

Review

Theory and practice: Changing faces of rural development policy in Ghana from 1957-2007

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The quest to create and expand opportunities for development in Ghana has evolved over the years and rural areas have been a field of development experiments. Successive governments since political independence in 1957 have professed various policies, projects and programmes to break the chains of poverty and free up opportunities for growth and stimulate prosperity. Nonetheless, rural areas remains chronically underdeveloped. The paradox of much attention and paltry progress brings to question the effectiveness of development policy in Ghana. This paper traces the trajectory of rural development policy over the first half century of Ghanaian development policy. It draws a parallel between prevailing theories in the past half century and how they shaped development policy. It finds that low agricultural output, rapid population growth and environmental change reign as the supreme triumvirate that has caged the potential of rural dwellers and sapped away progress. Analysis of primary and secondary data reveals a historical chasm between policy and practice. Rural development policy seems to follow a “shampoo” cycle and is often crafted for political capital and natural resource potential to the neglect of real potential and capabilities of the human capital. While rural areas may be geographically peripheral, they remain at the centre of development and developing these areas demands a bold new approach that recognises their potential in its true sense. The paper contends that rural development or underdevelopment is essentially human political agency and nothing else. It is argued that while development policy generally mirrors global trend, there are some local particularities. The paper concludes that development policy only works when political commitment is met with the consensual support of the rural dwellers.

Keywords: Rural development, policy, development practice, Ghana.

INTRODUCTION

Rural areas have been a field of development experiments in the developing world. Africa is arguably the largest development experiment laboratory with both state and non-state actors conducting ‘development’ works. Successive governments in Ghana since political independence have professed various policies, projects and programmes with the singular aim of developing rural areas, however, it remains chronically underdeveloped. The paradox of much attention and paltry progress brings to question the effectiveness of rural development policy in Ghana. The share poverty and failure to development rural areas in Africa have been causally attributed to

sociocultural (Lopes, 2008; Mkandawire, 2001) political (Abrahamsen 2000; Ake 1996; Idahosa & Shenton 2004; Mkandawire 2001) colonial and globalisation of capitalism (Chang, 2002; Harrison, 2010; Harriss, Hunter et al., 1995; Mkandawire, 2001; Ortner, Eley, & Dirks, 1995; Perelman, 2000). Others have ascribed the underdevelopment to climate and other physical characteristics (example Landes, 1998). This view is deterministic with racial undertones.

The role of development policy of African States is often ignored or are less emphasised or are masked by other factors in explaining albeit policy remains central to the

development or lack of it. The pervasiveness of poverty in Africa amid significant economic growth and development in the past three decades stains the progress made and calls for an interrogation in technology and civilisation. An examination of the critical role of development of policy is vital to understanding the state of rural development in Ghana because it shapes the decisions that inform allocation and use of resources in states. In essence, development is the by-product of policy. What then is policy and why does it matter.

Defining policy

Policy is one of the most defined words with varying spatiotemporal meanings (Torjman 2005). According to Dye "public policy is whatever government chooses to do or not to do". Similarly, Torjman (2005) opines that public policy is the course of an action a government chooses in an environment from among alternatives in order to realise a stated objective. For the purpose of this paper, public policy will be broadly defined to mean a framework that guides governments decision-making pattern, resource allocation with the aim of achieving a stated national interest or goal which may be time bound.

Cochran et al. (2009) distill public in developing countries into substantive, regulatory, distributive and redistributive. While distributive and redistributive policies are aimed to correct unequal access to resources and opportunities, regulatory policies are concerned with regulating human and institutional conducts. Substantive policy on the other hand refers to the deliberate actions to change, maintain, or improve public welfare, economic development and resource allocation spatially or temporally.

Modernisation Theory

In explaining how developing countries were not developed, the modernist identified a triad of interlocking and circularly causal roadblocks that stood in the way of the development process in those countries. These factors were a lack of capital, technology and antiquated social and organisation values. W.W. Rostov (who served as an advisor in both the John F Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson administrations) contended in his the stages of economic growth: a non-communist manifesto that modernising (essentially westernising or Americanising) developing is the prerequisite to development. To him and others such as Talcott Parsons, development is simply an evolutionary process where western societies were the evolved and the third world still in the process of evolving. The evolutionary process in the third world could be given a revolutionary push if Western capital, technology and social organisation and values are transferred or simply copied. They prescribed a dual economy model: traditional and modern sectors. The

traditional sector was largely agricultural, underdeveloped with surplus labour reserve which the modern sector was to exploit for the development of the country.

The Nkrumah government bought into the modernist view of development which was in vogue at independence. Scientific revolution premised on a shift to large-scale industrial complexes, transformation and rationalisation of agriculture production and social reforms were to propel the new Ghana to highest height of material prosperity.

Human political agency of rural development in Ghana

Politics and development or the lack of it are directly related. Politics not only shape policies but it is politics that implement them. Booth & Therkildsen (2012, p. 2) remarks that "development outcomes in poor countries depend on the political incentives facing political leaders". Human agency is therefore at the centre of who gets what, at what time and why not. Hence development policy is a product of the political climate at a particular period.

The modern state is composed of three few but powerful elements who interacts to accelerate or stagnate the development process. They are the ruling elites, bureaucrats and sector actors. The political elite composed of a coalition of powerful individuals from diverse backgrounds with the common interest of acquiring and or maintaining power. Decisions by this group are geared towards creating an enabling environment to perpetuate their rule. The bureaucrats are the administrative arm mainly composed of both public and civil servants and some private individuals of high economic clout. Bureaucrats are in theory independent of the ruling elites but in practice, they are clients because, in Ghana as in most developing countries, they owe their positions to the ruling class. These two elements of the development process are the most potent force. Collusion between them is the most effective force for development. It is for the same reason that they could be the most dangerous partners if they collude for greed. The third element is the sector actor. This group is the largest yet least organised hence the weakest. It is composed of households, farmer groups, firms and other stakeholder social groups. They are fragmented and incapable of effectively organising to demand effective resource use. With a weakened back, the ruling class and state bureaucrats with their organisation advantage decide what and where gets developed and who benefits from that development. The ruling elites only respond to the fragmented demands of the actors of the sector when there are sufficient incentives or when the consequence of not responding threatens the stability of their power. These three elements do not operate in a closed system. They interact with other forces of globalisation which

influence the outcomes of local interactions. The motivation for leadership is, therefore, keen. The Asian Tigers in the 1970s to 1990s invested heavily in rural development, driven by urgency, outreach and expediency under strong and focused state leadership. China is another example of how strong leadership in focused investment are crucial to eradicating poverty. The relationship between the elements of the state in these countries was mutual not exploitative, cooperative not antagonistic and synergistic not pervasive. Development only works when relationships between the trio are mutual, cooperative, and synergistic (Booth & Therkildsen 2012; Chinsinga 2014). Hence rural development is a product of human political agency and nothing else.

Politics and rural development policy in Ghana

It is argued that politics and policy are directly public is a by-product of who control power and their aims thereof. This is reflected in Ghana's policy.

Colonial rural development policy

In the colonial era especially before the Second World War, the approach to rural development was to maximise the potential of agriculture lands for cash crops to increase exports. Rural areas with mineral endowments and fertile lands capable of sustaining cash crops such as cocoa, coffee, oil palm and rubber were given premium. Commodities rather than human capital were prioritised. Only rural population in the productive forest belt were educated on ways to improve agriculture. The ten-year development plan under Guggisburg emphasised that *“extraction by hand unaided by machinery can never be efficient, besides being extremely laborious. It is highly desirable that efficient local extraction should be encouraged in order that the production of vegetable oils for consumption and export may be increased ...”* the policy of exploiting the agricultural potential in rural communities was central since it provided a steady source of export merchandise to serve the interest of the colonial metropolis. The Guggisburg government stressed that all must be done to ensure rural areas produced raw materials incrementally but sustainably and that *“the importance of, and urgency for, making good this lack cannot be gainsaid. A reference to the annual value of the' Cocoa industry alone will help to put in proper perspective what might appear at first sight unduly high expenditure”*(Colonial Secretariat n.d., p.6). In sum, the colonial policy towards rural areas was exploitative and aimed only at maximising the natural resource capability of the land, not human potential. The skilled manpower trained in the rural areas was a sort of reporting bureaucracy who largely stood outside of the agricultural production process. The policy of rural in the colonial era was based

on perceived resource endowment of that area. This led to unbalanced investment and the consequent development of the so-called golden triable of development in the southern forest belt. This heritage has been intensified by the successive postcolonial government.

Modernisation theory and rural development

Mindful of the pitfalls of colonial development policy, the first post-colonial government under Kwame Nkrumah launched the seven-year plan for national reconstruction development as a policy framework to guide development in Ghana. Rural development was viewed as central to the success of the plan. Nkrumah rural development was important to Nkrumah for two reasons. First, rural development was the only means of increasing incomes and closing the disparity that existed between the cash crop and food crop production. This was very much the line with his socialist ideology and creating an egalitarian society of equal opportunities and collective responsibility. The second reason is partly the consequence of the first. As part of creating a truly independent country, he sought to reverse the “unfortunate features of colonial policy that most of the energies of successive administrations have been directed towards facilitating the production of agricultural goods for export and encouraging the importation of both food and manufactured goods from the metropolitan countries”. Food sufficiency had the triple importance of empowering rural people through increased income, reducing the gaping disparity between cash crop farmers and food crop farmers and an effective tool for cutting the dependency created by the regime. The Nkrumah's government approached rural development from a poverty reduction perspective. Unlike the colonial era, development policy under the first republic gradually shifted from commodities towards a human welfare and indignity. The seven-year development plan documents that “government is not satisfied with the present standard of living in the rural areas, and especially in the Northern and Upper Regions. Ghana cannot consider herself really modern or progressive until standards in the villages have been raised far above what they are now” (Office of the Planning Commission, 1964, p. 63) Investments were refocused in northern and coastal savannahs to increase sugarcane, vegetables, fish and groundnuts production as an import substitution measure (Office of the Planning Commission 1964). Introducing new technologies through mechanisation and extension services increased both yields and acreage under cultivation. State farms were established as centres of excellence for diffusing new technologies and practices to smallholder private farmers. Industrialisation was the fulcrum around which socioeconomic progress was to revolve. The modernist development school of thought dominated development thinking in Ghana during

this period. Social transformation through mass public education both in rural and urban areas was initiated to create the “new African personality”. Free and compulsory university basic education was introduced while literacy programme was ambitiously pursued with the aim of eradicating ignorance while empowering a skilled and capable labour force. Rural areas had the role of providing raw materials for feeding industries in urban centres and small scale industries mostly in rural parts of the countries. The development policy objective of the first republic was to “achieve a self-sustaining economy founded on socialist production and distribution—an economy balanced between agriculture and industry, providing sufficient food for the people and supporting secondary industries based on the products of our agriculture” (Nkrumah 1968, p.91)

The dependency theory

Dependency theorist argues the real cause of underdevelopment of developing countries is the historical unequal relationship with the developed countries specifically colonialism. This school of development thinking was spearheaded by Andre Gunder Frank in his *Development of Underdevelopment* (1972). He argued that underdevelopment is not a natural condition but a direct creation of historical colonial domination of the Third World by developed countries. Developed countries’ development is the product of a “parasitic” relationship that sucked the resources of LDCs dry to enrich and serve their interest. In short, LDCs are made *hewers of wood and drawers of water* to feed the industrial complex of Western countries.

Gunder Frank characterised poverty in LDCs as an inescapable product of imperialism and domination that trap the LDCs at the bottom of the global economy. The only viable way out of this is to sever ties and introduce protective measures against exploitative intrusions into the local economies. Maintaining such relationship will only lead to haemophilic economies structured to depend on the “cores”. Frank calls for a total rejection of the modernisation thesis and its “dual society approach to development admonishing that “the policy recommendations to which it leads will if acted upon, serve only to intensify and perpetuate the very conditions of underdevelopment they are supposed to design to remedy” (Frank, 1972).

Frank further chides the modernisation theorist for assuming that the current state and history of the developing countries resembled the earlier stages of the developed world. This faulty assumption ignores the economic and other relations that existed between the now developed and the LDCs. Frank contend that global economy is like a concentric circle with core and periphery with the core been the industrialised developed western nations and periphery the raw-material-producing expanse. Prebrisch supports this assertion, insisting that the demand for raw materials tends to be

inelastic while the demand for industrial goods is inelastic. Therefore developing countries are perpetually disadvantaged and caught in a vicious cycle of underdevelopment (Kuhnen, 1987). This creates a domination system where the urban areas of developing countries are dominated by metropolitan areas in the developed world. For the dependency theorist, just as how the urban area in developing is ‘built’ to serve the interest of western capitals so does rural areas in the developing serve the interest of urban. To perpetuate itself the capitalist systems erode local culture through establishing and creating a syndrome for foreign goods. Hence import bill is eternally high creating unfavourable exchange system. This consequently affects national savings and creditworthiness to borrow for national development (Muzaale 1987; Binswanger-Mkhize & McCalla 2009).

Since the international economic structure is based on the exploitation of the periphery developing countries must breakaway – delink - from this structure and strive for national self-reliance” Knutsson (2009, p 17). The theory strongly encouraged nationalisation of foreign-owned firms and was suspicious of foreign investments especially in the primary sector. It also advocated strict regulation in the importation of consumer goods to wean off taste for foreign goods while encouraging self-reliance as well as overthrow governments that were foreign-oriented (neo-colonialist oriented).

The dependency theory and rural development policy in Ghana

This theory had a rousing appeal in the developing world because the arguments were self-evident in the wide chasm of development between the developed countries and LDC. It offered a logical historical explanation to the prevailing economic stagnation. Leaders of developing countries could easily point to this inequality. Again, it came during the decade of decolonisation and at the dawn of independence for most developing countries especially in Africa after a two centuries of exploitative colonialism. Resentment against colonial rule was at its peak and any western theory of development was seen as a ploy by the neo-colonialist desperate attempt to surreptitiously usurp the hard-won. Hence there was significant distrust for western development thinking. The dependency offered a better option as justice and equity was intrinsic in the arguments of the theory. Again, unlike the modernisation theory that viewed development in gradual stages, the dependency incorporated revolutionary thoughts embedded in Marxist ideology. This fitted nicely in the decade of revolutionary leaders and coups in Africa.

Like other developing countries, development policy in Ghana was influenced by the dependency theory.

Under the National Redemption Council which metamorphose to Supreme Military Council I & II (Acheampong and Akuffo), a 5-year development plan was initiated in 1972 with the aim of building an independent national economy, firmly structured on the

resource potentials of our land and the culture of our peoples in the context of the stated Government principle of Self-Reliance (Supreme Military Council 1975; Supreme Military Council 1979). This was to be achieved by capturing of the commanding heights of the economy by Ghanaians and ultimate independence from foreign domination. This aim is consistent with dependency theory argument that developing countries' economies must strive to be self-reliant if they desire to develop. In line with Frank's arguments, the plan also aimed at "minimising the strangulation hold of the balance of payments constraint (by foreign interests) on the national economic and social reconstruction effort" (Supreme Military Council 1975, p.26). The plan further sort to redistribute incomes and inject equity in access to opportunities to all which hitherto was enjoyed by the "already privileged and well-off minority" (Supreme Military Council 1975, p.26). This social justice principle was intrinsic in the dependency theory.

The five-year development plan concentrated on agricultural development, strengthening the industrial base and self-reliance based on domestic resources (Nsiah-Gyabaah, 1998).

Rural development was given priority in an attempt reverse the urban-biased public investments through a National Rural Development Programme. Over 25% of the budget for the development plan was allocated to the agricultural sector while Rural Banks were introduced provide credit to expand opportunity in rural areas (Nsiah-Gyabaah, 1998). Contextually, the shift in Ghana's national development paradigm coincided with the period when dependency theory was at its peak. I, therefore, argue that Ghana's development policy was influenced by the prevailing development thinking at that time.

Rural productivity crucial to the Operation Feed Yourself Campaign, the raising of productivity through the use of a more effective research and extension service. A Cheap Food policy was pursued to increase output per farmer with the aim of feeding all people at reasonable prices. People easily identified with the policies of the government. The achievement of the Acheampong agricultural policy demonstrates that development policy only works when political commitment is met with the consensual support of the rural dwellers.

Unlike the Nkrumah plan which emphasised industrialisation as the driver of rural agriculture, the Acheampong plan took a contrary view. Agriculture development was rather seen as a precondition for industrial development. There was a major policy shift in financing rural agriculture with the creation of rural community banks with the core mandate of financing smallholder farmers in Ghana. Commercial Banks were also required by law to lend 20% of their portfolio to the agricultural sector (Mann et al, 2010). The *Operation Feed Yourself* and *Operation Feed Your Industry* were largely successful as it increased output per farmer,

introduced new technology, agriculture recorded impressive growth of 4.1 per annum with food crops recording 4.6% growth between 1972-1975 (Supreme Military Council 1975). Ghana became food sufficient significantly degrading her dependence on importation of food from the metropolitan countries. These policy orientations reflect the dependency theorist for the call for self-determination and weakening of ties with the developed if the developing countries such Ghana are to develop.

Following internal wrangling and accusation of corruption, the SMC regime was deposed in a coup in 1979 which brought into power the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) led by Flt. Lt. J.J. Rawlings. It also handed power to a civilian administration, the People's National Party (PNP) in 1971. The brevity of the two regimes makes policy discussion very limiting. Rawlings staged another coup in 1981 ousting the PNP government he handed over power to barely two years ago under a new guise Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC)

Even though initially not ideologically neutral, the PNDC regime later imbibed dependency theory in its policy guidelines. This explicit in the "Policy Guidelines of the Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC)" which states that:

The historical roots of our present state of underdevelopment stem from British Colonialism which bequeathed set pattern of economic development, social structures, attitudes and a parasitic state machinery. The retention of the structures of colonialism had assured the continued domination of our economy by foreign financial interests, with the attendant losses of the country's resources and hard earned wealth in a new phase of colonialism, which has been aptly described as neo-colonialism (Ahiakpor 1985, pp.541-542).

The policy guide further asserts "Revolution to the direct task of achieving total economic independence by ensuring a fundamental break from the existing neo-colonial relations."

These commitments are clearly a heed to Gunder Frank, Wallerstein and Prebisch's call that breaking ties with the developed core were a condition precedent for development.

The government blamed high prices on greedy market women who sort to rip off the poor. This rhetoric is consistent with dependency arguments that the concentric system of the world capitalist economy was self-serving at the expense of the satellite countries.

After two years of implementing dependency theory-inspired policies, poverty increased while agricultural production in rural areas declined significantly. Rural livelihoods were negatively affected as farmers were compelled to sell their produce well below the market price far less than the cost of production. Again, inputs

such fertilisers, seeds and basic tools were expensive to acquire (Ackah et al., 2010; Opoku, 2010). With the economy worsening, there was a major policy shift. The PNDC abandoned the revolutionary rhetoric of the dependency to embraced neoliberal and Western development prescription just as Nkrumah adopted modernisation approach to development.

By 1983, the PNDC reversed its earlier disdain for foreign investment in Ghana. It was now government top priority to persuade foreign investors with tax holidays and other economic benefits.

The then finance secretary (Dr Botchwey) is quoted (as quoted in Ahiakpor, 1985):

Ghana will actively encourage direct foreign investment ... investors will not be frustrated when the time comes to transfer their profits and dividends to their shareholders overseas.... (Ahiakpor 1985, p.549)

This is treacherous to dependency doctrine earlier espoused by the same regime.

The policy change by the PNDC regime ushered a new face to rural development policy. This is the subject of the next section.

Structural adjustment and rural development

Import substitution and protectionist policies in the 1960s and 1970s resulted in high inflation, a weak currency and the high cost of agricultural inputs. Low prices of primary export products further accelerated the decline of the agricultural and mining sectors which are the backbone of rural economies. It was against this background that the Rawlings' PNDC abandoned the protectionist policy to which it earlier ascribed to for a World Bank/IMF-engineered structural adjustment programme (SAP). The SAPs sought to reverse the downward spiral of the national economies, revive the agricultural sector by injecting fiscal discipline while removing government interference in the market. The primary sector including mining and agriculture were to lead the recovery process. Ghana was to exploit its comparative advantage in cocoa and gold production by liberalising Agricultural led growth was viewed as a most effective means It was argued that the market forces will

It was believed that Ghana could recover from the declining growth and development by leveraging its comparative advantage in the primary sector. Modernising mining and agricultural sectors to increase output were to lead the way. Efforts were hence made to diversify the agricultural sector towards the production of goods with the highest comparative advantage as opposed to goods with perceived declining economic value. Cash crop crops such as cocoa, rubber, pineapple and coffee empathised to the neglect of food crop production. Consequently, areas which support the physical conditions supported the production of these crops attracted investments such as roads, schools and

health posts. To inject efficiency, government interference in production was limited to implementing an enabling policy that creates an open economy where the forces of demand interact freely. According to proponents of liberalisation, agricultural production and productivity will increase if the government limited itself to just the provision of basic infrastructure and legal environment the encouraged private sector participation.

The programme assumed that increase in output will automatically translate into better living standards and overall development. Even though the export sector expanded by the 1990s inequality between rural and urban areas increased. The growth was not inclusive and the fundamental assumption of the SAPs ignored the multidimensional complexity of development. Urban-based institutional structures sapped the profits which may have proceeded from the expansion of exports. The recovery of the economy was at the expense of the rural environment and livelihoods. As characteristic of World Bank/IMF recovery programmes, it emphasised economic growth driven by the mining and cash crop sectors which employ a relatively small section of the rural labour force.

Decentralisation and rural development in Ghana

Even though decentralisation had begun by the late 1980s, pseudo-political and fiscal decentralisation concentrated power and resources in the hands of powerful urban elite who recently returned to rural districts. The policy assumption of decentralisation was that there is a direct and automatic relationship between decentralisation and economic development. However, this assumption proved flawed. Participation in decision making, resource allocation and provision of public services were not fully achieved as had envisaged. Consequently, the decentralised structure instead empowering people to take control of resources and their allocation for local development became extractive and out of sync rather than inclusive. The most powerful elements within the local structure are central government appointee who owes an upward allegiance to central government rather than a downward accountability to local people. For instance in integrated rural development projects were initiated in the late 1970s and mid-1980s key among which are the Northern Integrated Rural Development Programme (NORRIP), Upper Region Rural Development Programme (URRADEP) and the Volta Region Rural Development Programme (VORADEP). It was envisioned that the projects will be locally driven and externally funded. However, by the 1990s none of these projects achieved its aim of increasing output of farmers. The existing power structure, institutional pride and conflicts amongst state departments and agencies crippled these initiatives. Decentralisation in Ghana has therefore reinforced the

role of rural areas as the “hewers of wood for the warmth” of the urban areas. However, some progress in poverty reduction can be attributed to decentralisation. According to Yankson (2008), access to social services and infrastructure has improved in the Gomoa District albeit modestly.

Land reform

By the late 1990s, sections of the development community started linking Africa’s underdevelopment to how land is acquired and distributed. It was argued that the fragmented and complex nature land tenure in Africa exudes insecurity and is, therefore, a great impediment to sustained economic development. Land reform was therefore initiated with the creation of the National Land Policy of Ghana (NLP), to ‘undertake tenurial reform process, which documents and recognises the registration and classification of titles and speed up title registration to cover all lands throughout Ghana’ (Ministry of Lands and Forestry, 1999). The vision of the policy is to strengthen individual land ownership rights and make interests in land easily tradable (Obeng-odoom 2012; Ubink & Amanor 2008; Yaro & Tsikata 2013). Under a World Bank grant, the Land Administration Project (LAP) was initiated to shape and streamline the harmonisation of land policies and institutional changes that encourage private individual ownership.

Despite these efforts at reforming land in Ghana, studies (examples Whitehead & Tsikata, 2003; Whitehead, 2002; Wiggins, 2009) reports that land tenure security has not improved. This has a negative implication for long-term agricultural productivity.

CONCLUSION

Development policy in Ghana has evolved and is still evolving. It largely mirrors the global changes shifts and trends in development thinking albeit with limited local variations as has been discussed above.

Over the last half century, rural development policy in Ghana has been initiated and shaped by agents outside of the rural space. Development has been planned for them instead of with them with the assumption that they are passive agents who are incapable of leading the course of transformation. The few projects with local participation were either ill-conceived or were largely controlled by external agents. This flawed assumption has served the interest of some “development experts” domicile in urban centres with little true knowledge of the development challenges of the rural people.

Developing rural areas remains critical to the socio-economic transformation of Ghana as it engenders further growth in other sectors of the national economy.

Past approaches to rural development have made little impacts or at best it has been like mending broken walls with stitches. A bold new strand of strategies that target the human resource capabilities, which gives priority to education and health, that gives people a sense of dignity should be the new focus of rural development approach in Ghana. This new approach must be comprehensive and ambitious enough to trigger self-propelling efforts to break out from the yolk of poverty in rural Ghana.

Sustainable rural development cannot be achieved without targeting education, health and infrastructure development. An ambitious mass education strategies spearheaded by the State is central if this is to be achieved. Rural education encourages innovation, good health, diversifies livelihoods options, and transforms the rural mindset from viewing economic activities as a way of life to a business venture. Educated farmers are most likely to transfer knowledge and innovate to improve productivity as compared to uneducated farmers. To achieve this, however, it requires a dedicated political will powerful and compelling to move resources, transfer technology and trained human capability to rural areas.

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