bible or repeated the prayers after the leader. This is an indication that you don't really need to be able to read and write to worship at this church. The leader then asked the congregation to sing the Lord's Prayer which they did out of memory.

The leader announced a hymn and read out loud the stanzas and the people sang after him, again demonstrating the literacy practice whereby the stanzas of hymns are read out for members to follow in singing. The leader asked the congregation to bring their tithes⁷. I saw that the members had tithe cards so they just put whatever amount of money they wanted to offer into the tithe card

⁷ A tithe is a practice in Christian churches where members are expected to pay a tenth of their income into the church coffers for the upkeep of the church.

and placed them in the offering bowl. The Steward of the church took the tithe cards and recorded the amount given in the cards and also into a master list. This again demonstrates the contention of Baynham (1995) that literacy is a communal asset.

From my participation in the church service, I identified a number of literacy practices. They included church members giving responses to statements read from a liturgy book out of memory, the bible being read out loud in a language every member understood, the leader reading out loud the stanzas of a hymn and the members singing after him, paying of tithes by members and sermons being preached for the exhortation of church members.

7.5.2 Cultural literacy- Funerals

I got the chance to observe a funeral ceremony at Juaso as a non-participant observer by accompanying Dennis to the funeral.

The two medium -sized canopies faced each other, while a small one was at the far end. Under the small- sized canopy sat the chief and opinion leaders of the town. The bereaved family and other people attending the funeral sat under one of the medium- sized canopies. Loud speakers for the Public Address System had been placed near the canopy where the chief and his entourage sat. The P.A. System itself was placed under the small canopy, where the chief and his opinion leaders sat.

Under the canopy where the family members sat, there was a table for the collection of donations called “nsowa⁸” in the Akan language for the bereaved family. On the table were a medium- sized wooden box and two plastic bowls into which the “nsowa” were collected.

Two people were collecting the “nsawa”. They had two separate notebooks into which they entered the donations. People would walk to the table where the collectors were seated to make their donations. Receipts were issued for a donation. At intervals the playing of the music would be interrupted and the donations announced, using the P.A. System. Thus the donations were not just collected and entered into the books. They were also announced mentioning the names of the people who had donated and how much they donated.

Thus the literacy practice of record keeping features in the observance of a socio-cultural practice like funerals. Announcing the donations in addition to writing them in the books also shows the literacy practice of mixing the oral and the written.

Attending other people’s funerals and making financial donations to the bereaved family builds solidarity among the people, which contributes to the building of social cohesion needed for community-led development.

I asked Dennis, the literacy class facilitator of Juaso why some money was put into the wooden box and others put into the bowls. He replied:

⁸ Nsowa is donations given to the bereaved family by sympathizers at the day of the funeral

When a member of this community dies every adult in the community is obliged to make monetary contribution to the bereaved family. So at funerals we record contributions of community members in a note book and put the money into the wooden box. The money goes to the bereaved family after the funeral. Every male adult pays 50P (Fifty Ghana pesewas) and female adult 30P.

I wondered how the community would know if some people did not pay up their contributions and when I asked Dennis he explained to me that,

There is a master list containing the names of every adult in the community. After every funeral, the notebook into which the contributions were recorded is sent to the funeral committee. The list is then transferred to the master notebook with amounts paid. If your relative dies and your name or that of your relative is not in the master note book the funeral committee will make you a penalty or else you will not be allowed to have the funeral in the community.

I later learnt from Ken, an opinion leader in the Juaso community that the monetary penalties are used for community development, indicating how a social practice like funerals can contribute towards the achievement of community development.

7.5.3 Public and private communication literacy

Through my observations, I identified a number of ways whereby public and private communication was done in Saaman and Juaso. These included the use of sound as means of communication. For example, the Methodist churches in

the two communities used a metal object hung in front of the church to announce meeting times. On ordinary days and at dawn they would strike another metal against the one hung in front of the chapel to announce to members that it was time for church meeting.

On Sundays they did the metal striking twice. The first one at 8.00 is to alert members to start preparation. Then at 9.15 am, they repeated the exercise for about five minutes to inform members that service was due to start at 9.30 am. This practice is understood by all in the community.

Figure 16: The metal bell at Juaso being struck to announce time for church service



Source: Field data, 2012.

Another means of public communication I observed was the beating of gong-gong or the use of a public address system to disseminate information.

Whenever the chief of the town wanted to pass on information to the town folks, or the community leaders wanted to communicate something to the entire community, the town crier, also called the gong-gong beater would strike a stick against a metal object to attract the attention of the people. Then he would deliver the message from the chief or whatever message had to be disseminated. He would repeat the exercise and the message standing at several vantage points in the community.

Ken and Newman, both opinion leaders in Juaso confirmed this to me during separate conversations I had with them. According to Ken they used the beating of the gong-gong to announce the decisions of the Unit Committee and the chief to the people. He told me during an interview I had with him that,

The gong-gong is then beaten to mobilize the entire community for a forum. Even if only four people come, they represent the community. We then put the decision before them. Once that is done it is binding on all. Then we beat the gong-gong again to inform the community about the decision.

During an informal conversation with Newman, an opinion leader, he said,

We have an information centre. Before we had the information centre, we used to have a gong-gong and a gong-gong beater. “Yede asem no hye n“ano” (Meaning we tell him what to say) and he goes round the community repeating the message for everyone to hear. We did the same anytime we wanted to pass on information to the people. When people hear the sound of the gong-gong they come out of their houses to listen to

the message. But that was tiring. It got to a time that we were not getting people to do that work for us. That is why when the modern system came we tried and bought one

At both the Primary and the Junior High Schools in Saaman and Juaso, drums were used to announce the start of the school day, change in lessons, as well as time for closing.

Finally, the colour of clothes, are used as means of public communication. The wearing of black and red clothing is an indication that a person is mourning and everybody in the community understood that. People would not disturb a man or a woman dressed in black with issues of love and intimacy because they understand that person is mourning a dead partner.

Similarly, I observed a number of private communication practices. This included the use of symbols as means of communication. For example, below is an entry I made in my researchers' journal on 8th July, 2012 when I was in the field collecting data and staying at Juaso:

Yesterday I returned to where I am staying in Juaso after some time outside to find a stick at the entrance to my front door. Having lived in a village before, I immediately knew what it meant – someone had come looking for me in my absence. Later the head teacher of the Primary School came and informed me he had been to my place early on. He confirmed that he had placed the stick in front of my door to let me know that somebody had been there.

The literacy practices demonstrating the use of semiotic forms of communication like sound, visuals, signs and symbols (Prinsloo & Baynham, 2008) observed in Saaman and Juaso included the use of church bells by churches, the beating of gong-gong to send information to community members, the use of drums in schools to communicate school times and lesson change times, the use of dress colours to indicate mourning, the use of sticks as symbols of private communication.

While many of these practices simply confirm the contention that there are other cultural ways of communicating besides writing and the spoken word, practices like the beating of gong-gong contributes to the achievement of CD. This is so because it is used as a tool for mobilizing the people and for sending information.

7.6 Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I reported findings on what counts as literacy for the people of Saaman and Juaso, the adult literacy classes, the relationship between the adult literacy classes and community development, and finally literacy events and practices in the two communities and how they related to community development.

From my interactions with the literacy facilitators and learners, it came out that their understanding of the objective of the literacy classes differed from that of policy makers. Whereas the policy objective was to use the literacy classes as tools for eradicating „illiteracy“ and community development, the facilitators

taught adult literacy as an end in itself. The learners also had a different understanding of the objective of the literacy classes.

A number of literacy events and practices existed among participants in the literacy classes as well as in the wider communities.

CHAPTER 8

LITERACY EVENTS AND PRACTICES IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PRACTICES

8.1 Introduction

A number of community development practices were observed in Saaman and Juaso. This chapter describes the various community development practices in the two communities and explores whether adult literacy plays a role in these practices. A number of CD practices were identified in both Saaman and Juaso. These included: communal labour, formation of community development committees, initiation and ratification of community development projects, developing community action plans, raising funds for community development projects, Holding Unit Committee meetings, accounting for monies collected for community development projects, and presenting community needs to the District Assembly for support. I first describe the CD practice after which I explore the literacy events and practices in it. The data sources used for this chapter included observation and informal conversations with research participants.

8.2 Community development practices

8.2.1 Communal labour

In both Saaman and Juaso communal labour is used for the implementation of community development projects. Whereas Saaman had set aside every Friday for communal work, Juaso only engaged in communal work when there was an on-going project. During communal labour in Saaman, the leaders provide food for the people as a form of motivation.

In both communities the people were mobilized for communal labour by means of a public address (PA) system which an announcer used to inform the people about the communal labour or by beating the gong-gong, the latter being done mostly in Juaso. As Nathan, the Saaman Assembly member noted,

Normally we have an announcer. Three days to the communal day we start giving information, from Wednesday to Friday. We give these announcements for three consecutive days... he uses the PA system

Martin, Joshua, and Daniel, all confirmed to me the use of communal labour as a means of achieving development in the community in separate interviews I had with them.

I learned from Martin that to achieve maximum participation in the communal labour, the leaders had divided the community into two, each group going for communal labour on alternating weeks. There were supervisors for each group who wrote down the names of people who do not turn up for communal labour for the necessary sanctions to be taken against them. If for any reason a

community member cannot participate in the communal labour he is expected to ask permission from the Unit Committee chairman or his supervisor.

For instance, the day I was having the interview with Hayford at the chief's palace where the PA system is installed, it was a communal labour day. At some point, Daniel, the Unit Committee chairman came into the palace and made an announcement with the PA system. This is what Daniel said:

People of Saaman the communal labour is on- going. Everybody should come to the grounds now. Anybody who does not come has flouted the law of the community. This includes all community members, carpenters, masons... if you know you cannot come, come and ask permission. If you don't come we consider you as being against the development of the community ...

Similarly, in Juaso, as was noted by Kofi, the Unit Committee chairman for Juaso,

When there is going to be communal labour, we make announcements via the P.A. System. Names of those present at the communal labour are recorded and those who don't attend are penalized. We organize communal labour every Friday when we are implementing a project

In both Saaman and Juaso, there were supervisors during communal labour who wrote down the names of community members who did not participate in

communal labour and who had not sought permission. The list is presented to the community leadership for sanctions to be taken against them.

In a conversation with Joshua, an opinion leader, he intimated that the success in communal labour in Saaman could be attributed to the Assemblyman. In his words,

... But since he ehhe started this job or he became the Assemblyman here, he is able to organize the people to come together and he explain the work that we are going to do and the need for that work. So people understand him. So people come in, we come in our numbers to do the job.

In Saaman, the leaders made use of the skills of artisans in the community, as well as the manual labour of unskilled members of the community. The latter do jobs like fetching water, carrying sand and blocks, weeding, or mixing mortar. This came out in separate informal conversations I had with research participants. When there is a project to be implemented, the community leaders call together the carpenters, masons, steel benders and electricians in the community and ask them to use their skills to support the implementation of the project. These artisans are not paid but rather are given some small amount of money for food during those days when they work on community projects. As Martin told me, „...The artisans provide their services at a minimal cost and the entire community provides unskilled labour“.

Frank, a steel bender as well as a blacksmith, and Hayford, a mason, both confirmed to me during separate informal conversations that they used their

skills to help in the implementation of community projects. According to Frank, for instance,

...When there is a project in the community, the Assemblyman and the development committee call all the needed artisans together and ask us to help. I have been helping with the steel bending work. The carpenters and the masons also help where they are needed.

Frank explained to me that as a member of the community, he believed he had the responsibility of contributing to its development. He therefore decided to make his steel bending skill available to the community by doing for free all steel bending activities on community projects whenever he was needed. He stressed however, that his decision was not influenced by his participation in the adult literacy class.

Those members of the community without any artisanal skills also provide manual labour towards implementation of community development projects.

No communal labour went on in Juaso during the period that I stayed in the community because there was no on-going project. However, I had the opportunity of observing a communal labour in Saaman. Below is a description of what I observed at the communal labour grounds as I recorded in my field note book.

Around 5.00 am on Friday I heard an announcement from the P.A. System at Saaman that there was going to be communal labour at 7.00 am. This was a repeat announcement made the previous day.

I arrived at the communal labour grounds at about 7.30 am. There were about 100 people at the site where they are putting up a school building. This comprised men, women, young men and young women. Whereas some of the men were mixing mortar, others were packing cement blocks, loading sand for the women or filling the foundation of the building. The women, on their part, were either fetching water for the mixing of the mortar or carrying sand for the filling of the foundation. I saw the Unit Committee Chairman, the Assemblyman, the Technical Adviser and other community leaders supervising various aspects of the communal labour. The general atmosphere was one of enthusiasm.

As I went to greet the Assemblyman, I heard one young man saying to another young man who was idling around. “You don’t want to work, if you don’t help for the school building to be constructed, where will your children sit and go to school?” Some people asked permission from the Unit Committee Chairman to attend to other businesses after they had worked for some time. I saw that one leader was holding a book in which he had written down the names of all who came to participate in the communal labour.

I partially participated in the communal labour by conveying a few cement blocks from where they were packed to where the men were laying the foundation of the building, after which I engaged in conversations with the Assemblyman and the Unit Committee chairman.

Below are some pictures I took at the communal labour grounds:

Figure 17: Women carrying sand during Saaman communal labour



Source: Field data, 2012.

Figure 18: Men mixing mortar during Saaman communal labour



Source: Field data, 2012

Figure 19: Youth carrying block during communal labour in Saaman



Source: Field data, 2012.

The literacy event seen in this community development practice is the writing down of the names of people who did not participate in the communal labour by

the supervisors. This shows the role that the literacy event of reading and writing plays in CD.

Besides this, the literacy practice of public communication in the form of using the PA system to announce the time and place of the communal as in the case of Saaman or the beating of gong-gong in Juaso also played a role. I make this argument on the basis of the emerging understanding of literacy to include other semiotic forms and multimodality as I indicated in the review of the literature.

8.2.2 Formation of community development committees

I observed that whereas in Saaman a number of development committees had been established, each with a defined role, to spearhead development in different areas in the life of the community, no such committees had been formed in Juaso and the Unit Committee handled all development activities. The community development committees in Saaman included the Unit Committee, the fund-raising committee, the works committee, and the social function committee.

At the head of all the committees was the Assemblyman who supervised the work of all the other committees and handled transactions between the community stakeholders outside the community. The chief, as the custodian of the community was a ceremonial head who was to be aware of everything going on and sometimes gave final approval. The fund-raising committee played the role of raising funds for community development. The works committee planned and supervised communal labour, whereas the social function committee was in charge of social functions.

The criteria for choosing anyone to serve on any of the committees was knowledge on what the committee was expected to be doing and commitment to the development of the community. Even though in each committee there was the need for someone who could read and write to take minutes and keep other records, the rest of the members did not have to be able to read and write to serve on the committees.

In a conversation with Joshua, an opinion leader, he confirmed the establishment of several community development committees in Saaman as Nathan had told me

...Assemblyman has organized the people and has formed different forms of committees and has appointed people to head these committees. And he, as I will say is the overall boss there. So he brings the people together, we attend meetings and plan what we need for the town.

It is worth noting here that the members and leaders of the development committees are appointed by the Assemblyman as opposed to them being elected in a democratic way by the community members.

In Juaso, however, there was no there was no development committee.

The formation of development committees is a cultural arrangement towards the achievement of community development. Saaman made good use of this social practice and it helped them to achieve more development.

Even though ability to read and write was not a key criterion for serving on any of these committees, reading and writing was required on all of these committees. Each committee needed someone to write meeting agendas, take minutes during meetings, as well as keep other records. It is important to note also that people who did not know how to read and write also served on these committees as deliberations at meetings were always oral and the secretary took minutes. This is a classic example of the use of both the oral and the written to achieve community objectives.

In planning community projects like the construction of the classroom block at Saaman, a lot of literacy events come into play. These include: Keeping records of cement blocks molded, ordering and paying for building materials, sending text messages to members and other people they deal with and well as keeping records of community people present during communal labour days.

8.2.3 Initiation and ratification of community development projects

In both Saaman and Juaso, the need for a development project could be initiated either by an individual or a development committee. But before the project could be accepted for implementation, it needed to be ratified by the entire community at a community forum.

At Saaman, as was explained by the Unit Committee Chairman, the Assembly member and Martin, an opinion leader, in separate conversations, a sub-committee identifies the project to be undertaken; the decision of the sub-committee is brought before the executive committee which is composed of the

chairpersons of all the sub-committees. Then the executive committee discusses and presents the project to chief and elders. From there if a decision is taken to proceed with the project, it is presented to the entire community for ratification. If the community agrees then the relevant implementation committee takes over the implementation of the project.

For example, Daniel, the Unit Committee chairman noted in an interview with me that the Executive Committee took the decision to construct a new school building using the community's own local resources, put the decision before the entire community, which ratified the decision of the committee.

The process was slightly different in Juaso. Explaining it to me, Ken, an opinion leader said the decision for a project is taken by the Unit Committee and discussed with the chief. When a decision is taken, the people are informed at a community forum and it becomes binding on all. As he put it,

Ehh... even if only four people come, they represent the community. We then put the decision before them. Once that is done it is binding on all. Then we beat the gong-gong again to inform the community about the decision.

Unlike in Saaman where the people are given the authority to agree or disagree with the project idea at a community forum, in Juaso the people are simply informed of the decision taken. This reflects a top-down approach to leadership which does not also encourage full participation of all.

It is clear from these examples that adult literacy does not play a role in the initiation of community development projects. Community development has nothing to do with the ability to read and write or participation in the adult literacy classes. One could share a development idea with the sub-committee they belonged to or with the Unit Committee and the idea would be carried forward if accepted.

8.2.4 Developing Community Action Plans (CAPs)

One community development practice that is common to both Saaman and Juaso is the development of Community Action Plans (CAPs) to guide the implementation of community projects. The CAP, which represents the identified and prioritized needs of the community is developed by a cross-section of the community and then presented to the entire community at a community forum for ratification before it becomes a working document. The cross-section is sampled from the chief and elders, the various committees, the Assembly member, opinion leaders and women who meet to identify and prioritize the needs of the community. The research revealed that both Saaman and Juaso were facilitated by an NGO to develop CAPs. Explaining the process of the CAP development to me, Nathan, the Assemblyman of Saaman said,

Ehh, we sampled from the community. We just sampled 20 members from 20 different groups, the chief, committee, Assembly member, opinion leaders and women. And we met and discussed that we want to undertake projects but let us come out about the projects needed.

He further explained that the group would list a number of projects that they thought would help the community to progress. Every member of the group is given the opportunity to come out with a project. After that the group prioritized the projects based on consensus or by voting where no consensus is reached. The community discusses the prioritized needs at a community forum and takes a final decision whether the project is worth embarking on or not. As Nathan put it,

... We put it before them for their views. And there are times when what we did came under criticism and we accept the general opinion of the people. So the final decision rests on the entire community.

The entire community made the final decision to accept and implement the identified projects or not. Once the community members ratify the project, the relevant committees take over the implementation of the project, looking for the needed inputs, assigning responsibilities, and looking for needed resources.

The process of CAP development was found to be the same in Juaso.

This practice again helps focus the development efforts of the community and involves all members at various levels.

Here again, reading and writing is required in the form of listing community needs and prioritizing them. Moreover, developing the final product of the exercise, the CAP, involves reading and writing.

8.2.5 Raising funds for community development projects

Whereas a lot of fund-raising activities were going on in Saaman, Juaso had not organized any fund-raising for years. This was because the people had decided not to pay any monies towards community development as past leaders had failed to account for monies collected.

To get the needed funds for undertaking development projects in the community, Saaman used a number of approaches. These included organizing fund-raising ceremonies, levying the adult members in the community; both those resident in the community and those living outside the community, as well as writing letters to financial institutions, businesses, NGOs and philanthropists for support. Both Nathan and Daniel spoke to me about this in separate conversations I had with them. As Daniel told me

... We also write letters to NGOs and companies to support. Some of them help; others also give promises to help. But for the most part we use levies and fund-raising activities

On the fund-raising ceremonies and levies, I learned from Nathan, the Assemblyman, that two fund-raising ceremonies are planned every year to which other stakeholders are invited to participate. Besides contributing financially during these fund-raising ceremonies, there are also material pledges in the form of cement and corrugated iron sheets.

Moreover, every adult member of the community is levied towards development projects in the community. Every male and female resident in the community paid five Ghana cedis, which was equivalent to (US\$2.5 at the time of the research and those resident outside the community paid ten Ghana cedis, equivalent to US\$5. This was confirmed by Daniel, Joshua and Martin in separate interviews. Daniel for instance told me that

We collect levies. Each community member pays say ₵5.00. We invite members of the community resident outside the community to the fund-raising ceremony. People contribute both in cash and kind. Some give bags of cement, iron rods. Also ehh, since our administration came to power, anytime a plot of land is sold in the community a percentage goes into the community's account.

Daniel and Martin, both leaders, explained to me how they went about collecting the levies. The decision on how much every community member would pay is discussed and agreed at a community forum. At the forum, the project to be undertaken is explained to the people and the amount to be paid in terms of levies is discussed and agreed after which receipts are printed. Whoever paid was issued with a receipt and the receipt books are used to check total amount realized.

Regarding the actual collection of the levies, the research revealed that it was done by members of the Unit Committee as well as non- members to ensure transparency and trust. People were selected from different churches and

different groups to ensure that all identifiable groups in the community were represented.

Similarly, Joshua corroborated the point that funds are raised through organizing fund-raising ceremonies and soliciting for help from philanthropists. The fund-raising ceremony also involved writing invitation letters to people outside the community to participate. A programme is drawn to be followed on the day of the ceremony. The people are organized with the support of churches in the community. On the day of the ceremony, people make free-will financial donations and at the end of the day the amount of money realized is counted to be used towards development activities in the community.

Saaman was able to organize a lot of fund-raising activities and thus was able to get the funds and other materials needed for their development projects. Juaso, however, failed to do this and thus could not undertake any development projects on their own.

The CD practice of fund-raising required reading and writing in activities like the collection of levies, writing of letters for support and organization of fund-raising ceremonies. The reading and writing aspect of adult literacy therefore played a role. However, the people who played these roles were not people who had participated in the adult literacy classes. Rather, they were people who had benefited from formal schooling.

8.2.6 Holding Unit Committee meetings

In both Saaman and Juaso Unit Committee were held to discuss development needs of the community. Explaining how the meetings were held, Daniel, the Unit Committee chairman of Saaman said in an interview that the chairman presided over the meeting. Before the meeting commenced, he asked one person to pray after which he welcomed members present. The Secretary would then read the agenda after which the issues on the agenda are picked one after the other for discussion. The secretary recorded the proceedings of the day. Upon exhausting the issues on the agenda, participants raise other matters for discussion. After all this a member moved for the closure of the meeting. If the motion was seconded, they prayed and brought the meeting to a close. An interview with Kofi, the Unit Committee chairman of Juaso revealed that the procedure was the same in Juaso.

Unit Committee meetings are held in the local language and a secretary records the proceedings in English. This shows that not all the members are expected to be able to read and write before serving on the committee. As was noted by Hayford, a participant in the literacy class,

Not all of us who serve on the committee can read and write. There is an adage that says that wisdom is not in one person's head. Even though I and some others in the committee cannot read and write well we have knowledge and experience in some things that we also share to advance the work of the committee. Besides, we have a secretary who records proceedings at the meeting. So we all don't need to write.

In this CD practice too, literacy played a role in the form of writing and reading the agenda by the secretary, as well as writing and reading of minutes. However, even though ability to read and write is required at Unit Committee meetings, not all members needed to have this ability once the skill is present in the committee. What was important was knowledge and experience to contribute to the development of the community. In both Saaman and Juaso there were members of the Unit Committee who could not read and write but made significant contributions towards the achievement of the objectives of the committee.

8.2.7 Accounting for monies collected for community development

The leaders of the Saaman accounted for all monies collected for community development projects to the people. The Unit Committee chairman ensured that all monies collected were used for the purposes for which they were collected. As I gathered from Daniel, the Unit Committee chairman, the leaders of the community accounted to the people at a community forum every three-four months. „It is important to make the community understand how the money collected was used so that if they are asked to pay money again in future, they will do so willingly“, he said. Daniel further explained to me that if the people understand how the money is being used, they volunteer for tasks in the community willingly and do not complain when they are paying money.

On the contrary, in Juaso, because the leaders failed to account for monies collected, for two and half years the people had refused to pay any monies for community development.

Accounting for the monies required ability to read and write as the leaders had to record all income and expenditure which were presented to the people at a community forum.

8.2.8 Presenting community needs to District Assembly for support

I learned from my conversations with leaders in Juaso that in the main, they achieved development by presenting their needs to the District Assembly for support. This was evident in the words of Thomas when he intimated that his role as Assemblyman was to “liaise with the District Assembly, present the needs of the community to the Assembly for them to see how they can help”. He noted that the community was not getting the needed support from the Assembly even though they presented their needs to them.

In addition to the Assemblyman presenting the needs of the community to the District Assembly, when there is a development need in the community, they either write a letter to the District Chief Executive or the chief and elders of the community go to see him to solicit for support. I learned this from Kofi, Newman and Ken, in separate conversations I had with them. Describing how the community went about getting a new Primary School building constructed for them to me, Kofi said,

The old primary school building collapsed and the chief and elders of the community went to the District Assembly for assistance in putting up a new primary school building. The Member of Parliament in the area also

took particular interest in our situation and followed up at the District Assembly for us.

I learned from Newman in a separate interview that letters were written to the DCE, the Regional Minister and NGOs for support in constructing the new school building.

Ken, an opinion leader, lamented the failure on the part of the District Assembly to support with these words in a separate conversation I had with him,

In the past, if you need something in your community you write a letter to the government. The government will then delegate people to come and verify. These days they will ask you to pass your request through the District Chief Executive (the DCE). If you pass it through him too you will wait for years without any response....The uncompleted JHS building, we have been frequenting the office of the DCE for years for support but to no avail... We don't know whether it is after we are dead and gone that they will come and do it.

These words show how completely the Juaso community depends on governmental support for the development of the community.

Saaman also used to present their needs to the District Assembly for support. But they decided to work towards meeting the needs of the community themselves as support from government was not forthcoming. This activity was done either by

sending a delegation to the District Chief Executive or by writing a letter to him. Reading and writing thus play a role in this CD practice as well.

This discussion has shown that a number of literacy events and practices take place in community development practices. These are found in CD activities like developing meeting agendas, writing minutes of committee meetings, ordering and paying for materials, keeping records of stock, recording levies and issuing receipts, preparing income and expenditure statements, developing agenda for fund-raising ceremonies and running through the agenda during the ceremonies, sending text messages, and writing letters for support among others.

The identified CD practices have included: the use of communal labour, the formation of community development committees, each with a defined role, to spearhead development in different areas in the life of the community, initiation and ratification of development projects, development of Community Action Plans, communal labour, raising funds for community development, accounting for monies collected, holding unit committee meetings, and writing letters to government for support.

These are social practices that Saaman was able to use effectively in the achievement of people-centred community development. It was found that in the implementation of many of these CD practices, reading and writing played a role. However, this did not exclude members who could not read and write from participating as in all the cases all that was needed was just one person on the

committee who could read and write to take minutes at meetings and keep other records.

In the next chapter, I discuss the findings of my research in relation to the conceptual framework used and other related literature as discussed in chapter two.

CHAPTER 9

SYNTHESIS, DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

9.1 Chapter overview

This chapter begins with an introduction which brings into focus the question the research seeks to answer, after which the key findings of the research are presented. This is followed by a brief presentation on the perceptions held by the two communities on adult literacy and community development.

Finally, using the theoretical and conceptual frameworks of people-centred development, literacy as a social practice and other related literature as presented in chapter two, as well as drawing on the findings from Chapters four to eight, I discuss the main research question.

9.2 Introduction

Using the Saaman and Juaso as case studies, this thesis set out to explore whether adult literacy plays a role in community development. In chapters 4-8 I presented the findings of the research based on the research question and the sub-questions. This chapter reflects on the findings in order to address the main research question.

Although a lot of research has been done in Ghana on adult literacy and community development, the focus of these previous studies have been on the impacts of adult literacy on learners and communities, conducted within the

conventional paradigm of literacy. This research was done against the backdrop of claims by the conventional view of literacy that literacy, on its own, without regard to culture, time and context, can have positive impacts on individuals and communities.

My research set out to fill the knowledge gap of previous research by adopting the social practices view of literacy to examine whether adult literacy played any role in community development in Saaman and Juaso. In doing this, I used ethnographic methods to explore what the concepts of literacy and community development meant to the research participants, as well as exploring if adult literacy played a role in community development. The scope of the research is spelt out in the statement and purpose section as well as in the methodology. The perceptions and experiences of two neighboring rural communities in Ghana, Saaman and Juaso, were used for the research.

The findings of the research suggest that adult literacy does not necessarily lead to community development projects. In both communities, there was ample evidence that the adult literacy classes that were organized did not have a direct influence on the initiation of and participation in community development projects. In like manner, some literacy practices found in the communities like religious literacy and commercial literacy did not play any role in community development. Nonetheless, in terms of the implementation of community development projects, aspects of literacy, like the ability to read and write, and public communications literacy, played a role.

The way a community conceptualizes adult literacy and community development has a bearing on whether the former would play a role in the latter. It also determines the level of effort of the community towards the achievement of community development. It is therefore important to understand how these two concepts are perceived in the two communities and how the perceptions relate to their practice of community development.

9.3 Perceptions on literacy and community development in Saaman and Juaso

The research establishes that even though the two case communities use different strategies in the achievement of community development, their perceptions on what counts as literacy as well as what counts as community development are largely similar. Literacy is perceived in a functional manner but not radical, in agreement with the ideological model of literacy.

In both communities, some of the learners in the adult literacy classes, the facilitators, as well as majority of the community leaders had the same functional view of literacy. The point of departure between these views is the emphasis placed on what literacy is to be used for. Whereas majority of the learners who participated in the research placed first priority on ability to read and write to cope with daily living, enhance their self-esteem, as well as participate unhindered in the larger society, the facilitators emphasized ability to read and write to make up for lost educational opportunity early in life. The community leaders interviewed, on their part, emphasized knowledge and skill for personal economic gain and the educational advancement of their children,

whereas policy makers place value on reading and writing as a tool for achieving community development.

The perceptions of majority of the people interviewed in the two communities on what counts as literacy, and whether adult literacy plays a role in community development are at variance with those of major international organizations and policy makers in Ghana and the developing world at large as has been pointed out in chapter two. Their views reflect the functional view of literacy as expressed by proponents the ideological view of literacy (Barton & Hamilton, 1998; Street, 1995) among many others mentioned in chapter two. They do not however, align with the views of proponents of critical literacy who conceptualize literacy as a tool for empowerment of people, to enable them question the status quo and challenge the oppressive elements in society (Apple, 1999; Dorvlo, 1993; Freire, 1970; Freire & Macedo, 1987; Giroux, 1997, Hernandez, 1997).

Concerning ability to read and write, even though many of the participants linked it to self-image and an increased opportunity to get jobs, that sense of a great divide as expressed by the great divide theorists (Goody, 1977; Ong, 1982; Olson, 1977, 1994) was not present. Literacy was conceptualized more as knowledge and skill. The assertion of the great divide theorists is therefore brought into question, reinforcing the arguments of earlier researchers who had challenged these claims (Street 1984; Heath, 1982; Scribner & Cole, 1981). Literacy is thus not just being able to read and write, and acquisition or lack of it does not separate a group of people from others. It is therefore not right to

separate people into „literate“ and „illiterate“ as I pointed out in chapter two. The perception of literacy among many of the research participants was also found to be consistent with that of the UNESCO Institute of Lifelong Learning (2013) which talks about people developing competencies to help them live in fulfilling ways.

The findings also confirm the argument of proponents of ideological literacy that literacy varies from context to context (For example; Prinsloo & Breier, 1996; Street, 1984, 1995; Wedin, 2004). Even between the learners in the adult literacy classes and the community leaders, literacy was conceptualized differently. This means that in undertaking research or designing a literacy programme, the meaning of literacy should not be taken for granted. Rather, its meaning in the context in question should be explored as indicated by Robinson-Pant (2008) and Nabi et al (2009).

Similarly, community development is perceived in terms of the hegemonic model of progress by the community leaders interviewed in both communities. The difference between the two communities is how the needs of the community are to be addressed. Whereas Saaman adopted a people-centred approach, described by Korten (1990), Wenger (2010) and Youngman (2000) as mentioned in chapter two in their attempt to meet their own needs, the perception of the people of Juaso reflected the welfare state critiqued by Rogers (1992), relying entirely on government for the provision of their needs. Now, what would explain the difference in the approaches? A look into the development experience of the two communities may provide us with an explanation. Saaman

has over the years not succeeded in their attempts to get government to support them in their projects. Should they continue to wait for something they have no hope of getting? I believe this inability to get support from government is what would have motivated Saaman to make efforts to meet their own needs. Juaso on the hand had received support from government in the past. Most likely, they still had hopes of getting support from government. This could however, be just one reason Juaso seems to have opted for the welfare mode of development. Other circumstances may have compelled Juaso to adopt this approach. Faced with a situation where the people have refused to pay any monies towards community development projects, the leadership would have no other option but to rely on government. The challenge Juaso would face however, is that, not until government came in to support, there would not be any development. This situation could explain why Saaman had more development and Juaso had none.

Community development is perceived as improvements in infrastructure and the lifestyles of the people. It is also conceptualized as unity of purpose in taking collective action to plan and execute the identified objectives. This perception is in congruence with development theory that emphasizes the importance of unity in the achievement of community development (Christenson & Robinson, 1989; Flora et al, 1992; Narayan & Ebbe, 1997). It is however, at variance with modernization and dependency theories which were both disempowering and ineffective (Chambers, 1983; Escobar, 1995; Scott, 1998).

Having described the perceptions of Saaman and Juaso on literacy and community development, I move on in the section that follows, to discuss

whether adult literacy played any role in community development in Saaman and Juaso, beginning with the adult literacy classes. .

9.4 Adult literacy classes and community development

I discuss the question of whether adult literacy classes play a role in community development from the perspective of the theoretical and conceptual frameworks- literacy as a social practice and people-centred development.

The findings of my research suggest that there may not be a direct link between adult literacy classes and community development as claimed by proponents of conventional literacy (Goody, 1977, 2000; Olson, 1977, 1994; Ong, 1982, Gough, 1995; Wagner, 1995), and subscribed to by International Development agencies like UNESCO (1997, 2000), the World Bank, UNDP and IMF in the pursuit of their development agendas (Bhola, 1999, 2008; Valdivielso, 2008) Mpofu & Youngman, 2001). This is so because the initiation of an idea for a project to be implemented was not linked to participation in the adult literacy class. Rather, the idea could either come from an individual or a development committee as in the case of Saaman or from the Unit Committee as in the case of Juaso. The idea is then discussed at several levels till it is ratified by the entire community as the findings revealed in Saaman, or the community is informed of the project by the community leaders as in the case of Juaso.

Regarding implementation of community development projects as well, the findings of the research point to the fact that participation in the adult literacy class does not necessarily lead to participation in community development. In

both communities, some learners in the literacy classes participated in communal labour, but they did not attribute their participation in communal labour to their participation in the literacy classes. For example, in Saaman, although all six participants in the literacy class who were interviewed participated in the development activities of the community, their participation did not emanate from their participation in the literacy class. Rather, it was born out of a personal sense of responsibility to the community and not something engendered by participation in the literacy class. The words of Hayford, a participant in the Saaman literacy class, which reflect the sentiment of the other participants, bring this home: “I have always believed that the development of the community is the responsibility of every member of the community”.

John in Juaso, who had also participated in the literacy class, echoed what Hayford said:

I participate in communal labour. I know as a good community member I have to participate in the development of my community. But I did not learn this from the literacy class.

Both literacy class facilitators in Saaman and Juaso corroborated what has been said so far. Asked in what ways he thought the literacy class helped participants to contribute to community development, Kingsley the Saaman facilitator stated he could not say for sure that participating in the class had helped anybody to contribute to the development of the community. According to him, in Saaman

participating in development activities is obligatory for all community members so one has to take part whether he/she participated in the literacy class or not.

Similarly, Dennis, the Juaso facilitator could not state with confidence that the literacy class contributed to community development.

Instead, participation in community development was linked to other factors.

These included:

1. A sense of commitment to the community.

They participated because they believed as community members they had the responsibility of contributing to the development of the community. Other people who had not participated in the literacy classes also participated in community development as a result perhaps of the same sense of commitment to the community.

2. Cultural and social demand

Beyond the sense of commitment, participation in community development was a cultural and social demand. Culturally, in the two communities, it was obligatory for every adult member of the community to participate in community development, whether one participated in the literacy classes or not. But even though participation in CD was compulsory in both communities, yet people in Juaso stopped participating as a result of disappointment by their leaders. What this means is that participation in CD is motivated by other factors other than participation in literacy classes.

3. Good leadership

Without doubt, good leadership that is transparent and accountable to the people would enhance participation in community development. The leaders in Juaso had failed to be accountable to the people resulting in the people refusing to contribute any more money for development work. On the contrary, in Saaman, the leaders accounted on regular basis for any monies collected from the people. This way they won the trust of the people who were willing to contribute more. Culturally, the success or failure of any venture is placed at the doorstep of the leader.

This is expressed in an Akan adage, “se wotwa owo ti a, nea aka nyinaa ye ahoma” (which means, if you cut the head of a snake, all that remains is a rope). The leadership in Saaman and Juaso played an important role in the achievement of community development. Saaman had a strong leadership that was able to plan and execute the development process. The issue of accountability in leadership also proved to be very important in the development practice in Saaman and Juaso. Whereas the leaders of Saaman accounted for all monies collected for community development projects, in Juaso, the leaders failed to account for monies collected. The result was that for two and a half years, the people of Juaso refused to pay any monies for development projects while in Saaman people were willing to contribute.

Even though participation in community development activities is obligatory in both communities, the ability of community leadership to enforce this cultural

imperative is what would separate one community from the other. The leadership in Saaman succeeded in doing this while the Juaso leaders failed to do so. The result was Saaman being able to implement more CD projects than Juaso. This draws attention to the importance of dynamic and transparent leadership for the success of CD projects. This is an aspect of the community power structure that is often overlooked by designers and practitioners of community development projects. A good community leadership structure that can win the trust of the people and then lead the process of people-centred development is one that holds itself accountable to the people. This confirms the observation of Barton (2001) that power is contested in dialogue.

In many rural communities in Ghana, leadership positions are the preserve of men. The voices of male members in the community dominate those of females. The situation in Saaman and Juaso is no exception, confirming the assertion by the UNESCO Institute of Lifelong Learning (2014) that women are relegated to the background when it comes to political decision-making, governance and management. For an effective leadership that reflects the concerns of all people in the community, there needs to be equality and equity among men and women with regards to leadership.

The concept of power as expressed in people-centred development recognizes the fact that “communities are not homogenous and that there always exist formal or informal power structures within each community which reflect social, economic and political relationships among the members of the community as well as with the outside world” (Burkey, 1993:207).

4. Social Cohesion

Additionally, social cohesion is an essential requirement for achieving full participation in community development as the theory of people centred development helps us to understand. This is corroborated by both Wenger (2010) and Freire (1970) as discussed in the literature review. It is also reflected in the definitions of CD given by (Narayan & Ebbe 1997; Flora et al 1992), as well as Christenson & Robinson (1989) all discussed in the literature review in chapter two.

The importance of social cohesion is seen in the level of effort of the two case communities towards the achievement of community development. Saaman undertook more community initiated development projects than Juaso because they were more united in the desire to meet the needs of the community. The people participated in communal labour, though it seemed not voluntary but obligatory for every adult member of the community, as failure to participate attracted sanctions. Nevertheless, contrasted with what happened in Juaso, the argument for participation in communal labour in Saaman as a result for community cohesion holds. Participation in communal labour in Juaso was also obligatory for all adult members. Yet the people did not participate apparently due to weak community cohesion. However, all the participants in the literacy class willingly participated in communal out of a sense of commitment to the community as has been shown earlier in this chapter.

If literacy classes led to community development, then participation in the adult literacy classes would lead to initiation of and participation in community development by the learners. However, the results show that in both communities the learners are not the ones who initiated community development. In Juaso community development was initiated by the Unit Committee and in Saaman by any member of the community through development committees.

In like manner, if the claims of a direct relationship between literacy and development were so, then Juaso, where the people were exposed to more literacy than Saaman in terms of the duration of the adult literacy classes, would have initiated more development projects. But that was not the case. Saaman rather initiated more development projects. However, the initiation of the development projects in Saaman was not attributed to the adult literacy class.

The results of my research thus question the orthodoxy of literacy, on its own, as a tool for development. It questions the link made between women's education and a healthier population (Wagner, 1995), the labelling of „illiteracy“ as contributing to and giving proof underdevelopment, prompting the World Bank in 2000 to take steps at bridging the wide gender literacy gap. It further questions what would have informed the affirmation of the role of literacy in sustainable development by UNESCO during its global summits as discussed in the literature review (UNESCO, 1997; 2000a).

It can indeed be problematic like Luria (1976) did to establish cause and effect relationships between activities or practices without taking into consideration other social factors that may have contributed to the difference in outcomes. Differences in cognitive processes established by conducting tests amongst people who can read and write and concluding that those who can read and write demonstrate cognitive ability, while ignoring other social factors problematizes the conclusion as Scribner & Cole (1981) observed, that the cognitive effects attributed by Luria (Ibid) to „literacy“ were actually not products of literacy but rather the result of other social practices such as schooling and urban living (Prinsloo, 2005). It is as a result of this that Freire (1978) saw the need for raising the consciousness of learners to understand the social factors that militate against their development, so they could take the needed action to change them. In this sense, the research submits that adult literacy classes, on their own, cannot have effects on CD. For literacy to have an effect on CD, it has to work in conjunction with other social factors.

Again, my findings are not consistent with studies conducted in Ghana which reported positive impacts of adult literacy on community development, as was noted in the literature review. These include: (Addo-Adeku, 1992; Adjei, 2009; Aggor, 1992; Aoki, 2005; Arko & Addison, 2009).

The common thread that runs through all the studies conducted in Ghana on the relationship between adult literacy and community development, which differs from this current research, is that the researchers operated within the autonomous model of literacy, looking for what literacy does to people instead

of what people use literacy for (Baynham, 1995; Kulick & Stroud, 1993; Prinsloo & Breier, 1996; Street, 1995). The findings of these studies point to positive impacts of adult literacy on community development. Though my research shows differing results, I am not completely putting aside the possibility of adult literacy classes having impacts on community development.

However, the findings of my research tie in well with those of Robinson-Pant (2001), Dyer & Choksi (2001) as well as Aikman (2001) who all found that adult literacy does not directly lead to community development.

The failure of the adult literacy classes to lead to community development may be attributed to a number of factors. In the first place, there were conflicting objectives between programme designers, literacy class facilitators and learners as I have indicated early on. The facilitators emphasized teaching of reading and writing at the expense of teaching development practice and vocational skills which were both in the curriculum. It is unlikely that learners would apply their newly acquired literacy skill to community development even if they were taught how to, as this was not their focus.

For any programme to yield the expected results, it is essential that all the players share the same objectives and are committed to it (Flora et al, 1992, Hamilton, 1992; Narayan & Ebbe, 1997). From the illumination of people-centred development, development must be a partnership between individuals working together and between the group and the change agents working with it. Eventually, this partnership must be extended to include other institutions, and

especially the government, so that the people can be assured of access to resources and a stable environment for further development (Burkey, 1993).

Even though the literacy facilitator could be seen as the change agent representing government as a partner in the project to use the literacy class in achieving desired community development, the partnership is seen to be incomplete and therefore cannot be expected to yield the desired results. A partnership in which partners do not have the same aims and objectives but rather hold varying objectives of the project is bound to fail as each partner will be driven by their own objectives in their actions.

The concentration on teaching reading and writing could have been influenced by the understanding of the facilitators of the objective of the programme as has been mentioned earlier. The argument however, is that if the learners were not taught how to engage in development activity in the adult literacy classes, then they should not be expected to engage in development activity by virtue of their participation in the classes.

The second factor is the design of the programme. Evidence from the research shows that the programme was designed top-down without input from the learners. The possible result is that it will not reflect the needs of the learners and as such they will not be committed to it. This has power implications. They would either drop out of the classes if they feel attending the classes will not meet their needs (Knowles, 1989) or use it for their own purposes (Kulick & Stroud, 1993: 25).

The third is the content of the literacy classes. A review of the manual for training the literacy facilitators under the NFLP showed that they were to be trained not only to teach the learners reading, writing and numeracy, but also how to engage in development practice. Again, the content of the primers developed by the Ministry of Education for use by the facilitators included lessons on how to engage in development practice, vocational skills training, as well as opportunities for practical development work in the community. However, the data gathered showed that the facilitators limited what they taught the learners to reading and writing and played down on teaching them vocational skills and development practice as was in the curriculum.

An evaluation of the impacts of the programme on the learners with regards to ability to read, write and count does not show a very good picture. According to Blunch & Porter (2004) the first phase of the NFLP had only modest effects on participants' literacy skills. Corroborating this observation, Aryeetey & Kwakye (2005) reported that less than 20% of the participants could read after graduation. Now, if the participants were taught how to read and write with the expectation that with the newly acquired skill they would contribute to community development, how would the programme achieve the expected outcome if the very tool needed to achieve the outcome is not well developed?

As Bhola (2008: 28) noted, adult literacy on its own cannot cause changes in the "economic, social, political and cultural life in the community and beyond", without the support of the political, economic and cultural structures in the community. This is again consistent with the argument of Freire that literacy is

more than a cognitive skill and that it includes power relationships and that an understanding of the relationship of learners to the world is what is important. (Freire 2001: 173). The literacy classes would therefore be expected to raise the consciousness of the learners and thus empower them to engage in actions that would better their lives and that of the community. Unfortunately, the data gathered did not give any evidence of the adult literacy classes having any positive impacts in the life of the community. However, there was evidence that some of the learners used aspects of what they learned from the classes in their vocations as well as their daily social activities. I submit therefore that even though the adult literacy classes did not have any direct effect on CD, it did impact positively on the lives of individuals.

An effective adult literacy class would be expected to lead to the kind of people-centred community development described by Hamilton (1992:29) where:

people of a community organize themselves informally or formally for democratic planning and action, define their common group “felt” needs and problems, make group and individual plans to meet their felt needs and solve their problems, execute these plans with a maximum of reliance upon resources found within the community, and supplement community resources where necessary.

But even though this happened in Saaman, it was not attributed to the adult literacy class.

This is not to say that the adult literacy classes organized in Saaman and Juaso and in other communities in Ghana did not achieve anything. Bhola (2008) as well as the Government of Ghana, Ministry of Education (2000) both reported positive effects of the literacy programme on learners. My argument here is that it is debatable to attribute those effects solely to the literacy classes.

Regarding why Saaman, with less exposure to literacy than Juaso, achieved more community development than Juaso, a number of reasons, which go to reinforce my argument that adult literacy, on its own cannot achieve community development, can be attributed. The first is the different conceptions held on who has responsibility for community development. Whereas in Saaman CD was perceived as the responsibility of every member of the community, in Juaso, the common perception was that since the people pay taxes, the government had to provide for the needs of the people. This perception is critical for the development of an attitude of self-reliance. If you believe that you have responsibility for your own development, you will not wait for government. If, on the other hand, you believe that government is responsible for your development, you will wait for government, no matter how long it takes. Herein lies the point of departure between Saaman and Juaso. But is it wrong for Juaso to hold government accountable for the taxes people pay? Surely these taxes should be used for the development of the people?

However, much as it is in order to demand development from government, it may be a challenge to depend entirely on government and sit without doing anything when the expected support is not coming. Saaman was able to initiate

more development because they took responsibility for the development of their community. This points the way to other communities, in alignment with people-centred development that self-reliance is a sure way of getting the needs of the community. Clearly, Saaman demonstrated much more self-reliance as described by Burkey (1993:50) and Askew (1984:27) in their ability to do things for themselves and taking collective actions for the benefit of the entire community, than Juaso did.

The second reason is the ability for resource mobilization. Entailed in the concept of self-reliance is the ability of a community to mobilize resources towards the implementation of development projects, without depending solely on external support. In Saaman, the leaders made use of all their local resources. They used the skills of artisans in the community like steel benders, masons, and carpenters, as well as the unskilled members of the community for manual labour. They were again able to raise funds locally for development work by collecting levies from community members. In addition to this, they sourced for funds outside the community from financial institutions, businesses, NGOs and philanthropists. Saaman was able to do all of these because they were committed to self-reliance. Unlike Saaman, Juaso could not do any of these. This is another demonstration of the fact that self-reliance is very important in the achievement of people-led and centred community development. Without it, people will remain in the state of dependency, unable to do anything for themselves, even if they are taken through the most effective literacy classes.

The kind of community development that Saaman exhibited is consistent with what Korten (1990) described as mentioned earlier. This includes the needed collective action to achieve empowerment and to address problems requiring resources beyond the means of the individual action. It also involves mobilizing resources to fuel the engine of development. Beginning with the mobilization of their own meager resources as the basis of self-reliance, individuals and groups must gradually acquire rightful access to external resources and services on mutually acceptable terms.

The third reason is community participation. The active involvement of majority of the people of Saaman in their community development endeavours confirms the literature that effective community participation is essential for the achievement of community development as discussed in the review of the literature on participation (Mathur, 1986; Oakley, 1989; Rifkin, 1985). This was demonstrated by Saaman. In Saaman, the people were involved in the community development efforts more than Juaso, as I mentioned in the description of how development is achieved in the two communities.

However, even though Saaman's actions in mobilizing the people for collective action are in tandem with the practice of people-centred development, a few contradictions are worth noting. For example, for the bottom up approach to community development to be complete at all levels, there is the need for participation of the people in all the processes. Contrary to this, the Assemblyman appointed leaders to the various development committees himself, instead of allowing the people to choose their own leaders. This reflects a power

relationship that is not in agreement with people-centred development. This will not lead to the empowerment of the people. When people are allowed to lead the development process, they feel empowered, which translates into more commitment to the process. This way, a lot can be achieved in the community in a sustainable way.

Again, in both Saaman and Juaso, participation in community development work was not voluntary but rather compulsory. For instance, all adult members in the community were obliged to participate in communal labour and failure to do so attract sanctions. The people were forced to participate rather than participating out of their own free will. This kind of participation will not result in empowering the people. Bowen (1986) and Ribot (1995) call this a form of coerced labour. As Conning & Kevane (2002) argued, this could be a way of entrenching local power relations.

Participation also sometimes was partial and not complete. A case in point is what happened in Juaso where project ideas were initiated by the unit committee, presented to the chief and elders for approval and then the community informed of the decision in a top-down approach without involving them in the decision-making process. Thus in both communities what was happening was just a semblance of participation and not participation in its true sense.

For community participation to be effective therefore, the participation of people in the development activities of the community has to be voluntary and not

coerced. Moreover, there has to be active participation of people at all levels in the community development process. Further to this, Cernea (1985) and Hirschman (1984) also talked about participation involving the people taking responsibility for the development process. . They further argued that communities would need to ensure that all members of the community are willing and are given equal opportunity to participate in the development process. This means that the people of any community, who are the ultimate beneficiaries of the development initiatives, need to be involved in the process from design to implementation, and they should have ultimate responsibility for the process if people-centred community development projects are to be successful.

From the foregoing, it is clear that effective community participation is critical for the success of people-centred, community- led projects. Participation should not only be at the level of providing either skilled or unskilled labour, or even making monetary contributions. Rather, leaders should encourage participation at all levels of the project of the project. The people who are the direct beneficiaries of development interventions should be part of the decision making process of the project. Coerced participation will not lead to empowerment of the people which in turn will make projects unsustainable.

The fourth reason is motivation. At the heart of all developmental efforts at the community level is the motivation of the people to work towards meeting their identified needs. Saaman was propelled to initiate development projects themselves because they had no hope of support from government. Further to

this, socially Saaman was in a crisis, faced with a collapsed school building resulting in teaching and learning going on under trees. On the contrary, Juaso had in the past received lots of government support and was hoping to receive more. They were therefore not motivated to strive towards achieving their needs on their own. They would wait for government no matter how long it took. The result is that Saaman has been self-reliant whereas Juaso has fallen prey to dependency on government and other external support, depleting their sense of initiative and not being able to do anything on their own if the expected „outside“ support is not coming. This situation emphasizes the fact that the welfarist approach to development, where the government is expected to provide the basic needs of communities, creates dependencies rather than self-reliance as was pointed out by Rogers (1992).

Lastly, effective use of community development practices. Saaman used a number of community development practices which are consistent with people-centred development and which helped them to achieve their identified needs. These included:

1. The use of local skilled and unskilled resources through communal labour
2. Formation of development committees
3. Ratification of development projects by entire members of the community
4. Development of Community Action Plans to focus the development efforts of communities.

5. Local fund-raising

6. Financial accountability.

These practices helped to involve all the people at various levels of the development process as well as build solidarity among the people.

This is a good example to follow by communities engaged in community-led; people centred development as this leads to commitment of people to the development process as well as sustainability.

Having analyzed the relationship between adult literacy classes and community development, I proceed now to analyze how the use of literacy by learners in their day to day social activities relates with community development.

9.4.1 Social uses of literacy by learners and CD

This refers to the use of literacy as seen in the day to day lives of the learners outside the adult literacy classes. The use of reading and writing by the learners in their various vocations as well as their day to day social activities as reported in my findings confirmed the claim of LSP that literacy is multiple and is embedded in social activity (Heath, 1982; 1983; Prinsloo & Baynham, 2008; Scribner and Cole, 1981; Street, 1995). These included use of reading and writing in blacksmithing, in sewing, recording of income and expenditure in masonry work as well as in farming, and also doing bank transactions. These uses of literacy helped learners in their individual activities and are in no way linked to CD. I argue therefore that the learners' application of what they learned from the adult literacy classes did not lead to achievement of community

development but rather for their own benefit as individuals. This again confirms the argument of Kulick & Stroud (1993: 25) that learners do not receive literacy passively, but rather use it for their own purposes.

Literacy practices identified among learners like commercial literacy, religious literacy, and hunting literacy were equally for personal benefit and did not lead to community development. I therefore challenge the claims of proponents of conventional literacy, including UNESCO and its allied international bodies, that provision of adult literacy classes lead to community development. Even where participation in the adult literacy classes led to improvements in the vocations of learners, resulting in increased income and thereby increasing their ability to support CD financially, the link is not linear as commonly claimed.

The literacy practices identified were on-going in the communities and there was no indication from the data that those individuals who practised them had a mind of using them towards achieving community development.

Having said this, it is important to note that reading and writing played essential roles in the implementation of CD. For example, they were important for writing and reading of meeting agenda, taking minutes at committee meetings, collecting levies, developing CAPs, writing letters for support, as well as organizing fund-raising events. However, the research established that these reading and writing roles were not performed by participants in the adult literacy classes but rather by people who had had the benefit of formal education. This again clearly shows that providing adult literacy classes does not directly lead to CD.

Ability to read and write was not a criterion to serve on CD committees as was reported in the findings since meetings were held orally and in the local language and only one person who could read and write was needed to record proceedings. The observation by Baynham (2005) that literacy is a communal resource is thus upheld. Once the skill of reading and writing is available in the group, it serves the general purpose.

However, other literacy practices identified in the two communities, such as public communications literacy, and funeral literacy contributed to the implementation of community development. Funeral literacy, for instance, contributed to CD in the sense that in both communities besides giving financial donations to bereaved families during funerals, financial contributions were also made into the community coffers which were applied towards the development of the community. Again, if members of a family do not participate regularly in funerals in the community, they are fined before being allowed to organize a funeral when a member of their family dies. Monies accrued from these fines are used for community development projects. Public communications literacy, on its part, is used to mobilize people for CD.

In this sense, my research establishes that even though adult literacy classes and literacy practices among learners and other community members play no role in the initiation of community development projects, once the projects are initiated some literacy practices play a role in their implementation.

I argue therefore that neither adult literacy classes nor literacy practices can have direct effects on community development. This revelation from my research agrees with Street (1984) that such an assumption would be according to the social uses of literacy the same autonomous powers that proponents of the conventional view of literacy did which have been proved not to work.

On the evidence of these findings, it is reasonable to assume that it is not the provision of adult literacy classes to communities or the existence of literacy practices that lead to community development. More so, adult literacy classes that focus on teaching reading and writing in the local language, which may not even be the preferred language of the learners are not likely to lead to community development. For this to happen, more would be required. As has been discussed in the conceptual framework in chapter two, for people-centred community development to be achieved, other factors like social cohesion, good leadership, cultural traditions, community participation, self-reliance, and local social knowledge are important.

CHAPTER 10

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

10.1 Research conclusions

The purpose of my thesis was to explore whether adult literacy plays a role in community development, using the Saaman and Juaso communities as case studies.

The findings suggest that whereas the adult literacy did not necessarily lead to the initiation of community development projects or participation in them, some social literacy practices play a role in community development practices. Examples are the use of reading and writing in committee meetings, levy collection, writing of letters for support, development of CAPs, as well as writing of invitation letters for fund-raising ceremonies. Public communications and funeral literacy also did play roles in the implementation of CD as the beating of gong-gong or the megaphones were used to mobilize the people for communal labour. Similarly, during funerals, the people made financial contributions towards the development of the community.

The research identified a number of community development practices in the two communities the implementation of which made use of literacy events and practices. The CD practices included: communal labour, holding of committee meetings, developing community action plans, collection of levies, mandatory participation of all community members beyond age 18 in communal labour,

organization of fund-raising ceremonies, accounting for monies collected for community development projects, and presenting community needs to the District Assembly for support. All of these practices required an amount of reading and writing like in the case developing the agenda for a meeting, taking, writing and reading the minutes of a meeting, compiling the names of people who pay levies and issuing them with receipts, taking records of stock, ordering and making payments for construction materials, preparing income and expenditure accounts, as well as writing letters for support.

The research also found that even though the CD practices required the reading and writing, ability to read and write was not a criterion for joining any committee or participating in CD. Reading and writing was found to be a communal resource and once there was someone on any committee who could do it, the others did not need it. This was so because even in the conduct of committee meetings, both the oral and the written were used. One only needed to be of good character, committed to the development of the community, and be knowledgeable in the area of serving the community to serve on a committee or render service to the community.

The study revealed that other factors besides adult literacy such as a sense of personal responsibility towards the development of the community, social cohesion, good leadership, and accountability, contributed to participation in community development, as has been discussed.

The findings again show that community-led, people –centred development is the most reliable and sustainable approach to community development.

10.2 Limitations of my research

I should stress that my thesis has been primarily concerned with exploring whether adult literacy plays a role in community development. In doing so, the literacy classes in Saaman and Juaso were examined. However, this thesis is not an evaluation of the literacy classes and a completely different research would need to be undertaken if the evaluation of the literacy classes is desired. My findings should therefore not be taken as evidence that the literacy classes conducted by government were unsuccessful. Again, even though I identified some literacy practices in the two case communities and explored whether they played a role in CD, the focus of the research was not to explore the role of literacy practices in community development. Here again, that would require a completely different approach to the research. Thirdly, although there are lots of literature on adult literacy and the empowerment of women, in this research I did not concern myself with exploring the link between adult literacy and women’s empowerment in particular. Finally, my research uncovered some evidence on the emerging claims of some schools of thought that multi-modality and other semiotic forms are part of literacy. However, this again was not the focus of this research.

With regards to the methodology used, the main obvious limitation of this research is the use of the case research approach which has to do with the degree of external generalization of findings (Yin, 2003). The case research approach

adopted implied that the research was limited to a particular context, in this case Saaman and Juaso with characteristics which may be different from other communities in Ghana and around the world. This may limit the extent to which the research findings can be generalized.

Nonetheless, even though the findings of the research may not be generalized, they were compared and contrasted with other studies undertaken in Ghana, Asia, and the Caribbean. In so doing the research has affirmed or challenged findings of these studies thereby contributing significantly to the body of knowledge on literacy and community development.

10.2.1 Challenges with the research sample

To achieve maximum variation in the research sample, I intended to use equal numbers of males and females from the learners in the literacy classes and the facilitators as well as from the Assembly members, unit committee chairpersons and opinion leaders. However, apart from the learners in the literacy classes where I had equal numbers of males and females to participate in the research, all the other research participants were male. This is because the leadership in both communities was male dominated. The Assembly members, literacy facilitators, unit committee chairperson and opinion leaders in both communities were male. This made the research sample unbalanced in terms of gender. This was however, addressed as was explained in the methodology chapter.

10.2.2 Challenges during data collection

The main challenge encountered during data collection was the expectation of the communities that the research would bring them some development benefits.

I sensed this more with the community leaders in Juaso and I had the feeling that this influenced some of the answers they gave me. Having worked in the two communities before as a project manager, some of the research participants still could not separate my position as project manager from that of a student researcher even though I had taken pains to explain the purpose of the research. I dealt with this situation by emphasizing the purpose of the research as well as triangulating the responses to my questions between respondents and comparing interview responses with my observations where possible.

10.3 Implications for and contribution of my research to theory, research and practice

As stated in chapter one, my research is the first in Ghana to investigate the relationship between adult literacy and community development from the perspective of literacy as a social practice. I hope this will open the way for more research in Ghana using the LSP framework.

The major contribution of my research to adult literacy and community development scholarship and practice is the provision of evidence to the fact that no matter how effectively adult literacy classes are organized, without community-based, people-led, self-reliant development, some people will insist that government takes responsibility for development even with the small things they can do themselves.

Secondly, this research has provided empirical evidence to confirm the claim by ethnographic research that it is problematic to conceptualize literacy as a single

technical skill that has consequences on individuals and communities. Rather, we need to perceive literacy as a situated social practice that is multiple and serves different purposes in different social domains (Barton and Hamilton, 1998; Robinson-Pant, 2001; Street, 1984, 1995, 2001).

Thirdly, my research has contributed to the debate in literacy scholarship as to whether we can establish a linear relationship between adult literacy and community development. I have argued that no such relationship can exist in terms of initiating community development as has been claimed by autonomous literacy and development organizations. No matter the quality of adult literacy classes, they cannot lead to community development if the knowledge acquired is not used hand- in-hand with self-reliant, people-centred, bottom-up participatory development (Askew, 1984; Burkey, 1993; Korten, 1990).

Fourthly, my research has established the fact that some literacy practices do play a role in community development as I explained at the beginning of this chapter.

Again, my research has brought to the fore the indisputable importance of the political, social, cultural, religious and economic environment in the achievement of development. I argue that any adult literacy programme that aims at affecting community development is already on the path to failure if it does not address the structural barriers in society as part of its strategy.

Moreover, my research has confirmed the scholarly position that the concepts of adult literacy and community development are contested in their forms,

meanings and functions (Rogers, 1992; Scribner & Cole, 1981, Street, 1984) by signaling the different meanings even people in the same communities attributed to these concepts. It would therefore be necessary for literacy and community development programme designers and practitioners to find out what these mean to project beneficiaries. Doing this will help them to factor the perceptions of programme into their programmes. We cannot continue to assume and impose the meanings of these concepts on communities if we want our programmes to be successful.

Furthermore, the research has established that the school literacy practices taught the learners in the adult literacy classes did not help them to participate in community development activities. I propose that for adult literacy classes to help advance the development of the community, the focus should be on teaching learners those literacy practices that are embedded in community development practices. Again, the literacy practices taught in adult literacy classes should focus on the practices that the learners use in their day to day social activities. Added to this, they need to lead to awareness-raising of learners of their responsibility towards community development.

Moreover, my research has confirmed the need for participation of programme beneficiaries in the design of adult literacy classes so that the content of the programme will reflect the felt needs of the people and ensure a shared understanding and commitment to the objectives of the programme as has been argued by (Flora et al, 1992, Hamilton, 1992; Maruatona, 2001; and Narayan & Ebbe, 1997). There is evidence in my research pointing to the fact that this was

not done in Saaman and Juaso, resulting in the design of the adult literacy classes not reflecting the needs of the learners which in turn led to some learners dropping out of the classes. The programme was centrally designed by the Ministry and Education and “imposed” on the people. Adult literacy classes will be more successful if the design of the curriculum is made participatory and also done taking into consideration the history, local culture, experiences, beliefs, as well as future hopes and aspirations of the people.

Additionally, my research has established that people-centred development (PCD) is the most reliable approach to successful development at the community level and pointed to factors needed to achieve PCD.

Finally, viewed from a multiple LSP lens, the adult literacy classes in Saaman and Juaso taught a particular kind of literacy- the school literacy from an autonomous standpoint, which has proved to be not the most useful for the achievement of community development. What is actually needed is to teach community development in the adult literacy classes as well as during the practice of community development.

10.4 Significance of the research

The relevance of this research lies in the fact that:

1. Its findings provide context-specific empirical evidence on the role of adult literacy in community development.

2. This research represents a shift in Ghana where most of the research in this area has been focused on the autonomous model of literacy to the detriment of the LSP model. I hope that this research will provide a road map to research into literacy as a social practice in Ghana. Furthermore, findings of the research will hopefully enhance the theory of literacy as a social practice as it has shown how it can be used to achieve community development, an approach to literacy research where not much has been done, especially in Ghana.
3. The research interfaces the perspectives of policy makers, programme designers and implementers as well as participants in adult literacy programmes on the relationship between adult literacy and community development. This, I believe, will enhance the development of literacy programmes that reflect the interests of learners.
4. The research will also help designers of community development programmes to appreciate the importance of identifying the literacy practices of their target beneficiaries and integrating them into their design to achieve their objectives.

10.5 Recommendations

10.5.1 For future research:

Research focusing on literacy as a social practice in Ghana is very limited. Further research into adult literacy might usefully focus in particular on social uses of literacy in other contexts to aid a fuller understanding of the concept and ways in which they relate to community development.

10.5.2 For future action/policy

For adult literacy to have an effect on community development, the design and content is very important. My research proposes that the design of adult literacy classes incorporate the day-to-day social uses of literacy of the learners into the curriculum.

The research also suggests to designers and practitioners of adult literacy and community development projects to identify areas of community development where adult literacy is required and build capacity of learners in practical ways for effective use within community development.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: COMPLETED ETHICS FORM

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN

School of Education

RESEARCH ETHICS: STUDENT/SUPERVISOR JOINT STATEMENT

This form should be completed by the research student and then co-signed by student and supervisor: Tick the YES or NO box, and write in details where appropriate. Please read the UCT Code for Research involving Human Subjects before completing the form. Ask your supervisor for clarification and help if needed.

Student researcher: Name: Theophilus Nkansah

Title of research project: An exploration of the role of adult literacy in community development: a comparative research of perceptions and experiences in Juaso and Saaman in Ghana.

Course detail: HD001 (PhD in Education).

Supervisor: Dr. Salma Ismail

Have you read the UCT Code for Research involving Human Subjects? (available from supervisor or at the UCT web-site - go to Research/ go to Standards and Procedures)	YES (X)	NO
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Is your research making use of human subjects as sources of data?	YES (X)	NO
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In the space below state what your research question/focus is, and give a brief outline of your plans for data collection.

The purpose of this research is to explore analyses and describe the perceptions and experiences of the people of Juaso and Saaman in Ghana on the role of adult literacy in community development. The point of departure of the research is the theoretical orientation that literacy involves much more than just the technical skill of being able to read and write. Rather, there are multiple literacy practices in any given social context and that different literacy practices are used in different domains of life for different purposes. Literacy practices may or may not involve reading and writing. The focus of the research is consequently on investigating what different literacy practices there are in Juaso and Saaman, the purposes for which these literacy practices are used and whether they play any role in the

initiation, design and implementation of community development projects in the two communities.

Outline of data collection plans:

Data collection will be done from June 2012- January 2013 (8 months)

I will use the basic classical ethnographic data collection methods of participant observation and informal conversations as my main data collection tools. I will supplement these with Semi- structured interviews and document review. In each community I will conduct one focus group interview and four in-depth interviews for purposes of triangulation.

3. A total of 22 participants from the two communities will be involved in the research:

Sample:

Sample	Juaso	Saaman	Tota
			1
Women participants in adult literacy class	3	3	6
Men participants in adult literacy class	3	3	6

Information

Will participants (research subjects) in the research have reasonable and sufficient knowledge about you, your background and location, and your research intentions? Describe briefly below how such information will be given to them. If there is any reason for withholding any information from participants about your identity and your research purpose, explain this in detail below.	YES (X)	NO

Before commencement of the research, I will provide participants information regarding my background, the institution at which I am pursuing the PhD, the purpose of the research, why I need their participation in the research, the role I expect them to play and how I will use the data I collect from them. I will then request of them to sign consent forms of participation after they indicate to me that they have understood the nature of the research and are willing to participate voluntarily.

Consent

Will you secure the informed consent of all participants in the research? Describe how you will do this in the space below. If your answer is NO, give reasons below.	YES (X)	NO
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I will request all participants to sign the consent form below prior to participation in the research:

TITLE OF RESEARCH: An exploration of the role of adult literacy in community development: a comparative research of perceptions and experiences in Juaso and Saaman in Ghana.

Thank you for making time to meet with me. My name is Theophilus Nkansah. I am a PhD student at the University of Cape Town, South Africa. I am conducting this research, in which I am requesting your participation, as part of the requirements towards the award of a PhD degree.

Nature of your participation

I may ask you to participate in a group interview with other people. I will observe you as you go about your day to day activities to understand what you do. I will also conduct an interview with you to explore your views and experiences on literacy and community development. The interviews will take between an hour and a half and two hours of your time. I would like to record the interview on a tape.

What will happen with the information?

All the information I collect in my personal interview with you will be confidential. No-one besides you and me (Theophilus Nkansah) will have access to the transcribed tapes. I will not use your real name in the final report if I have to quote some of the things you say in the interview so it will not be possible for anyone to connect the statements to you.

Voluntary

Your participation is entirely voluntary and there will be no monetary rewards

<p>In the case of research involving children, will you have the consent of their guardians, parents or caretakers? If your answer is NO, give reasons below. If your answer is YES, describe briefly how this consent will be got from the participants.</p>	<p>YES</p>	<p>NO (X)</p>
<p>The research involves adult participants only.</p>		

<p>In the case of research involving children, will you have the consent of the children as much as that is possible? If your answer is YES, describe briefly how this consent will be got from the children. If your answer is NO, give reasons below.</p>	<p>YES</p>	<p>NO (X)</p>
<p>The research does not involve children.</p>		

Confidentiality

<p>Are you able to offer privacy and confidentiality to participants if they wish to remain anonymous? If you answer YES then give details below as to what steps you will take to ensure participants' confidentiality. If there are any aspects of your research where there might be difficulties or problems with regard to protecting the confidentiality and rights of participants and honouring their trust, explain this in detail below,</p>	<p>YES (X)</p>	<p>NO</p>
--	----------------	-----------

The anonymity of the participants will be ensured using their pseudonyms instead of their real names.

I will ensure I do not keep interview data where people will have access to. All data will be stored in a safe place. I will keep it locked away in my office.

Potential for harm to participants

<p>Are there any foreseeable risks of physical, psychological or social harm to participants that might result from or occur in the course of the research? If your answer is YES, outline below what these risks might be and what preventative steps you plan to take to prevent such harm from being suffered.</p>	YES	NO(X)
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Potential for harm to UCT or other institutions

<p>1. Are there any foreseeable risks of harm to UCT or to other institutions that might result from or occur in the course of the research? e.g., legal action resulting from the research, the image of the university being affected by association with the research project, or a school being compromised in the eyes of the Education Ministry. If your answer is YES, give details and state below why you think the research is nonetheless worthwhile.</p>	<p>YES</p>	<p>NO(X)</p>
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<p>2. Are there any other ethical issues that you think might arise during the course of the research? (e.g., with regard to conflicts of interests amongst participants and/or institutions) If your answer is YES, give details and say what you plan to do about it.</p>	<p>YES</p>	<p>NO(X)</p>
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Signed:

Student: Signed by candidate Signature Removed

Date: 21st October 2012

Co-signed:

Supervisor: Signature Removed

Date: 22nd October 2012

APPENDIX B: IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW GUIDE

Title: An exploration of the role of adult literacy in community development: a comparative research of perceptions and experiences in Juaso and Saaman in Ghana.

What counts as literacy?

+ Would you tell me what it means to you when someone is said to be literate?

+ Would you tell me why in your view ability to read and write is important or not?

What literacy practices are there in the two communities?

+ Please tell me what you do every day of the week from the time you wake up till the time you go to bed.

+ In what ways do you use reading and writing in the activities you just talked about?

What counts as community development (CD) for the people in Juaso and Saaman?

+ Would you tell me what you understand by community development?

+ What things do you think will make this community develop?

+ In your view how does community development happen?

What role do literacy practices play in the initiation, design, and implementation of CD projects in the communities?

✚ What CD projects has the community undertaken in the past or is undertaking now?

✚ How were the projects initiated, designed and implemented?

What CD practices do the people in the two communities engage in?

✚ Would you describe the processes the community goes through towards achieving their identified needs?

What role do the literacy practices identified play in community development practices in the two communities?

✚ Would you please tell me what exactly you do in the CD practices you have mentioned?

APPENDIX C: FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Title: An exploration of the role of adult literacy in community development: a comparative research of perceptions and experiences in Juaso and Saaman in Ghana.

Interview Guide

What counts as literacy?

- + Would you tell me what it means to you when someone is said to be literate?
- + Would you tell me why in your view ability to read and write is important or not?

What literacy practices are there in the two communities?

- + Please tell me what you do every day of the week from the time you wake up till the time you go to bed.
- + In what ways do you use reading and writing in the activities you just talked about?

What counts as community development (CD) for the people in Juaso and Saaman?

- + Would you tell me what you understand by community development?
- + In your view how does community development happen?

What role do literacy practices play in the initiation, design, and implementation of CD projects in the communities?

✚ What CD projects has the community undertaken in the past or is undertaking now?

✚ How were the projects initiated, designed and implemented?

What CD practices do the people in the two communities engage in?

✚ Would you describe the processes the community goes through towards achieving their identified needs?

What role do the literacy practices identified play in community development practices in the two communities?

✚ Would you please tell me what exactly you do in the CD practices you have mentioned?

APPENDIX D: SAMPLE CONSENT FORM

TITLE OF RESEARCH: An exploration of the role of adult literacy in community development: a comparative research of perceptions and experiences in Juaso and Saaman in Ghana.

Thank you for making time to meet with me. My name is Theophilus Nkansah. I am a PhD student at the University of Cape Town, South Africa. I am conducting this research, in which I am requesting your participation, as part of the requirements towards the award of a PhD degree.

Nature of your participation

I may ask you to participate in a group interview with other people. I will observe you as you go about your day to day activities to understand what you do. I will also conduct an interview with you to explore your views and experiences on literacy and community development. The interviews will take between an hour and a half and two hours of your time. I would like to record the interview on a tape.

What will happen with the information?

All the information I collect in my personal interview with you will be confidential. No-one besides you and me (Theophilus Nkansah) will have access to the transcribed tapes. I will not use your real name in the final report if I have to quote some of the things you say in the interview so it will not be possible for anyone to connect the statements to you.

Voluntary

Your participation is entirely voluntary and there will be no monetary rewards. There will be no adverse consequences if you decide you do not want to participate.

Benefits and harms

During the interview I will collect information about your views, experiences and opinions. It should not cause you any distress or harm. If at any time you wish to stop the interview because of discomfort, you are free to do so. The research will be beneficial to me as it will help me get a PhD degree.

If you are willing to participate, can you please indicate below that you have understood what the research is about and that you are willing to participate in the research?

Name of participant:

Signature of participant:

Date:

Name of researcher: Theophilus Nkansah

Signature of researcher:

Date:

E-mail address of researcher: theonkansah@gmail.com

Mobile: +233208202682