UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

EXPLORATORY STUDY OF THE ROLES OF TRADITIONAL LEADERS IN COMMUNITY COMMITMENTS AND ENGAGEMENT IN ASUTIFI NORTH DISTRICT

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DECLARATION

STUDENT'S DECLARATION

I, ERIC ANTWI, declare that this dissertation, with the exception of quotations and references contained in published works which have all been identified and duly acknowledged, is entirely my own original work, and it has not been submitted, either in part or whole, for another degree elsewhere.

SIGNATURE:……

DATE:……

SUPERVISOR'S DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of this work was supervised in accordance with guidelines for supervision of dissertation as laid down by the University of Education, Winneba.

SUPERVISOR'S NAME: DR. SAMUEL ASARE AMOAH

SIGNATURE:……

DATE:…….

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DEDICATION

To my uncle, Barimah Twereku Ampem III, my children; Marianne, Angela, Nana Owusu Antwi and Afia Amponsah and my lovely wife Mrs. Emelia Antwi.

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ABSTRACT

The study focused on the roles of the traditional leaders in Ntotroso paramountcy of the Asutifi North District to ensuring community commitment and how they can continuously engage themselves. As a case study design that used qualitative approach, a sample size of four participants was selected using the purposive and theoretical sampling techniques. The purpose of the study was to examine the possibility of helping communities to engage themselves to enhance development. The study used interview and reflective dialogue as data collection tools to get information from the study. Data collected were analysed thematically. Major findings that came out strongly included, the emphasis placed on the use of cultural norms during discussions. Again, the prominence of multiple ideas gave better understanding on issues which the participants gained. In addition, discussions focused on how deep thinking processes influenced members' contributions. The presence of a facilitator issue made discussion organisations effective. For better understanding of issues, participants' expert knowledge and prior experiences were crucial to bring about the development of positive attitude towards engaging with the kind of exchanges. These contributed to the reflective conversations. It was therefore recommended that, in-depth knowledge and role definitions during any collaborative activity need to be defined well by the paramountcy in such interactions within the study area.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background to the Study

Individuals grow professionally through developmental process in order to meet the demands of changing educational systems. Across nations, both developed and developing countries, there have been radical attempts over the past thirty years, to change the ways individuals perform in the environments. In England and Wales, for example, performance indicators and occupational standards were published in HMI, (1996), DfES (2001) and SEED (2002b) as a guide to monitor individuals' performance. In the USA, according to Lessman (2004), the Chicago accountability system in the neo-liberal time shows how efforts were made to change the individuals. In Ghana for instance, to keep to international standards, the education ministry has in many times collaborated with institutions from the communities (Marsick, developed countries like Leeds University, University of South Florida to organised programmes to update participants' performances.

The unique processes initiated, based on demands and challenges of the nations, differ. For instance demands from Australia, New Zealand, Europe and USA may be different from demands by African states (Day & Sach, 2004). Even though efforts put in by nations and to change the participants end with some benefits, the accompanying challenges have called for continuous research for ways to make participants more effective.

Attempts made have seen some tremendous improvement through changes in policy and social context through community support tend to change the shift in what counts as legitimate knowledge (Gewirtz, 2009). In addition, large numbers of people are actively yearning for something that gives those concrete policies and practices that

will enable them to actually act practically in their own institutions that are being imposed on them (Lauriala & Kaasila, 2010). This idea is reinforced by the fact that problems of learning are solved locally by community members and their & Watkins (1990).). Even though there are efforts put in place towards working hard to maintain quality in education through community development, inadequacies normally found are due to the fact that, education is dynamic and a professional field (Guskey, 2000), hence there is the need professionals need to be proactive in their dealings, in order to support the changing trends.

On the contrary, developing an effective community, worldwide is characterised by many challenges. Continuous and multi-directional concerns are raised about individuals output. The concerns here relates to standards, ethics, 'doing one's job well' and discourses that produces a particular performance. The concerns come from educators, governments, parents, participants and students, worldwide since the time of the Greeks (Guskey, 2000). For example Black and Williams (1998b cited in Gallimore & Stigler, 2003) raises concern about the gap between what is expected and what is exhibited by community members. Governments want to improve national economic performances by increasing overall educational achievement (Bell & Gilbert, 1996). Parents, guardians also want individuals to be able to prepare their young ones more effectively for adult life. These complex concerns seemed to be linked to: first of all, the tensions created as a result of which reigns supreme; secondly, the varied interpretations given to what support one can give to change challenges facing community development due to the rapid global technological changes. These have therefore, placed unprecedented demands, in both the developed and developing countries, hence the use of radical methods to change society with the involvement of traditional leaders in Ghana.

The combination of theory and practice of development has been a major challenge which traditional leaders and the community are battling with. Opinion is divided about which needs to be strengthened. One school of thought is of the view that, managing community development rests on the shoulders of traditional leaders and for that matter, acquisition of skills is supreme and subservient in community interactions.

The 'tension' or 'argument' has given rise to the difficulty in explaining community change. This has resulted in situations where traditional rulers take radical positions when it comes to finding ways to make community change their practices. A varied explanation to community change makes it a complex and many-sided (multifaceted) phenomenon. For example, Boyle, Borg, Falzon and Baglioni (2004) explain it as continual deepening of knowledge and skills. Lauriala and Kaasila (2010) think individuals are assumed to change through acting and interacting in professionally relevant learning communities. Penlington (cited in Lauriala & Kaasila, 2010) also believes that community change centres on the idea that by talking with colleagues is more able to access and alter the subjective substratum that has being modeled variously as beliefs, emotions, personal theories, identity and personal practical knowledge that underpin and shape practice. Guskey (2000) also thinks that if there is a shift from 'cynical' to 'skeptical' in ones' beliefs, attitudes and perceptions, change has occurred. He went on to say that changes in attitude and beliefs are likely to spur additional changes in practices that bring further changes. Gallagher et. al. (2009) also think that individual change connotes when new ideas and participants about interactions are believed to be true by colleagues 'when they give rise to actions that work'. What is worth signaling here is that, participants change is growth, where participants are assumed to change (and learn) through acting and interacting in professionally relevant

processes. Explaining growth, Day (2004) talked about it as involving learning which is sometimes natural and evolutionary, sometimes opportunistic and sometimes the result of planning.

The rapid changes in the world due to technological complexity have also contributed to the debate about what community change means. These global changes have affected the demographic, economic, cultural and historical dimensions of nations. This is captured in the following by OECD:

> *We heard much about lowering of social esteem, unjust criticism by politicians, increasing burden and worsening working conditions…. [but] there is some evidence that individuals psychological concerns are connected not so much with excursive situational demands but rather with the intensification of demands in the sense of forced decision-making and the pressure for actions …and [this situations] enhances a subjective feeling of being powerless (OCED, 2004)*

These irrepressible challenges have necessitated varied radical changes and renewal to learning (UNESCO Publications, 2000). Individuals are therefore experiencing widespread uneasiness, crisis of identity, deteriorating of self-image as described from public opinion as well as the weakened trust of peers and their families (Jones, 2009; Lauriala & Kaasila, 2010).

Traditional leaders' roles as custodians of change process have been challenged and community position is now threatened, resulting in abandoning some of their roles in terms of what they need and its relevance to their livelihood. This means, people need to live up to expectations so that, issue of control becomes certain because:

> *Both individuals and countries benefit from education. For individuals, the potential benefits lay in general quality of life and in the economic returns of sustained, satisfying employment. For countries, the potential benefits lie in economic growth and the development of shared values that underpin social cohesion (OECD, 2004).*

The challenges demand strategies to develop and sustain quality in the development of the community. To ensure quality and to make the individual versatile and effective depends on the development of a potential and sustainable change mechanism. The mechanism should be related to learning opportunities, designed to provide consistent coherent interaction at all levels whilst simultaneously meeting individuals' diverse individual needs (Young & Cates, 2010; Guskey, 2000; Fullan et al., 1990).

Statement of the Problem

Opportunistic mechanisms are what are used to facilitate community change due to its multifaceted nature. Attempts made by experts to explain change have been done based on perspectives. For instance, Reio (cited in Young & Cates, 2010) thinks that emotional experiences are crucial in talking about community change processes, because during the change process risk taking is very crucial. Hence, the creation of enabling environment is crucial since change creates environment of uncertainties. Johnson and Johnson (2000) also believe that motivation, commitment, and expectations are issues that greatly influence participants change, hence such need special attention when engaging in activities calling for individual's change. Lauriala and Kaasila (2010), on the other hand, based their studies on models emphasizing psychological view of community change as useful, but inadequate by themselves to

explain participants'change, hence they extended their views to cover cultural and situational factors and processes of social interactions. Rarieya (2005) developed the models focusing on the how emotional experiences influence risk taking.

Notwithstanding the complex nature of community development, activities in contemporary times have seen some significant changes. Kaasila and Lauriala (2010) using the integrationist model of change indicated that roles, statuses, expectations and social norms are useful tools to conceptualize the process of change. It is worthy of notice that these change activities worked within a context and it could be concluded that the potentials of all these models can be realised within such contexts.

Contemporary approaches are now emphasizing on, what Jimoh Shehu (2009) and a host of others are calling for, the strengthening of collaborative approaches to develop a culture of collegiality, continuous inquiry and community of learners that will foster insightful environment practices informed by diverse experiences, perspectives, shared vision and dialogic interpretations.

This is vital because Sylvia Downs (2008) have stated that;

> *The need for continuous change in order to survive is widely recognised. Individuals have an important role in both promoting and encouraging change, one essential element of which is the development of people. This in turn depends largely on an encouragement and practice of active learning. But the job of manager, trainer, or participant is not to drive people to learn but rather to promote the climate in which learner-driven learning can thrive. In these circumstances the learner can deal with change rather than meet it haplessly.*

Another area which is gaining much attention is the social setting, support systems and the personalities involved in the setting. Guskey (2000) has indicated that among other factors, the influence of culture of the organizations and the people involved, prior knowledge, rewards and motivation, commitments of the individuals, resources and support are very crucial in any change processes. In addition Johnson and Johnson (2000), Wenger and Lave (2005), Gallimore and Stigler (2003) are advocating in an addition, learning communities, colleagues interaction process and continuous inquiry characteristics because they are in contemporary terms engine of growth in any learning and educational organization.

On support systems recent change activities focus on constructive and reflective learning (Sherin, Linsenmeier, & van Es, 2006; Manen, 1995; Zeichner, 1996) which emphasizes collaboration and reflection on participants' activities using multiple discussion episodes (Moore & Stigler, 2003). For the process to be continuous, systematic and diversified, it requires a mechanism that could store as well as retrieve actions for further reanalysis.

The foregoing picture given by experts seemed gloomy; however, change activities have their limitations. Mostly, communities' control on what needs to be done is paramount. Implementers mostly are removed from specific problems of the environment, for instance due to technological changes, policies call for reforms that are promulgated with little input (Jones, 2009). Other issues like making individual take control with little facilitation over their own change, identifying context specific problems and with the help of their colleague dialogue and try to find appropriate solution to the identified problems have been some problems.

Key issues associated with community change taking control of their development is how the context seemed to influence the level of reflectivity, level of

openness, willingness to share values, sustaining the process and assumptions in-depth (Hargreaves & Reynolds, 2004). Individuals involved should have the choice due to ethical reasons as there is the need for minimal self-disclosure as well as freedom to express views (Fook & Gardner, 2007). But sustaining the process is very crucial because change through commitment have the necessary outcome; a model developed should systematically construct opportunities to learn (Wilson & Berne, 1999). Again identifying stages and encouraging participants to move through the stages is very crucial if community members are to observe their abilities to modify their thinking (Gallimore & Stigler, 2003).

In view of the above, the question is on practical terms, can a model be developed that will be context-driven, developmental in nature, systematic and sustained, to make participants' involvement voluntary and feel free to explore and provide the necessary tools to support traditional leaders infuse the need for providing leadership process towards supporting individuals to succeed academically?

The accumulated wisdom of research knowledge is not itself sufficient to explain the shift towards more collaborative forms of community development is a lever for change. Other factors, too, are playing an important part in the particular formation and functioning of collaborative developmental exercises. These factors do not merely foster collaboration in the abstract, but concoct it in particular forms for particular purposes that merit careful inspection. This study therefore seeks to unravel how effective community participation can support effective interaction on the roles of traditional leaders in community commitments and engagement in Ntotroso paramountcy in the Asutifi North District of the Brong Ahafo Region of Ghana.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to examine the possibility of helping communities to engage themselves to help develop communities in Ghana with the aim of enhancing understanding of the problem and the key issues affecting communities change in the Ntotroso paramountcy in the Asutifi North District.

Objectives for the Study

The following are objectives that guided the study:

1. To identify individual characteristics that support effective reflective and collaborative activities.
2. To explore the structure of interactions that supports the community interactions.
3. To find out how committed individuals are when dialoguing on chieftaincy issues.
4. Identify characteristics of individuals and it influence the commitment they have when dialoguing on chieftaincy issues

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. How does individual's personal identities and attitudes within the chieftaincy setup support effective reflective and collaborative activities among traditional leaders in Asutifi North District?
2. What discussions structure of interactions support the community to be effective in their interaction in Asutifi North District?

3. How committed are individuals when dialoguing on chieftaincy issues in Asutifi North District?
4. What is the form of interactions within communities in resolving challenges in Asutifi North District?

Significance of the Study

Numerous concerns about the need for traditional rulers to support change in Ghana has been raised. The concerns are mostly from community members, government officials, parents, educators, the media calls for adequate investigation to identify a model that will serve the Ghanaian traditional leaders.

Notwithstanding the knowledge creation and awareness that are promoted using reflective dialogue, it enhances the process of unsettling thinking, the fundamental assumptions about practices, which will allow unearthing implicit assumptions which hallow for comparisons and those socially dominant which may restrict practice (Fook & Gadner, 2007). The systematic procedure ensured practices are replicated daily which will influence their articulation, developing and researching their own practices.

The outcome of the exploration will give insight to how communities can develop professionally using skills already acquired through cultural dimensions and peers so as to prevent the ad-hoc and uncoordinated nature of decision making in Ghanaian communities.

The study could also influence the belief in its readers that, with appropriate support from objective critique an understanding will be created to accelerate community development. Given the fact that there was the need for the use of reflective and collaborative practices to be introduced nationally in communities, an understanding of the nature of individuals' reflective and collaborative practices could

aid the development of a model in communities. This would introduce, sensitize, train and encourage planners, to incorporate elements of reflective and collaborative practices.

However, it is my hope that, by making the research report available to the community who are responsible for developing of their environment, it could act as a catalyst in ensuring that innovations are actually needed to help manage the complex nature of our communities. Alternatively, at the very least it could raise curiosity regarding community leaders' reflective practices.

Delimitation of the Study

It would have been the wish of the researcher to cover the whole of Asutifi North District which has three paramountcies. However due to the nature and the extent that in-depth understanding was to be developed, the study was limited to the paramouncy of Ntotroso. Ntotroso is located in the Brong Ahafo region of Ghana, it is approximately 40 kilometers northwest of Sunyani the capital town.

Limitations of the Study

In a study that uses humans and their attitude towards others, individual's reactions to others views are normally determined by the one's dispositions. Within the interactions, it was difficult to determine how the participants internally analysed issues before coming out to react to others views. The subjective ways individuals analysed issues had an influence on the results of the study.

Even though results from the study have been reported in English, during the interactions, the medium of interaction was mostly in the Twi language. The transcription could have been influenced as some of the issues may have been

literally translated and thus might have influenced the results. The selection of the participants which was done with the support of the Odikro might have had some influence that led to bias in the selection.

Definition of Terms

Omanhene: The head of the paramountcy

Traditional Leaders: The sub-chiefs of the paramountcy

Opinion Leaders: Omanhene's inner circle and stakeholders at the paramountcy

Odikro: The caretaker of a community under paramountcy

Organization of the Study

The main body contains five chapters. The first chapter forms the introduction of the project work. This includes the background to the study, the statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, research questions and the significance of the study. The second chapter focuses on the Literature Review which was broken into subheadings. The third chapter contains the research design, sampling technique, procedure for data collection, the population, the sample, the instruments used for data collection, and data analysis scheme. Chapter Four presents the findings and discusses them and Chapter Five gives a summary of findings, draws conclusions and makes recommendations.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This chapter focuses on the traditional roles of chiefs, theoretical and empirical frame for the study. In addition, the following also were reviewed: peers and Views Sharing, reflective collaborative practices and cultural dimensions.

Chiefs and traditional authorities and their roles in the democratic order and governance

The Ghanaian chieftaincy institution was unchallenged and inherently democratic in its role as well as structure prior to the imposition of colonial rule in 1874. Addo-Fenning, (1997), traces the beginnings of the erosion of hitherto undisputed traditional authority, the birth and growth of corruption among chiefs and other traditional authorities, and the subsequent dependence of chiefs on the colonial government as a source of power. The role of education in replacing chieftaincy as the repository of wisdom, influence and reverence and the subsequent marginalization and resentment of the institution by natives is well argued.

Historical Significance of Chieftaincy

Chieftaincy, Ghana's most enduring socio-cultural institution, has borne and will continue to bear the thankless task of providing cohesion to underpin the nation-state since the Constitution alone would be unable to sustain the state. The point is well underscored in Edward Blyden's (1998 p. 12) warning that the soul of every race “finds expression in its [traditional] institutions” and that “no people can profit by or be helped under institutions which are not the outcome of their own.

Traditional governance in our country dates back at least five hundred years and the typical pre-colonial state or kingdom was deliberately organized into a decentralized political system for efficient administration. The state [Oman in Akan] structure was, as elsewhere, pyramidal comprising communities categorized according to size – hamlets, villages, towns and cities – and at the helm was the king or sovereign, called Omanhene in Akan. Each community had their own overlord or overseer, called Odikro or simply Ohene in Akan depending on size and influence.

The Chieftaincy Institution is one of the most important Cultural Institutions and Heritage of Ghana. The Institution is as old as the history of the country. Though it is one of the oldest Cultural Institutions and traditions of Ghana, it continues to play very significant and relevant roles in national development. The good news is that the Institution continues to survive the challenges and influences of the western values and practices. First and foremost, the Chieftaincy institution is not only limited to Ghana. It is practised in many other African countries. Though there are similarities, there are also differences in the structure, operations and functions of the Institution from one country to the other.

In South Africa for instance, the institution, status and role of indigenous leadership and institutions is recognised in section 212 of the South Africa, 1996 Constitution, which provides that–

"*(1) The institution, status and role of traditional leadership, according to customary law, are recognised, subject to the Constitution".*

(2) A traditional authority that observes a system of customary law may function subject to any applicable legislation and customs, which includes amendments to, or repeal of, that legislation or those customs.

(3) The courts must apply customary law when that law is applicable,

subject to the Constitution and any legislation that specifically deals with customary law."

The Place/Position of Chieftaincy in Ghana

The National Constitution of 1992 recognises the institution of chieftaincy in Ghana; as one of the best means of projecting and promoting our Culture and Heritage. The Chieftaincy Institution in Ghana is enshrined in is the fourth republican Constitution of 1992. Article 270(1) of the1992 Constitution of Ghana clearly states that the Institution of Chieftaincy, together with its Traditional Councils as established by customary law and usage is hereby guaranteed.

According to the Chieftaincy Act 795(2008), a chief means a person who hailing from the appropriate family and lineage has been validly nominated, elected or selected and enstooled, enskinned or installed as a chief or Queenmother in accordance with the relevant customary law and usage.

The categories of Chiefs as stated in section 58 of the Chieftaincy Act 759 are:

- The Asantehene and paramount Chiefs
- Divisional Chiefs
- Sub-divisional Chiefs
- Adikrofo
- other Chiefs recognized by the National House of Chiefs

A person does not qualify to be a chief if that person has been convicted of high treason, treason, high crime or for an offence involving the security of the state, fraud, dishonesty, or moral turpitude. Article 276(1) of the Constitution and Section 57(3) of the Chieftaincy Act (2008) state that, a Chief shall not take part in active party politics. This is because Chiefs are supposed to be above reproach. They are the custodians of

our Culture and Heritage. They play the fatherly figure role for all members in the community. They are therefore supposed to be politically neutral and see to it that there is peace, unity and understanding in their traditional areas. The Chieftaincy Institution is a noble and revered one. Chiefs have different titles in Ghana which reflect the geographical location of the chief. In the Volta region, the most popular name (title) is Togbe (which also means an elderly man). In the Akan speaking territories, the most common one is Nana (Chief) Ohemmaa (Queen-mother). The people of Ga origin call their Chief "Nii". There are other titles. The Asantehene for instance is His Royal Highness.

The Changing Face of Chieftaincy

It is absurd for anyone to think, or even conjecture the thought, that chieftaincy is anachronistic and irrelevant in public affairs and, thus, must be done away with. Indeed, every Ghanaian is initiated into their culture at birth by customary naming and ushered into the world beyond, again, by customary farewell, never mind the increasing inclusion of contemporary religious rituals. It is worthy of notice that, chieftaincy is the embodiment of the cultural and customary essence of the life of the people and that destroying one is destroying the other.

Interestingly, democratic governance in Ghana, in all ramifications, draws its strength from the traditional governance structure and it is fair to say that national politics would not be as tolerant were it not for the effective and impartial handling of the people by chiefs, especially when one considers the stabilizing role they play during elections. There is no gainsaying the fact that from community to community, the authority of chiefs continues to be more revered, not feared, and their views and directives are more likely to be implemented than that of government. The Institute of Economic Affairs (2010)

Traditional Courts

The limitation of the traditional court is known and it is also a fact that the modern law and judicial system has failed to deliver justice in many ways to the people. It is imperative if the hybrid that would see traditional courts and jurisprudence becoming an effective first port of call for civil disputes between individuals and families is instituted (IEA, 2010).

The Roles of Traditional Leadership

Chiefs perform various functions; culturally, they symbolize the Culture and Heritage of the people often projected at festivals. Politically, they are the traditional heads and authority in their traditional areas. They see to the peace and unity of their people. They also exercise executive, legislative and judicial powers since pre-colonial times. Chiefs also see to it that there are development projects in their areas for the benefit of their subjects.

Spiritual Roles of a Chief during Dialogue

The spiritual role of a chief involves both esoteric and open-door activities. The chief is the spiritual link between the living and the dead especially his late royal ancestors. The reigning chief pours libation and uses the libation as a means of communication to reach the dead. Ancestors who at best are described as the living – dead "because our oral tradition tells us that, physically they are dead and buried, their spirit keep presiding over meetings and could influence decisions. Before, the declaration of war or peace, they are consulted through libation and their remarks are interpreted to the chief (enquirer) and the people. As a human being is made up of the physical tangible body, it is part of our spiritual history that, though dead, they exist in spirit and can endorse or cancel our decisions.

Economic Role of a Chief

The chief has an economic role to play to better the lives of his subjects. He always admonishes hard work, toil and labour to make a living as lazy people are always a liability. The chief acts as a focal point of social mobilization, leading the people to farm, does business to drive away poverty which is a bane to societal development. In the olden days the chief could summon the whole community to assist him on his farm, displaying an example of leadership through hard work for the people to emulate. It used to be an offence for one to refuse to attend the chief's call for work. A leading and enterprising chief could offer land to be used to grow crops and the proceeds harvested to generate monies for the overall development of his community.

Military Role of a Chief

The chief cannot be left out. As the primes, he declares war or peace. To ensure the survival and defense of the community, as a chief must be brave and visionary. These qualities are looked out for among competitors before one royal emerges as the preferred and enstooled as a chief. The presence of the chief leading his army is a sign of inspiration that sparks courage, determination that lead to victory in wars and battles.

In the olden days, the exploits of a chief had been in terms of battles won, territorial expansion achieved and number of captives made subservient to his throne. In this the chiefs get accolades and titles of bravery such as: '*Okogyeabour*'(the one who attracts bullets during war),' *Osuodumgya'* (the rain that foils the power of gun powder),' *Okogyeaman'* (the one who conquers and captures state through war) etc.

Political Role of a Chief

The political role of a chief involves his entire leadership. Leadership is about managing, controlling people and assets .As a political leader ,the chief has always been

the "first citizen" All political decision, emanates from him after due diligence has been given to all consultation of his kingmakers. As a leader he demonstrates the will power to sustain the development of his community and will never give up even in the face of an uphill task. A case in point was King Prempeh I refusing to surrender the Great Golden Stool to the British, after the Asante Empire suffered a defeat in the Yaa Asantewaa War of 1900.

By a moral decision, the "Black Stool" is always older than the human occupant and must always be defended and protected even at the detriment of the occupants life, because occupants die, the Black Stool remain. Hence the Black Stools are always venerated and provides the names of succeeding chiefs. Losing the "Black Stool" meant, the annihilation of the community, and this sanctity of the Black Stools will never be compromised (Ahin, 1970).

Peers and Views Sharing

Ideas sharing depended on how individuals are coached. Coaching is essentially a method of transferring skill and expertise from more experienced and knowledgeable practitioners of such skill to less experienced ones supposed to be a peer. As a model of training, it relies on more than mere explanation or demonstration of the required skills that are to be learnt. Coaching, rather, consists of an intensive relationships process between coach and significant other(s), expert and novice, in which the coach works alongside others and engages in dialogue with him or her as the other attempts to practice and develop the newly acquired skills. As a form of training, coaching therefore has a highly practical focus, it is intensive and enduring in its application, and depends on the development of strong and trusting collegial relationship.

There are a number of different varieties of coaching among individuals. Garmston (1987) has helpfully identified and defined three different forms: technical coaching, collegial coaching, and challenge coaching. Technical coaching focuses on the learning and transfer of new skills and strategies into the existing repertoires of participants. Collegial coaching is directed more to the context of discussions and to the processes of self-reflection and professional dialogue among participants needed to improve practice and to alter the organizational context in such a way as to assist that improvement. *Challenge coaching* evolves from one of the other two models and addresses itself more to specific and persistent problems in instructional design and delivery which need attention. In this paper we will describe and critically assess the first and most widespread of these coaching alternatives, while retaining throughout an awareness of the comparative implications of the second.

The development of a workable model to ensure that good reflective practitioners exhibit good practices is crucial. Reasons for this are that, Cunningham (2001) admits that reflective individuals mostly observe and refine their practices on an ongoing basis. Reflective individuals again are very critical and speak out of their views on policies that are morally questionable, educationally unsound and professionally impracticable; secondly they continually revise and evaluate their own practice through critically analysing and evaluating their actions and share with others and finally they are open-minded and reflect upon their own assumptions, prejudices and ideologies before acting (Zeihner, 1996). This study thus, is located within the reflective and collaborative realm where the ideologies of the individuals have to, in an open-minded environ to deliberate on issues related to the chieftaincy context.

Gallimore and Stigler (2003) think that, there is the need to discuss individual cases, through reflection and collaboration. Contributing to this debate, Poplin (2003),

talks about being more effective in changing participants' practice when it is organised around collective participants. This is because multiple views can be shared as actions can be interpreted in countless ways. The above therefore form the background information that is calling for the use of a model that is underpinned by the participants of discussing episodes in a planned series of critical dialogue related to the environment.

A research in this can stimulate debate about the approaches that may make the most sense for achieving acceptable practices. Getting access to information to help with discussions rests on using appropriate device(s). Such an interface, video as against other prints, seemed appropriate because video have a special advantage of enabling detailed examination of complex activities from different points of view. If used in the environment, it preserves environment activity so it can be slowed down and viewed multiple times, by many people with different kinds of expertise, making possible detailed descriptions of many environment lessons in new ways (Gallimore & Stigler, 2003). In a nutshell, participants should be able to:

- analyse individuals practices continuously in the light of differentiated problems
- envisaging alternatives solutions
- recursively testing alternatives in any environment, reflecting on their effects and refining and re-behaviours until they are satisfied with the consequences. (Gallimore and Stigler, 2003). These ideas postulated by Gallimore and Stigler (2003) are what are encountered within the chieftaincy environ, where in the cause of deliberations, views are analysed, tested to refine and to develop behaviours that are accepted by the royals.

Developing Reflective Collaborative Interactions

The new trend commonly used to develop reflective collaborative exercises crucially revolve around the idea of 'reflexivity': The process whereby individuals, groups and organizations 'turn round' upon themselves, critically examine their rationales and values and, if necessary, deliberately reorder or reinvent their identities and structures provide innovative ways of doing things. Developing new ways due to reflection will support changes especially from modernity which is called *reflexive modernity*.

Modernity is a social, and its one's ability to become a person is dependent on the capacity to 'take the role of the other' and thus to share meanings with others, but the individual is also a creative constructor of society and an agent of social and psychological change in their own right. The self is also therefore thoroughly reflexive, in that all existing roles in institutions, structures and practices can be reflected upon by the individuals which inhabit them, and thereby acted upon by the self in accordance with its socially constituted interests and concerns.

Democratic Dispensation of Community

In the economic sphere, for example, new opportunities for autonomy and equality brought about by new production technologies and new organizational forms are high-lighted by those who regard the types of persons required by the 'new' economy as similar to those which one would expect to be produced in genuinely democratic educational institutions. In both contexts, Amoah (2002) claims that the aim would be to produce and reproduce citizens and workers who were involved in continuous growth and learning, who were adaptable and flexible, but also capable of seizing opportunities to develop their skills, to be creative and to take responsibility

for their own work, in a way which maximized the scope for self-regulation and personal autonomy, and minimized the need for constraints imposed by management.

In contemporary years social differentiation provides new hierarchical structure than one where the difference merely reflects diversity of occupation and lifestyle. Workers may need to have higher skills and to be more cognitively engaged than previously but they have for the most part less security and less opportunity for being 'critical'. Appeals to what Giddens (1991) describes as 'expert systems' (e.g medicine, science, psychology) will inevitably involve justifying choice of system from the many on offer, all with their competing truth claims. Some individuals will have more access to more information, but for everyone there is no longer any belief in the infallibility of expert systems and nothing is 'dead certain'. Yet such systems have to be 'trusted' and it is the capacity to develop appropriate forms of trust that the erosion of community undermines.

The Need for a New Professionalism

Given these new conditions, we might conceive of the new professionalism as contributing to the construction of a social and moral order which accommodates the more desirable aspects of 'new times' while countering those forces which produced inequality and fragmentation. As we know from the history of modern western society, this would not be the first time that the professions have been linked with the idea of social improvement. One of the great analysts of modern society, Emile Durkheim, was the first to see that the professions could be a positive moral force in society, acting as a bulwark against economic individualism and an authoritarian state. He envisaged the moral communities established by professionals acting as an alternative source of solidarity in an era where the old ties of the traditional

moral order had broken down. In England, this theme was taken up by the Fabian left and social democrats, for example, Tawney and Marshall, (cited in Amoah, 2011) who regarded professionals as a source of stability and democracy in a changing world. Their expertise would be used in the creation of a workable welfare state, with services delivered according to objectively defined needs and in a way that would free citizens from their dependence on state and industrial bureaucracies, as well as the market.

One of the main differences between then and now is that, in the current period, the knowledge base of professionals, the source of their previously much valued expertise, has become less secure. From an epistemological viewpoint, there have been changes in the way we typically understand the nature of knowledge and what it means to know. Professionals can no longer claim that their knowledge is a theory-free, unbiased and objective source of expertise; like all knowledge, it is located within a paradigm or 'language game' which has its own discourse rules and truth criteria, and which provides one of a number of possible vantage points from which to describe and explain the 'world'. Thus, there can be no knowledge claims which are uncontestable. However, the problematic nature of professional knowledge is intertwined with another difference in the present context—the lack of trust in professionals which stems, in part, from the critique of the traditional knowledge base but is also linked to criticisms of how professionals have operated in practice. Professionals are alleged to have engaged in monopolistic practices and, far from being anti-bureaucratic, are themselves an intrinsic part of bureaucratic mechanisms. Sociologists like Weber linked professionalization with bureaucratization and saw both as reflecting the rationalization of society. As Wright and Johnson (2000) point out,

. . . the continued expansion of professional numbers and the

> *professionalization of occupations were seen .... not as a desired expansion of the learned and liberal profession dedicated to service, stability and democracy, but as an explosion of experts and technocrats—men of narrow specialism and narrower vision.*

This view makes it imperative to try to locate the understanding and the use of reflection and collaboration to develop deep thinking within the Ghanaian traditional leadership styles of engaging significant others to develop a system that can foster better understanding of issues for development. Thus, a system needs to be evolved to support these traditional leaders to seek the mandate of the people around them when decisions are to be made in the interest of the people.

The Leadership Commitment

To be a committed leader, one could function in terms of morality, be autonomous and develop powers in ways that will be helpful to society. Without autonomy, they could not experiment or explore different approaches to the production and reproduction of democratic moral communities in new social conditions, since their own capacities for creativity and moral choice would be restricted. Leadership process thrives on reflections for the emergence of renewed moral identity. Like other occupations, occupational restructuring has been justified in terms of the need to provide a more flexible workforce, one that can more readily adapt to change but also, from a management viewpoint, one that can be more easily maintained to meet aspirations of the inhabitant.

Leadership commitments as echoed by Amoah (2011), bring with it an

enhanced role for opinion leaders, who are more instrumental through 'new order' to bring about change. Opinion leaders, as Amoah (2011) posited, are accountable to the authority to which they work for to ensure that their communities are geared up to any task; flexible enough to be responsive to reporting to the people what is required in changing environmental conditions, and more efficient thanks to the 'fine tuning' of ideas made possible by the localization (Gewirtz et al., 2009). The control exerted on traditional leaders is thus not operated by a distant state but by a local management, namely the opinion leader who derives his legitimacy through appeals to the impersonal forces of the environment.

Towards a Collaborative Culture of Commitment

Professional culture characterizes based on collaboration provide an enabling environment for communication (Hargreaves, 1994; Nixon et al., 1997). This explained characteristics permeate the Ghanaian cultural environment (Mensah, 2006). For Hargreaves, collaboration is a kind of metaparadigm for what he describes as the 'postmodern age'. It is a strategy for coping with the rapid pace of change and the acceleration of paradigm shifts which are bound to occur in education and indeed in all areas of social life in 'new times'. From the above arguments, problems can only be resolved by the use of shared knowledge constructed through dialogue between individuals within a particular context rather than through the 'top–down' application of a universal, 'objective' professional expertise as suggested by Mensah (2006) and tends to support 'an increased capacity for reflection' (Hargreaves & Reynolds, 2004: 246). In effect feedback that encourages individuals to reflect on their own views can be achieved.

Collaboration in Practice

Amoah (2011) provides a persuasive account of the promise of collaborative cultures, but he is also aware of the dangers. Collaboration can be limited to the areas of cultural undertones and thus, foster complacency and reinforce, rather than radically change, existing practice. It can suppress individuality and lead to conformity and group thinks. It can be used as an administrative device which paradoxically can produce a situation where participants do not want to collaborate. It can be used as mechanism for co-opting opinion leaders and securing their compliance with various reforms of a dubious nature from a cultural viewpoint.

Collaboration cannot be democratic if it is merely a vehicle used by traditional leaders for increasing control over the people in the community. There is growing body of evidence that in many cultures (Amoah, 2011, 2012) collaboration supports the use of multiple views, deep thinking and managing cultural dimensions. Hence with the study at hand using collaboration can bring some salient and innovative ideas to support commitments and engagements.

The Shift for Structure to Culture

In this area of research there has been a shift in recent years from a preoccupation with community effectiveness to a concern with the practical implications of research on effectiveness for environment improvement strategies (Hopkins, 1995; Mortimore, 1991). This has been accompanied by a shift in emphasis from 'structure' to 'culture'. As Stoll and Fink (1996: 81) point out, whereas community effectiveness research has much to say about structures, strategies for improvement require a more detailed, understanding of the 'processes that goes through in its search for effectiveness'. An indispensable part of this understanding

involves getting involved with the culture of the people, with the norms and values and philosophy that guided policy; 'the rules of the game for getting along in the organization; and the feeling and climate conveyed in the organization' (p. 81); and at a deeper level, the shared assumptions and beliefs which operate often at an unconscious level and define an organization's taken-for-granted view of itself and its environment. This emphasis on 'culture' is evident in any successful practice.

The understanding here is in developing a culturally-sensitive strategy that can support and strengthen the use of the cultural tenets of the participants involved to explain behaviours of worldwide concern their development. In support, Song & Catapano (cited in Gallager, 2009) explain that people actively interpret the cultural issues that they meet in social contexts in ways that make sense to them and enabled them to make their interpretations on their own. This therefore requires aligning the process to the cultural disposition of the group participants who usually express their perspectives rooted in their values and beliefs (Kyekye, 1997; Owusu-Menash, 2006) as they interact. With this, one important question I asked myself was how, in terms of locus of control, could I develop a methodology that would put the participants' disposition at the central point of the research? This is borne out of the fact that the Ghanaian cultural tenets are underpinned by the 'communal spirit' where each one is the 'brother's keeper' (Amoah, 2011; Owusu-Menash, 2006; Kyekye, 1997). Again, views expressed on an action have its roots in the tradition enshrined in the culture. For example, within any interacting group, the oldest among the group and his/her ideas are given the utmost respect, and consensus building is the major activity and ultimate goal of the group as differences and conflicts arising from opinions expressed are quickly and amicably resolved. Such attitudes portray the affirmation culture of most African societies (Stephens, cited in Akyeampong, 1997) where attempts are made to 'minimize

points of disagreement and ...to harmonize possible conflicting perspectives'. With such cultural property, there is that belief that if such an idea is advanced it to the frontiers of a design as a springboard to develop a collaborative and reflective conversation culture, it will allow flexibility and interactivity to promote an effective trajectory when participants reflect. This in the end can promote rich and deep professional dialogue as envisaged in this study.

The Reflection Culture

It is generally recognized that in any developmental process, there is the need to develop a learning organizations and if this is to be achieved, individuals will have to become learners. Since change, in part, stems from the thoughts and actions of leaders, the development agenda of people in an environment is a crucial aspect of the process of improvement. The emerging paradigm of learning in any cultural improvement research has been largely derived from the tradition of action research in which the notion of individuals as reflective practitioner is a key element. For Elliot (2009), people develop their practice through reflection in two ways: (1) reflection initiates action, that is, when research on a particular problem results in a new understanding which requires a change in practice; and (2) action initiates reflection, that is, when an individual reflects on a change which is a response to a practical problem. Such research provides opportunities for collaboration as those involved get feedback from others on their researches. According to Stoll and Fink (1996), action research of this kind is only one among a number of strategies which help individuals to learn; others include the development of mentoring and coaching relationship, appraisal systems, shared decision making, team building, conflict-resolution skills and inter-personal effectiveness. The environment has a role to play in creating a climate of trust in which community members can help each other with their rich

practical experiences and where ongoing, self-initiated learning can flourish.

Disciplinary Power

In exploring the way power works in communities, the work of analysts like Foucault would appear to be particularly useful. For Foucault (1977), power in the modern age does not stem from one political centre but is exercised in institutions at innumerable points, resulting in the much closer control of individual behaviour required by the society in general. In order to understand how power works, therefore, we have to look closely at local networks of power relations in institutions like the chieftaincy rather than (or perhaps in addition to) interpreting social processes in terms of the 'grand narratives' of confrontations between the state and the people. As a strategy of control, modern power is not manifested globally but locally as 'micro-powers'. It operates through 'discipline' which involves the replacement of legal principles with the principle of physical, psychological and moral normality. The operation of *disciplinary power* gives rise to a new kind of bureaucracy, albeit one rooted in the same form of rationality, instrumental rationality. Power is wielded through 'normalization'. It is concerned with the bringing about of a certain kind of individual with certain kinds of characteristics. This new moral technology of bureaucratic control does not arise because people in modern societies are seen as individual agents but rather individual identity itself is a product of this new form of control. Some of the 'truths' about ourselves which we consider to be fundamental like our sexual natures, are also produced by this new regime of power. The fact that we accept that we have such a nature makes us objects of control.

Foucault's (1977) interpretation of modern power as having a particular kind of association with knowledge is in marked contrast to the conventional definitions of power and knowledge. According to the latter, there is a negative articulation

between power and knowledge: the former can disguise the way it operates to repress the individual, whereas knowledge or truth can expose this process and challenge it. For Foucault, the intellectual discipline and institutional control are dialectically related. Cultures, for example, are made possible and validated by knowledge from various discipline which are taught through practices; while institutional processes produce the kinds of individuals that can be 'known' by studying the discipline. The word 'discipline' is used in two senses: on the one hand as a branch of knowledge and on the other as a system of correction or control. In the same way as it does with the child, individual identities, giving them certain kinds of selves which can be readily managed and then proceeds to minister to the selves it has constructed. In this way, Foucault makes us skeptical of all claims to have transformed relations in institutions in a direction which is more democratic and power free. All differentiations (such as ways of categorizing children or organizing knowledge) are suspect, however benign they may appear at first sight. They will always involve the exercise of power. Even the differentiations participants make in understanding their own nature will potentially reflect the operations of power.

Traditional Process of Interaction

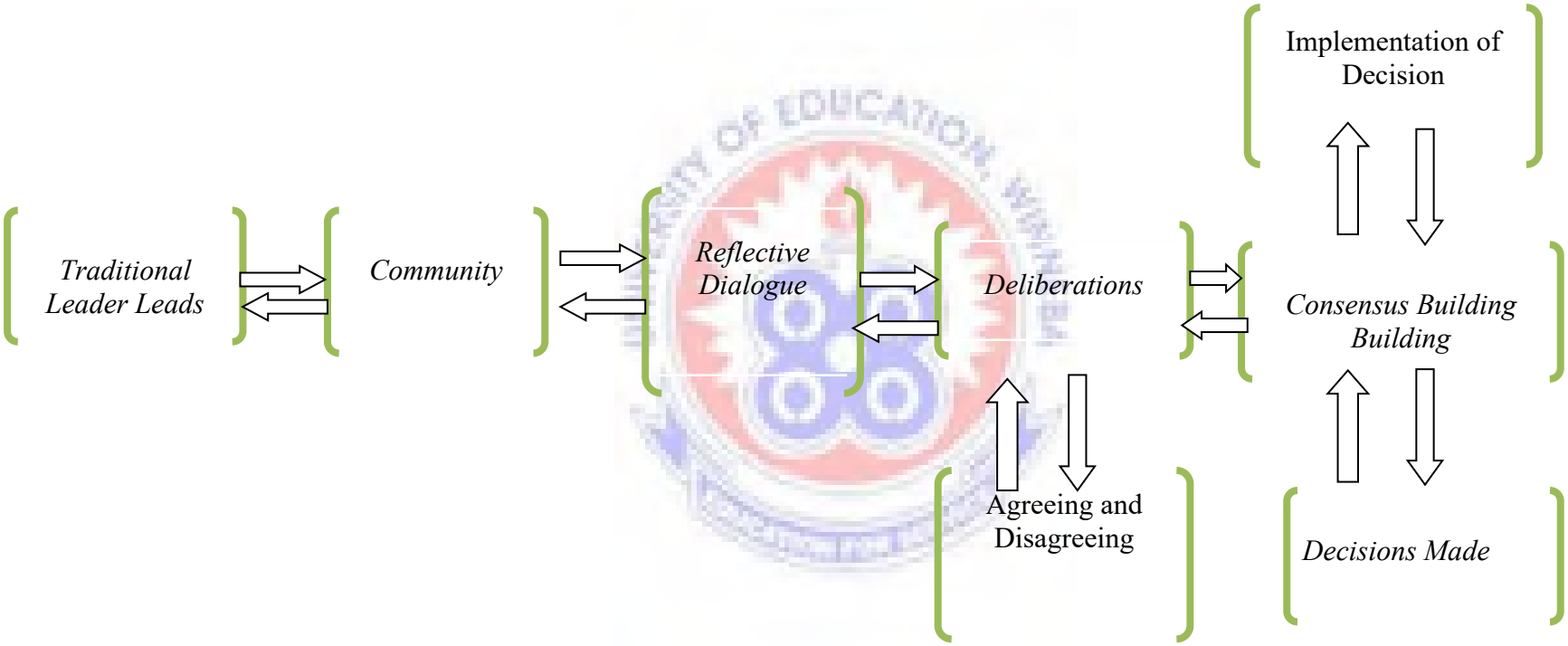

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework developed for Study

Source: Developed by researcher (2017)

From Figure 1, the discussion frame deals with the traditional leader interacting with the community through reflective dialogue. This interaction is about deliberation where agreeing and disagreeing is the focus of the discussions. From the deliberations consensus is arrived at where decisions are taken and implemented.

Summary

The literature focused on the roles being played by traditional leaders and how they do it, it again reviewed information on what identities need to be exhibited by individuals who get involved in reflective collaborative activities. Further the structures as well as the mode of discussions during group interactions are highlighted. The way peers share and review their understanding of issues are also dealt with in the literature. In developing reflective and collaborative environment, some characteristics that make interaction effective are also dealt with. Emphasis are made on how committed individuals are and would be in a reflective culture has also been reviewed.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This section discusses the methodology used for the study. It describes the history of Ntotroso in the Asutifi North District, the research design of the study, identifies the population and sample size targeted for the study. It additionally deals with methods and procedures used in gathering data and analysing data.

A Concise History of Ntotroso

Ntotroso Community features prominently in the Ahafo general history regarding its origin, settlement and development. The history of Ahafo dates back to the late 17th century after Asante's state had to liberate itself from the shackles and domination of the Denkyira State after the Asante achieved a glorious victory over Denkyira in the decisive battle of Feyiase. Asante's state developed into a formidable Empire, embarking on wars and Battles of expansion, punishment and domination. In each of these wars, captives were picked and planted within the Metropolitan Asante. Oral tradition has it that, after the death of King Osei Tutu I, King Opoku Ware I was enstooled. A decision to punish the Akyem state, led King Opoku Ware I to embark on a war with the Akyems for having killed King Osei Tutu I. Asante Empire sent its military arsenals and might to attack Akyem state .

Whilst on this Akyem war, King Ebiri Moro took advantage of the exits of the Asante Army from Kumasi and attacked Kumasi, Bantama to be precise as the frontier community. A report of this savage offence against Asante reached the Asante Army and King Opoku Ware I dispatch his Gyaasehene Opoku Frefre, Akwaboahene and Gyamfi

Kumanini to defend and over ran Sefwi. Ebiri Moro of Sefwi had plundered the Bantama Royal Treasury, captured women and children bound for Sefwi. This is known in historical parlance as "Fante Sa" in which the Asante Army won a decisive victory over Sefwi, and retrieved the stolen assets including the women. The Asante Army made sure that, it continued attack on the entire Sefwi's, Aowins who used to occupy the entire Ahafo Land area. Starting from Mankranso, stretching to Nkawie to Bibiani and to Mim and back to Mankranso through Akropong in today Ashanti Region. This vast Ahafo land was left desolate and to be re-inhabited. To size the golden chance of a fertile environment, plenty of games and directed people from Metropolitan Asante on the order of king Opoku Ware I to find settlement firstly, to hunt for game and prepare farms for foodstuffs and to be the breadbasket of Asante Empire. Semantically, the term Ahafo simply meant "Land of plenty and cheap food and meat" it must be placed on record that, the term 'Ahafo is only an environmental description not of the people as all the inhabitants had been part of Asantes (Dunn and & Robertson, 1980). To look for new settlement, a group of people led by Amakye Panin from Barekese area popularly called Amakye Bare left foe a new settlement westward of Kumasi and founded the Ntotroso settlement. Oral and archival information, speaks of one Amakye Panin a skilful hunter and his wife Nana Botwe from Amakom royal house left for a new site at the ford of the Ntotroso stream and named the new settlement as Ntotroso. This was around 1768 when the Ntotroso settlement started to develop as new people joined.

In this period of state information, the major attention was their economic pre-occupation and settlement. It is on record that, the skilfulness of Amakye Panin as a hunter sent him through the dense Ahafo forest to reach Wam which is modern day Dormaa,

through to Duayaw Nkwanta, Yamfo, Bomaa and back to Sunyani which forms the traditional enclave of Ntotroso. Another responsible factor that accelerated the expansion of Ntotroso was around 1836 when the "Apomasu Shrine "was discovered in the dense forest of Twabidi during the leadership of one chief called Twereku Ampem I and his wife Obaapanin Akoma , they discovered the Apomasu Shrine and started to reverse and worship it. The Apomasu Shrine which has the power to overcome barrenness, misfortunes, and calamities became the single magnetic force that brought people from far and near to consult the deity for various reasons. As part of Apomasu Shrine exploit, it predicted the return of the exiled King Prempeh 1 of Asante Empire from Seychelles Island – a true prediction that brought Ntotroso and Kumasi closer. As a "thank you" gesture, the Asante Empire brought £7.07s, a palanquin, and two pairs of golden sandals to the shrine.

This amount of £7.07s was used to build a palace for the Ntotroso Great Amakye Stool in 1926 and cemented the relationship between Ntotroso and Kumasi. A third factor that also led to the expansion of the Ntotroso settlement was traditional gold mining and kola business long before the cocoa industry came to out shadow it. This evident in many abandoned gold mine pits left uncovered history has it that the biggest uncovered gold mine pit was and is still called "Kum Aduosia" literally means , it caved in killing sixty (60) miners as mining has attendant disasters. Gold mining was based on a simple technology using panning and dredging to get the gold dust. This means, the people of Ntotroso and its satellite communities knew gold trade before the onset of Newmont Ghana Gold Limited which is now using more sophisticated technology to dig for gold in large quantities. The founding Clan of Ntotroso has always been the Aduana Clan with a symbol of a Dog spitting fire which stands for bravery and skilfulness. Succession to the Great

Amakye Panin stool has always come from the single Aduana royal house.

Research Design

A research design, according to Amin (2005) is the plan which the research study follows. It is a series of advanced decisions that are taken together, make up a master plan or model for a research study. Amin (2005) goes further to state that it is a stated structure and process of conducting a research project, detailing the plan and method for systematically and scientifically obtaining the data to be analysed.

The present study adopted the case study design and employed the qualitative approach (Creswell 2003). The purpose of this design is "to obtain different but complementary data on the same topic" (Creswell 2003, p.13) to best understand the research problem.

Population

The population for the study was all the opinion leaders who happened to be close to the chiefs selected for the study within Ntotroso paramountcy. This was considered due to my familiarity with the environment.

Sample and Sampling Technique

Sample size of four (4) participants were selected from the community for the study. The participants were purposively and through theoretical sampling techniques selected. The selected individuals were considered to be information reached individuals who could contribute to the issues in the study hence their selection

Access and Participants' Selection Strategies

The choice of an appropriate study site for any research is fundamental to all researches. For validity purposes, Creswell (2003) and Amoah, (2011) prefer selecting a 'typical' site. Even though Wainwright (1997) has raised some concerns about the typicality of research site with regards to what constitutes a typical site when no exploration of potential sites have been carried out, Denzin & Lincoln (2008) think, selecting a site needs to be done reflexively and managed according to the context specificity in such a manner that, it can help assess the authentic views of participants. In view of this, Wainwright has suggested the following criteria;

- Ease of access to the informants
- Whether data can be adequately recorded, and
- Whether there are any characteristics of the sites that might influence and informants' testimony

From Wainwright's (1997) suggestions, which may not be sufficient, access in the study has two sides. First is the official permission and, once on the field, the negotiated aspect with potential subjects. Some privileges, in terms of assess and prior knowledge that I thought could potentially be useful in the research process informed my choice of the participants. Second, my interest is to know how individuals close to the traditional set up, which I felt needed much attention, influenced my selection. Third, the nature of the study required continuous engagement of the participants, hence there was the need to consider proximity of the community to research meeting place for convenience to stagger research group discourse in-between the traditional members and fourthly, to minimize

financial constraints in travelling. These characteristics helped me select a community in the Ntotroso environ. Such background information was considered to be helpful to my investigation, but I had to be more proactive in devising strategies that would not made me behave as a traditional leader taking part in the study.

Having had permission from the participants, my next concern was to select participants for the study. Mattessich et. al. (2001) believe that in any collaborative activity, members involved need to review who to include, but in this study the responsibility was on me to do the selection. In view of this, I decided on four criteria to help me select the members. First, the participants needed to, on their own thinking develop their own strategies to engage in the discourse about their interactions within the traditional setup by setting their own agenda without taking instructions from me. They need to have explicit and unspoken control over relevant issues. Second, I wanted to focus on the experiences within one environment so that I could have the same limited view traditional leaders as mine since with my traditional background, I would able to understand the processes the discussions go through in reflective conversation hence the choice of Ntotroso considered appropriate. The difference for me was that, even though, I had never interacted so much with the participants in mind, I had observed them in their day-to-day interactions with some few people. Third, the group needed to have the capacity to continuously monitor the activities and integrate into their discussion profile, if the need arose, and finally the number needed not to be so large that the process of collaboration would become unmanageable. All these were done having in mind the limited data collection period of six months.

The four participants were initially purposively selected with the help of the

Odikro of the town in question. These cohort of participants for typicality (Creswell, 2003), were all resident in the paramouncy and were selected after the initial interview and feedback from the Odikro.

Data Collection Instruments

Semi-structured Interviews and Reflective Dialogue

After selecting the participants, I needed more information about them with regards to their background experiences. To allow them to express any views, beliefs, practices, interactions and concerns (Freebody, 2003) that they had, interview sessions were used for that purpose. I felt that would allow me to use follow-up and supplementary questions that were necessary to illuminate a clarification of ideas. However, using interviews according to Reissman (1993), is limited by the fact that a story being told to particular person might take a different form if someone else was the listener. Again in the words of Wragg (2002) 'the perception of participants in a study influences what they say'.

To address these shortfalls, I thought of not using the structured interview due to its rigidity. On the other hand, unstructured interviews allow the interviewee some flexibility and more freedom in the direction in which the interview would go. Unnecessary sidetracking seemed to affect its usage which sometimes results in time wasting within the time constraints for the data collection period. Consequently a semi-structured one was adopted as it allowed flexibility in how the interviewees sought to explore the meaning and perceptions about ideas to gain a better understanding relevant to a study (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006).

The use of the semi-structured interview had some positive influence on the

participants, as I gave them a voice which sought to impress upon them that their views were greatly important to the study and that I was also interested in their ideas and experiences. Even though there was some uneasiness on the part of the participants from the onset of the interviews, the flexible nature of the interactions seemed to enhance a high level of rapport between them and me. This served to promote a stable balance in the relationship established between the participants and me. Such an established link is crucial in such a social event as both the interviewer and informant affect each other's contribution, although the effect is asymmetrical (Powney & Watts, 1993).

Developing Interview Guide and Conducting Interviews (step 2)

Having settled on the use of the semi-structured interview guide, I asked the following questions: How can the guide help collect data that portray reality and the development of knowledge? The question was influenced by what Miller and Glassner (2004) posit that, interviews provide assess to the meanings people attribute to their experiences and social worlds. I then developed the guide to give the participants some latitude to comment on issues relevant to the study (Miller & Glassner, 2004).

As I adopted the interview guide I made adequate preparations to maximise the chances for successful interviews in order to minimize the challenges involved in elite interviews (Burgress, 1984; Cotterill & Letherby, 1994). From the start, I was always punctual for the interviews, usually arriving much earlier than the appointment time. After politely and humbly greeting the interviewee (which is very important in Ghanaian culture), I always reiterated the assurance of confidentiality and anonymity and emphasised on how records of their interview transcripts would be inaccessible to others. I then asked

for reconfirmation of their willingness to participants in a second stage interview in addition to requesting for audio recording of the session and a playback of the forty minutes interviews for them to validate.

The interviews were done on days selected by the participants themselves. The interviews periods were staggered between the individuals availability. The interview was on a one-on-one basis. These measures, in spite of limitations like being time consuming, enabled generally successful interview sessions.

For credibility and feasibility of the interview data, it is important for researchers to check their interpretations of interview data with respondents to ensure trustworthiness. The researcher needs to develop and maintain a critical attitude towards what respondents tell them as a way of giving credence to what people say. The transcribed interview data were later presented to the participants to comment on. Some inconsistencies in their submissions were identified by them and subsequent changes that they suggested were made before the data were used for the analysis.

The Methods and Data Collection Process

The researcher collected introductory letter from the Department of Leadership in Education and used as the reference letter for identification. The researcher consulted the opinion leaders and a date set for the interactions

After carefully considering the research questions, the nature of the data needed for the analysis and the prevailing conditions on the research field, it became evident that the best way to collect adequate data from the study would be through narratives of their background history and their thoughts about being committed to exploring what the

traditional leader needs to govern. In view of this, I became convinced of the usefulness of semi-structured interviews and a reflective dialogue (RD) was appropriate in my attempt to gather the data needed for this investigation. Semi-structured and reflective dialogue were adopted as they have the advantage of making the participants express their own opinions and views in a way that was meaningful and provided an opportunity for them to reflect. Secondly, it also gave me the opportunity to seek for clarification and details and in same way challenge them on the authenticity of their opinions. Even though the semi-structured interview provided some data, the RD served as the kingpin in data collection.

Ethical Issues

This research was planned in line with accepted ethical issues adopted by researchers. Robson (1993) for example said:

> *Researchers must recognise the participants' entitlement to privacy and must accord them their rights to confidentiality and anonymity, unless they or their guardians or responsible others specifically or willingly waive that right. In such circumstances it is the researcher's interest to have such a waiver in writing. Conversely researchers must also recognise participants' right to be identified with any publication of their original works or other inputs, if they so wish. In some contexts, it will be the expectation of participants to be so identified.*

In view of what Robson (1993) has postulated, informed consent, confidentiality and anonymity were considered very useful in this research.

Informed Consent

Informed consent according to Bryman (2008) is key in social research ethics. It implies, the prospective research participants should be given as much information as might be needed to make an informed decision about whether or not they wish to participants in a study.

The inference from this was to allow the participants to decide whether to be part of the study or not. Because as Stark and Torrance (cited in Amoah, 2011) put it, when participants give their consent to a study, they are empowered rather than the researcher being protected; they are assured of anonymity in order to avoid any possible harm to them. Again it is an underlying principle to avoid deception, cohesion and harm, alongside assurances of confidentiality (Heath et. al., 2004). However, Heath et. al. (2004) have argued that "informed consent is a largely unworkable process given that researchers can rarely know the full extent of what participants may entail, or predict in advance all the possible outcomes of participants" (p. 406). In spite of this criticism, it is worthy of notice to understand how important it is to retain the participants of informed consent with activities that 'sits' within qualitative enquiry (Yin, 2009).

From the views above, it was reasonable on my part, as a first step, to arrange a meeting with the participants to inform them about the objectives of the investigation. A second meeting which sought to formally solicit their volunteerism to participate in the study was organised. The focus was to explain all aspect of the research and the intervention to the participants. The purpose of the discussions was in explaining the rationale of the study, especially how the group and I were to co-plan and co-investigate, why it was a good idea, and also to make them become aware of the need for them to either

opt out or be part as the process progressed. This second meeting ended with the distribution of the consent form to the participants to fill, and another meeting day was fixed to receive their feedback. On the appointed day, feedbacks regarding signed consent forms were received and this led to my explaining confidentiality issues to them.

Confidentiality and Anonymity

The complex nature of the interactions made confidential issues also complex. The fact is that, it is difficult for both the participants and researcher to anticipate everything that we will be consenting to, and considered as confidential. This makes it difficult to protect the individuals who took part in the study. Situations like this provoke some questions about how to protect such interactive behaviours which can form the basis for any discussion and interpretation. It also has the implication when reporting the research as the researcher may not know all that may be harmful to the participants since some aspects of the interactions could be used as examples for change, and can also be harmful where unacceptable aspect of the behaviour are made public for discussion. This is why Bogdan and Biklen (1992) think that, 'unless otherwise agreed to, the subjects' identities should be protected so that the information you collect about them does not embarrass or in other ways harm them'.

In the study, confidentiality issues were treated under two levels. Firstly, the participants were assured of my keeping in confidence every bit of information they provide regarding their personality, and secondly, criticisms about their actions, for example, issues about bad or wrong behaviours or interpretation given to unacceptable

behaviours were to be discussed as an issue and not tagged to any particular individual participant even when such behaviours were being discussed outside the group. This was done to ensure that they were not unwittingly put in any undesirable position so that they would avail themselves to be part of other researches. However, regarding anonymity, they were assured that when reporting the findings no reference would be made to individual participant and that where it was necessary to quote participants, pseudonyms would be used (Marshall & Rossman, 1999).

Data Authentication and Trustworthiness

In researches, a way is needed to assess the "extent to which claims are supported by convincing evidence" (Silverman, 2006). To be able to authenticate the trustworthiness of the RD depends on how reliable or valid the subjective nature of the discourse is treated to ascertain the strength of the dialogue.

To authenticate the trustworthiness of any data collection, Yin (2009) thinks that "if a later investigator followed the same procedures as described by an earlier investigator and conducted the process all over again, the later investigator should arrive at the same findings and conclusion" (p.45). In other words, do we expect to find about the same findings if we repeated the design and procedures?

The complex nature of the interaction makes validating the data collected complex. Reflecting on the process, and in support of what Silverman (2006) thinks, I adopted three out of the five criteria for validating action research studies advocated by Heikkinen et. al (2007) to validate the quality of the data collected. The criteria are explained in the next section.

This principle emphasises that 'action does not begin in the vacuum, and never ends hence the researcher needs to pay much attention to the different context and tradition (Heikkinen, et al., 2007). In addition, the information needs to be presented in chronological and logical sequences, while attempting to establish causalities as well as disclosing the goals and objectives of the actors. Clearly, this idea seemed important when evaluating the quality of any action.

The structure of the process, which informed both the data collection procedure and how the analysis was carried out, influenced the write-up.

The principle of reflexivity, according to (Heikkinen, et al., 2007), is based on the idea of philosophy, where the researcher needs to consciously reflect on their pre-insight or analyse their ontological and epistemological presumptions. Feldman (2007) agreed to the notion of researchers examining their relationship with their subjects to question their presumptions of knowledge and reality. However, he did not subscribe to a particular reflexive account being necessarily better in quality and being more truthful than any account, because clearly one cannot expect to know the "ultimate truth" that corresponds exactly to an external truth (p28). To address Feldman's opposing views, the interaction process saw a principle of critical exchanges of ideas, claims and counter claims as the participants compared and contrasted plurality of perspectives and used multiple realities, to develop understanding and knowledge.

In short, (Heikkinen, et al., 2007) believe that the workability of a study is about how the quality of the study gives rise to changes in social actions. From the study the Qay the participants interacted and shared views showed how the data collection tool worked to support the findings.

Another reason that I think made a process to work was that, firstly, the participants were empowered and emancipated from PD activities by way of developing their own ground rules and selecting the focus for the discussions. Secondly, their ability to notice any shortfall in their contributions, and the way they dialogued on these actions through critical dialogue using plurality of perspectives to agree and disagree to develop consensus demonstrate its workability. Again, the way the participants valued and trusted the outcome from the dialogue sessions and how they recycled the behaviours in their immediate discussions raised new issues for further discussion.

Recording and Transcribing

Audio tape-recordings are important data recording processes that 'sit' in qualitative research. Silverman (2006) has pointed out that "transcription of such recordings, based on standardized conventions, provide an excellent 'naturally occurring' interactions, and can offer a highly reliable record to which researchers can return to as they develop new hypothesis" (p20).

Tape recording for example, according to Powney and Watts (1993) supports getting verbatim views expressed by participants in any study. The recording therefore made my work of recording activities in this complex process to be less burdensome. It was able to capture all information. It allowed me get back to the recorded data time and again to get understanding of the information I needed.

However, the reactivity effect on the participants whose conversations were being recorded made them more 'more guarded about what they say (and how they say it), especially when sensitive materials are being discussed (Vulliamy, 1990, p.105). One

major disadvantage was how a mechanical problem nearly erased all recorded interviews on the voice recording gadget.

During the interactions, I made it clear to the participants that the nature of the interactions which was to take place needed a mechanism to capture all their utterances which may be difficult for me to do with the four of them talking at the same time. Due to this the voice recording device was placed at a very conspicuous place to allow their conversations to be captured. For safety, the recorded interviews were transferred and stored in a computer. In addition, I complemented the work of the recorder with note-taking.

The interviews recorded were transcribed promptly and personally as the interview was still fresh in my mind. Even though it was a time-consuming and laborious process, I felt it was better than giving it to a new person to do it. The reasons were that I was able to add comments about the interview as I transcribed, particularly the individual's body language like their facial expression and emphasis. Secondly unclear portions in the recording were quickly remembered and inserted.

Data Analysis

The most difficult aspect of the process of data analysis was how I could analyze the data collected satisfactorily. Data collected in the study amounted to three hours of initial interviews and seventy two (72) hours reflective dialogue. I was overwhelmed, about the volume of data more especially about how to condense such large volume of data into a manageable amount necessary to allow the emergence of themes. During the

transcription, I had to keep drawing information from different sources, including some traces of evidence of their experiences until I ended up identifying the themes.

What I did during the transcription were that I started with a small question first, and then identify evidences that address the questions. Draw a tentative conclusion based on the evidence, and also coming out with the evidences so that readers can check its appropriateness.

Through the process of the constant comparison method (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Denzin & Lincoln, 2008), I tried to link issues located in the data to relevant concept about reflection and collaboration in an attempt to keep a close link between the data and the concepts. I kept a close attention to any contrasts between the themes I developed hence I needed to draw the distinction between them. Second, I used iteration as I teased out relationship, probed issues and combined categories from the data to develop the themes and patterns from the data in order to ascertain the correspondence between the concepts, reflection and collaboration.

The participants' voices and 'own words' were used to support arguments. This came from the iterated process of reading and rereading the transcribed narratives from the interviews conducted. During the process I was guided by the following questions: what views were being given to occur in words and phrases in the data that were pointing to how the participants were reflecting? How were they organizing their thoughts? How were they being critical about what they say? Those aspects that had no relation with the focus of the study were discarded.

The within-case analysis informed the cross-case analysis. Within-case analysis from Creswell's (2003) viewpoint allowed me to become intimately familiar with each

participant's views, which in turn allowed the identification of the distinctive patterns.

I used the cross-case analysis to examine how systematically issues cut across all cases' contributions. Referent themes from the within-cases analysis were used to identify similarities and differences in categories for the cross-case.

Challenging Issues/Problems and Reflections

The collection of data for the research was affected by five major factors that limited the amount and quality of information gathered for this exploration. First, the views of the sample size of four participants appeared too limited to be used to generalise the findings. Second, mechanical problems related to the audio data affected the transfer of the recorded data to another device to be transcribed and this nearly deleted all recorded data. I was very fortunate to have a backup that was quickly used to retrieve the lost data.

Third, by using the grounded approach in the analysis, one issue of concern was data saturation; what is produced is solely the researcher's own analysis showing how reflexive the researcher is. The next important factor which constrained my data collection exercise and therefore limited the data I collected was the limited resources which I used to conduct the fieldwork.

Another limitation to my research methodology is probably with the techniques employed in the analysis of the data, which seemed too simplistic to some researchers, since it did not provide sophisticated statistical analysis of the video excerpts.

CHAPTER FOUR

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter begins with an analysis of the empirical data collected. It begins with the presentation of the brief profiles of the participants, and the second which introduces the arguments rose through the analysis of the data. The research evidence presented in this chapter is a product of a number of iterative processes involving data collection and analyses.

Section A

Brief Profile of Participants

These brief profiles introduce the participants of the study. Pseudonyms are used to protect the anonymity of the participants, in accordance with the argument made by Bryman (2008) that the privacy of those who participated in the research process need to be respected.

Case 1: A1

A1 was about forty five years old, married with three kids. He has been in the palace for the past forty years. He was involved in activities including supporting the chief to make and meet other dignitaries who pay courtesy calls on the chief.

He talks about empathising with colleagues who may have difficulties and always offer options when consulted by his colleagues. Mostly the options are related to alternatives to resolving conflicts and resolving identified problems. Besides that, he organised and brought together all individuals in his immediate environment. He was happy to have support and respect from his colleagues.

Case 2: A2

A2, in the study was forty eight years old and always a member of the chiefs' entourage as well as the head of delegation to functions. A2 feels that his contact with experienced people in the field, and the way individuals collaborate and share ideas in the community, has greatly influenced and changed his ways of discussing issues. Aside from that he thinks the community climate also contributes to how to look for alternatives to help improve discussions.

Case 3: A3

A3 was a twenty three year old man. He believed he had the ability to discuss wider issues as well interacting with the people in the community. He had attended some activities on community development, but did not think such activities have any influence on his interactions with the community. His concerns were that he believed in collaborating with colleagues to solve problems.

Again his philosophy was that, community members should always look for alternatives to manage challenges they encounter as he puts it 'we cannot be perfect in all that we do, that is why I occasionally ask other colleagues to offer help on my behalf when I have problems'. He was very critical of what he encountered. To him, communal identification is about inculcating what is right into individuals and again he believed that, during discussions, what is learnt is very crucial for individual's future lives.

Case 4: A4

A4 was thirty five years old. His major responsibility is his role as the 'secretary to the chief' and he thought that effective management of self is the cornerstone for every effective leader. He believed leaders should use varied approaches to resolve problems.

A4 thinks that even though group interaction has its own problems, it has shifted his beliefs in the way people think. He posited that consulting colleagues and sharing ideas is what should be done by leaders when trying to improve. Apart from colleagues, he believed every member in an environment could be relied upon to assess any community development.

Answers to Research Questions

RQ1: How does individual's personal identities and attitudes within the chieftaincy setup support effective reflective and collaborative activities among traditional leaders in Asutifi North District?

A theme that came out strongly regarding how chieftaincy setup and personal identities in use for collaboration was that, four factors came out strongly to determine how such collaboration can be used to determine people's commitment. Issues relating to the evidence about the four factors form the subject of analysis and discussions in this section.

Interviews and reflective dialogue were used in an attempt to elicit information from the participants, in order to illuminate how their characteristics were being utilized in their roles. The results of this process are discussed below. It emerged from the discussions in this section that participants' expert knowledge, prior experiences, and their positive attitude towards engaging with the kind of cultural activity, contributed to their reflective conversations, and promoted an environment conducive to collaboration.

When individuals engage in any collaborative activity with the aim of changing their practices, the expectation is that they share their knowledge and experiences in a mutually beneficial and well-defined relationships process (Mattessich et. al., 2001). In addition, such an interaction aims to engage the group in reflection (Hatton & Smith, 1995) to appropriately make sense of their inking experiences and activities. Eraut (1994) has also posited that "it is only fellow members within an environment who are sufficiently knowledgeable to judge the work of their colleagues".

The case study evidence indicated that, there were disagreements, rivalries and conflicts between the participants during the interactions. For example;

Such discussions need well informed knowledge, if you do not have in-depth knowledge about a concept under discussion you cannot reflect and contribute much on it. Listening to A1 he could not explain what actually happens at the chief's palace always (A2).

From A2's explanation on what A1 said, it is when you have in-depth knowledge about what takes place during discussions at the palace that you can say something (A3).

Even though in-depth knowledge was acknowledged, it comes with some concerns which are echoed in the above quotations. Within the interactions one could deduce that one's in-depth understanding is very critical and show how one is "more knowledgeable than the other". The implication here is that one has a strong confident position about one's in-depth knowledge.

Two reasons for this were identified in terms of the rivalry and competition from the data. First, there was a concern that the individuals could not sufficiently justify any identified event they deemed acceptable or unacceptable. Second, the participants were unable to offer any relevant and appropriate alternatives, and as such contested any suggestion made. Further, in-depth knowledge on any event observed was considered to support the offer of relevant and appropriate evidences to the acceptability (or unacceptability) the option offered. The following comments illustrate the emphasis on the need for in-depth knowledge:

Such discussions need well informed knowledgeable individuals, if you do not have in-depth knowledge about what

is under discussion you cannot reflect and contribute much on it. Looking at the way A3 provide information on activities within the environment, he could not differentiate well between what he thinks and the reality on the ground (A2).

From A2's perspectives on what A3 said, it is when you have in-depth knowledge about an issue that you can make the difference. He could point out all what exactly makes a good idea; it shows that disrespect is a very bad practice of the youth as well as being committed to what is seen.

These quotations point to probable occurrences which were echoed by A3, concerning power and in-depth knowledge as well as authority and were about the influence of one person having what he claims to be 'more knowledge than the rest'. The implication here is that one has a strong confident position about one's knowledge. Nevertheless, the participants seemed to be aware of domineering influences in such discussions, but their concerns were not dependent on the more knowledgeable one for further explanation, rather it was because of their overriding desire to have objective and even-handed discussions, taking everything into account to achieve fairness in their discussions, not just the most obvious issues. In support A3 said;

Let us give valid and objective view on what we are discussing. The fact that A2 is always in the palace does not give you the power not to accepting what we say. We should accept disagreement to come out with agreement

These sentiments notwithstanding, the participants acknowledged the need for in-depth knowledge, being objective during such discussions. In addition to the in-depth knowledge there was the feeling that experience of the individual can also support such interactions.

This view seemed to corroborate what my literature review found regarding the fact that one's' professional and practical knowledge base support individuals to identify differences and similarities in their actions (Dymoke & Harrison, 2008; Pollard et. al., 2008). However, their ability to do this depends on the qualities of their reflections (Rarieya, 2005).

The data showed that as the participants relied on their own personal historical precedents, through reflection, mostly advanced their experiences into the discussions and this constrained them from being very objective in their comments. This view is echoed in what A2 and A3 said about A1;

> *You know I am older and have spent more years in the palace more than the rest of you so take what I tell you. (A2). Yes we know you are older than us but you cannot use your experience to bully us. (A3)*

What happened therefore was for them to depend on their prior knowledge regarding the actions observed, and they used this to try to justify what they know. Even though they believed that sometimes the solution to a challenging experience can prove useful in resolving another problem, it appears that the influence of the cultural norms sometimes colour their comments. This made the participants hesitant to use prior experiences. Of course this was not the sole explanatory factor that made them avoid the use of prior

experiences. The problem of using their personal experiences to impose ideas on the other members was their greatest concern. The following are some of the feelings of the case study participants about the imposition of ideas based on past experiences:

> *A1 the respect I have for you, and the way you give valuable information to our discussion, I am worried about the way you seemed to impose your views on us. In addition you do not respect our views meanwhile we are to learn from you the oldest from this exercises (A4).*
>
> *A1 your behaviour is not making me come forward to offer my views (A2)*

A1's use of his prior experiences seems to be the result of the willingness of the other colleagues to accept what he said during the discussions. However they also considered him to be suppressing their views. Even though he could provide some information on unfamiliar events for the benefit of the group, the remaining three participants opposed most of his views. The research literature suggests that a behavioural characteristic of this nature within interactions can threaten the extrinsic and intrinsic merit of the interaction (Olson & Barret, 2004; Fook and Gardner, 2007). Conflicts resulting from such interactions can also influence any meaningful reflection. Emphasising this point A3 said: 'are we fighting or discussing issues. The way things are I cannot even recollect or reflect on what we discussed'. Thus, through the use of the evidence, it became clear that the repetitive discussion of ideas where the locus is to consistently hear multiple views

with the goal of obtaining a broader view, was to ensure nothing was missed.

The way and manner issues were discussed over and over in multiple times supported the participants to identify differences and similarities in what they said and this prompted them to critique their views. The following quotations suggest this:

The repetitive and continuous ways we discuss our views help to easily recount what was currently discussed and link it to our new discussions. It makes you see multiple ways to adopt to resolve some of the challenging situations. (A2)

Our continuous seeing of our mistakes and resolving them does not need any special person to tell you what to do. You see the differences from the discussions. Reflection is made easier this way. (A3)

His views allowed me organised my thoughts. He expressed his views on my submission by telling me I need to separate out the ideas from the others. This to him which I used can make the views objective by polishing ideas before I continue. (A4)

The continuous revisiting of my ideas and the discussions so far has given time the idea that initially I was creating problems for you all. I now know it is the best to engage in such activities. Even it improves your experiences as you tend to learn more new things. (A1)

The extent of the continuous discussions during the interactions and how it influenced

their reflections and collaborations and the use of experiences were obvious from the comments of the participants. It is therefore suggested that to help the participants to develop the ability to effectively reflect and collaborate, repeated re-echoing their ideas is highly preferred. The way they interacted and reflected continuously is what Day (1999), posited that within any effective collaboration, reflection cannot be left out and this can foster a reflective collaborative culture.

The above discussions point to some illuminating issues regarding an individual's in-depth knowledge in discussions on specific events and in doing so greater quality of analysis is required (Hatton & Smith, 1995). The effective way of sharing reflective views in any interaction is what Rarieya (2005) supports. He believes that it is necessary to engage in:

> *...reflection with others who ask questions of one another, thereby helping each other gain new insights about situations, beliefs and values. Moreover, the perspectives are usually shared (Rarieya, 2005, p. 315).*

Thus, according to Rarieya (2005) effective sharing of views from reflection using appropriate knowledge is needed to ensure the participants in the discussion understand what is discussed. However, Fook and Gardner (2007) pointed out that adequate knowledge is crucial within good reflection. Eraut (1994) also argued that getting second or other opinions on a view expressed is preferable, since such personal knowledge may not be congruent with the public knowledge under discussion.

On the following views of the participants, it is suggested that, both personal and professional lives, as well as the structured social environment were significant and central to influence their reflective and collaborative practices.

Let us see to it that we discuss one issue after the other so that what

we know and how we behave in the palace will manifest so that people may not have another view about us (A2)

As for me I know I possess that professional skill of deliberating on chieftaincy issues so I want us to keep to that level (A1)

I've lived in this environment the whole of my life so I know more about what pertains so I will give you better understanding of issues that befit my status. (A4)

Some of the proverbs and sayings by some people need to be addressed since they explain certain happenings (A3)

In support of this research, evidence in literature suggests that individuals' personal and professional lives can influence effective dialogues which in turn can influence their reflection and collaboration to a significant degree (Hatton & Smith, 1995; Rarieya, 2005; Fook & Gardner, 2007). For example, Hatton and Smith (1995) found in their Sydney study that:

...the practitioner is able consciously to think about an action as it is taking place, making sense of what is happening and shaping successive practical steps using multiple viewpoints as appropriate.

In another study, Rarieya (2005) also pointed out that peoples' personal and

professional lives can possibly lead them to have better control of their lives. In his study, which had the aim of finding out what happens when chiefs and stool individuals engage in reflective dialogue on their practices, four participants from the same environment who were unfamiliar with reflective and collaborative activities were involved in some discussions. Apart from the individuals being unaware of their reflective and collaborative changes, the general observation by the participants was that they understood their discussions well and learnt a new way to practice. Rarieya therefore argued that individuals' ability to engage in reflection, for methodological improvement, is sustainable, when the participants are open-minded, wholehearted, responsible, willing to take risks and has assess to alternative ways of resolving challenges. He also argues that individuals would be more committed if the reflective activity could support them taking control of their change process. He concludes by stating that personal and professional lives are closely intertwined and crucial in reflective activities. This came out from his study where some of the participants acknowledged the reflective activities as worthwhile to get them to improve on their thinking, whilst at the same time others did not show commitment due to personal reasons.

The study also identified and recognised the structure of the activities in the RD as a contributing factor to the participants' willingness to adopt a strategy to discuss and understand their views. This therefore forms the basis of the discussion for the next section.

Generally there was a positive view shared by all the participants regarding how their discussions were planned around significant issues with regards to some challenges to commitment which helped them to gain a better understanding of their views, as well as better organised ideas. For example;

The way that we share and plan what to say, in-fact is making me develop much understanding in whatever we say (A2)

Okyeame (Referring to A4) don't you see that we have to plan how we are going to say since the discussions are good because of the way we are addressing issues (A1)

In-fact I see that we do more justice to whatever is brought up for discussion if it is done systematically. We can delve deep into issues well (A3)

Based upon their group discussions, one can see that the activities gave them the opportunity to systematically and rigorously diagnose and audit their views. The analysis of their comments indicate that the process allowed them to assess the practical realities of their submissions and this made them aware of their worth. Further they felt it promoted quality in their interactions and reflections, as they shared and exchanged new experiences and ideas which corroborate what these many researchers (i.e. Tigelar et al., 2008; Jung et al., 2005; MacDougall & Drummond, 2005; Bereiter, 2002) think reflective collaborative activities support.

One important finding regarding the organisation of the activities in the study was about critiquing consistently views expressed, practical realities of what they say. Even though the participants meet occasionally to discuss pertinent issues within their environment, they felt implementing their acquired knowledge had to be done through consistent, rigorous and systematic processes. In effect, the discussion process seemed like a bridge to facilitate effective implementation of their acquired knowledge. The whole culture

is aimed toward engagement in a systematic, organised activity in order to understand how it could be implemented. Some individuals recounted, with negative emotions, their experiences of engaging in collaborative activities with colleagues, when they met to share their views. A3, for example commented "the rather evaluation posture of the members when they meet at time discourages one for taking part in such discussion". In addition personal sentiments seemed to influence their perceptions and characterise their interactions. Further confirmation that their perceptions influenced, what they said, could be seen in this statement made by A4: *"Judging from the way our views are being shared continuously, I have the opinion that it is an assessment of our views".* Similarly, A3 was of the opinion that member *"evaluation stance on what they observe especially finding faults about what each individual says to me is a way of assessing our views objectively".*

The above views demonstrated clearly the important role the activities played in the knowledge-practical implementation interface of their practices. The case study evidence indicated that the continuous and systematic culture provided a productive environment in which individuals could examine their knowledge base, something which they find it difficult to do in the normal course of events.

The aforementioned, who positively acknowledges the importance of the organised structure of discussions, indicates that individuals had difficulties from the outset. Prominent among such difficulties was the issue of being unfamiliar with any discussion, which the theories and participants as well as their practical experiences never addressed. Such incidences, which were readily discussed further, strengthened their acknowledgement of the activities. However as the discussions proceeded, the individuals/participants became adept in identifying the differences and similarities in all discussions. Comparisons were

effectively carried out which identified such differences and similarities. A2 thinks in discussing issues confronting the people within the study area influences of knowledge from theories and participants on individuals are vital, when activities are focused-based, for instance discussing environmental challenges, of which he thinks better comparison, could be done.

Another issue, raised by the participants relate to the timing of the discussions. The linkages can be seen when discussions based on theory and participants points of view are exported into any discussion or vice versa, in continuous and regular schedules. The short interval within which what is discussed is used or quickly discussed, seems to improve the quality of participants' reflections. Reflection becomes easier since contemporary difficulties are quickly attended to through the discussions. Emphasising how the organised activities promoted better reflection, A2 said:

> *the manner at which immediate feedbacks on the identified deficiencies are advanced to immediate solutions in a more regularized and structured manner made it easy for me when reflecting to contribute during discussion.*

This type of evidence supports the claim that the exercise provided a backup mechanism to support new ideas. The regular activities encourage a continuous build up of ideas as well as the linking of these ideas to knowledge and practices. However, evidence from the data showed some barriers which inhibited this. The decision arrived at purposely served only the participants whose ideas were discussed, even though the other participants gained some knowledge from it. Each of the participants, aside from the one whose lesson was discussed, most of the time did not show much interest in the discussions. This view is

supported by the following statement, made by A3: “because the immediate feedback from the discussion is to be used in our everyday life, discussions on others’ behaviours are not important to me”. In spite of this negative feeling about the discussions, the link between the theories and participants, of discussion on practiced issues is valuable, as supported by Fook and Gardner (2007) who believe that timing is crucial to critical reflections.

One distinguishing feature of the interaction process regarding the structured activities, which A3 readily pointed out, is about the nature of the discussion pattern in the interaction process. Discussions from the outset were found to be disjointed and messy. Events were randomly selected and comments were made. The selections were generally on uncoordinated views expressed. Discussions never focused on specific issues; hence it sometimes prevented continuous in-depth discussions on selected issues. Every individual’s comments depended on their preferences. These preferences depended on their observations (Galimore & Stigler, 2003). When discussions do not follow and focus on one event ‘there is fragmentation of ideas’ (A3). The resultant effect is that bits of skills are discussed, but there is no coherency in gathered ideas, and only poor and superficial understanding of practice is achieved.

However, through the subsequent, sustained interactions, a well-structured pattern of discussion was observed. Information provided was in a structured form and assimilating became easier, and, as a result of this, the participants were able to organise their thoughts more easily. The order of presentation of ideas, turn taking and discussions focusing on specific issues to develop understanding at any point in time was one of A3’s observations. This seems to be an important observation made as in this type of collaborative activity, ensuring the operation of participants and procedures is crucial. Furthermore, it is critical

for participants participating in such an activity to examine their views in order to identify both deficiencies and worthwhile experiences so that they can address and offer alternatives for change. Initially, this seemed a difficult practice to achieve, as A3 observed. Despite this difficulty, the data showed a variety of examples of approaches adopted by the participants to continuously examine their practices.

From the data, it could be concluded that the structured activities within the interaction process influenced the participants' way of reflecting and collaborating. It created an environment in which their practices could be discussed to help them develop better understanding and to integrate the outcomes into their environments. Also through the activities, the participants acknowledged the worth of the process especially in attempting to understand the practical realities of their already learnt theories and participants in their thinking. Thus, through critical analysis, it is clear that the outlined activities could promote effective interactions Mattissich et. al. (2001). This supports the findings of Gewirtz, Mahony, Hextall, & Cribb (2009) in which they identified those participants who, based upon their engagement in reflective collaborative interactions, are likely to be equipped with up-to-date information concerning the knowledge explosion which has characterised the contemporary world. Following on from the arguments of Gewirtz et al., the question to be posed now is, could it be possible for the participants to engage in this type of cooperative reflection without any facilitated support?

It has been argued in the literature that collaborative activities intrinsically and extrinsically motivate participants in their collaborative effort to change, however the competitive culture within collaborative activities tends to have both negative and positive influences, which are likely to affect interpersonal relationship and attitudes within the

collaborative environment (Johnson & Ahlgren 2000, Ryan & Deci 2005). There is therefore the need to manage and coordinate activities (Bens, 2005) in order to provide a balance within these issues to guarantee a high level of professional discipline. It is through this balance that people could pour out their often quite justified critical comments, as they attend to their negative feelings and achievements gained from the interactions (Ribisch, 1999*)*.

Views expressed that has been echoed, indicates that when given the chance to decide on a rationale for the interaction, varied perspectives that could not be synchronized characterized the interactions. The problem was the influence of the complex group dynamics brought to the study by participants. Synthesizing ideas therefore it could be argued as follows; from this study, collaboration and cooperation can exist in participant's communities and thus offer the members an understanding of some of the intervening and inhibiting variables (Mattessich, et. al., 2001). This information normally guides participants in search of a strategy that could provide a balance of ideas in their activities. This is to ensure the development of a deeper understanding and valuable insight that could not be readily made available. This therefore requires effective reflection. Evidence from the outset of the process indicates that external imposition of ideas is not appropriate.

Consequently, open-minded ideas, where the locus of the support rested with how individual participants can offer guidance were deemed more acceptable by this group. Nevertheless, any participant expressing such a view also expresses awareness of the capability of anyone who gives them the freedom and autonomy. Thus the facilitator's standing needs to be enough to strengthen and stimulate the group to open

up and provide ideas that can be sustained over time, rather than suppressing their views. The importance of getting a facilitator like this involved was acknowledged by the case study participants as being crucial. A3 noted this when he stated "*I think the way Yaw came in to support our discussions strengthened our ideas and clearly opened up what we could do*". Confirming A3's comment, A1 noted "*it was his help that resulted to our agreeing on a focus for the discussions".*

The positive views expressed about the role of the facilitator seem to be the result of how the participants' commitments and willingness to partake in the process. The high-stakes context in which reflective collaborative activities was to be organised in a flexible manner was welcomed by the participants. What could happen is without anyone to manage the activities participants could adopt any strategy that they deem fit, which, within the group, means that there is a likelihood of conflict. However in order to foster a "rich environment for the interaction" there needs to be a facilitator, who is versatile, and can change with the continuously changing times.

Ghanaian cultural norms exerts some limitations to discussions in which cross-hierarchical levels among the group members exist (Amoah, 2002). Participants' awareness of differentiation both in age and academic standing demands that each recognises and gives the necessary respect. The realisation of an artificial barrier created due to the differentiations, therefore plays an important role, as barren communication could occur within such an environment. Having effective and cordial interactions is dependent upon on developing effective rapport. The case study evidence indicates that establishing effective rapport is aided by explaining the rationale and the participants' ability to interrogate the rationale, as well as discussing ethical issues thoroughly, as a way

to help the participants engage, in a relatively relaxed way, with the activities. In addition, establishing a cordial relationship is also crucial. The following statement confirms this view: *"the impression created in the first day from the explanation of the process steps put my heart at ease because I knew of my protection throughout the processes and the subsequent benefit"* (A1). Having such access provided the necessary environment for feedback, which has the potential to be used to modify any initial plan for such an activity.

Their wariness about the facilitation confirms the initial thinking about how one could facilitate such a process, because if the one has never conducted systematic research into reflective activity, the one will not be clear how he could reflect continuously on such thinking to develop the needed strategies one had also never encountered, as cited in Mangolin's (2007) notions of "cultural theory, a dynamic and living form of reflection that exists in the lives of practitioners, whose content changes with the developing public conversation of those involved in its creation" (Mangolin, 2007 p.520). However, at the end of the data collection period, and as the data was analysed retrospectively, one would begin to understand the transformation one had undergone, which helped such individuals to articulate his/her personal theory regarding traditional leaders. Nevertheless it is clearly important that any facilitator in such an activity needs to be aware of the impact of his/her background and professional competencies.

To encourage participants in the study to improve upon their reflections, a process that offers greater opportunity for easy reflection was needed. The case study evidence provides an account of the application of a process that had been used in other settings. The participants had prior knowledge of what is effective, but even so, the study found the

participants were unable to use it totally and effectively. The call for someone to facilitate this type of process is illustrated in the following statement: "we need someone like Eric to help with the making references to situations" (A2) and "*let us get someone knowledgeable in it to organise it since it is not part of our culture*" (A1).

The case study provided evidence indicating how the facilitator presence allayed the fears and anxieties of the participants regarding the abrupt ending of discussions. The participants, in their attempt to articulate their views, were observed to rely on their colleagues for support. Objective reasons were expected to be raised to justify their support. However, as I observed, their body language and the obvious hostilities during the exchanges of ideas normally lead to the abrupt ending of discussions. A4 remarked: *"you people are not making the discussions friendly at all, by your ways of arguments"*. This view prompted me to reflect on the hostilities, at which point I made two observations. One relates to whether the participants understood the rationale of the study regarding giving them the autonomy to control the process. My intervening to calm down tensions therefore could be seen as an intrusion on their interactions. On the other hand leaving the activities to end abruptly was also a concern of mine.

Whilst I was contemplating how to resolve their fear and anxiety, which the evidence from the study indicated has gripped the participants given the repeated occurrences of the abrupt end to the discussions, the participants confirmed and acknowledged the influence of this on establishing mutual trust. This raises the question of how these three concepts, dominated by human innate qualities, could be resolved since they were linked to emotional attachment. Further analysis indicated a major contributory factor to this occurrence related to an entrenched disciplinary structure within their cultural

norm, the ability to challenge authority. It has therefore been realised that ambivalence exists between the expectations of the process and the cultural demands. Expressing his disgust about such behaviour and calling for liberation from such behaviour, A3 said:

> *seriously, A1's behaviour is unrealistic. He needs to respect our views as we do for him. The way he treats our suggestions, as if he is the overall boss of these activities, is not fair. He does not trust anyone. I do not know how to question his comments for fear of him shouting at me. I think Eric needs to come in to save us from such suppression.*

This supports the fact that within any community of practice, the group's complex multiple dynamics, carried into such an activity, impacts heavily on it (Wenger, 2006). Having realised this, closer contact was made in order to search for reasons behind such behaviour. The findings could be summed up as follows, "as a member of the people who resides in the palace and also in charge to seeing participants change for the better, I cannot sit to see the participants doing what cannot bring change in their discussions" (A1). This view deepened my understanding about A1, in relation to how he views his interactions with the other participants. This disclosure exemplifies the idea that there are various reasons behind most of his behaviours. Unravelling this is crucial to help understand the behaviour. My presence therefore became important as the strategy helped me to unravel what was behind her behaviour, which in turn assisted in both understanding and responding to the tensions, which developed.

The case study evidence also established the fact that the relationship between the participants and the mentor created another challenge. The participants regularly demanded validation of their comments or views from me. Expressing his sentiments on the

participant's closeness to the mentor, A2 asked rhetorically: "*Why do we want Eric to ascertain whether all that we say is correct or true? I don't think he has answers to all that".* Having realised this I always told them I was also learning like them. Getting closer to the participants seemed to have various effects on the process, however that it appeared to do something to lessen resource person–participants divide, highlighted the importance of having someone to encourage such occurrences (Ben, 2005).

Establishing cordiality improved communications between the participants and the mentor. However A1 saw it otherwise. To him: *'being too close can bring compromises'*. He made a good point that in communicating with others, care must be taken to ensure what is discussed relates to the focus of discussions. The difficulty of this became apparent in this study. However, with communication being crucial to collaboration, (Mattessich et. al., 2001) there is the need for someone to organise the group, especially a group with hierarchical levels aimed at establishing effective relationship that can promote communication. These are all explanations as to why there was the need for a facilitator to be present. Therefore, setting some guidelines could have also supported the facilitator, as it had been established that he was also a novice in the activities. The need to work with such guidelines is the focus of the discussion in the next sections.

In summary, from the discussions, even though the facilitator presence in the interactions sometimes had what appeared to be a negative impact, there was a generally a more positive influence gained through the facilitator presence. The Facilitator's/mentor's resourcefulness and innovative ideas (Ben, 2005), gained through the mentors' continuous reflection proved crucial in such interactions. Furthermore, the ability to understand how a facilitator organises him/herself in order to be able to recognise personal shortcomings is

crucial (Hatton & Smith, 1995; Osterman & Kottkamp, 1993; Ben, 2005; Mattessich et. al., 2001).

As the process progressed, the evidence indicated that there were some worries regarding the facilitators' management of the interactions. A1 illustrates this point as follows:

> *everyone was saying anything at all about the interactions. Which one should I take, why can't each one explain his thought before the other. I was confused on what to say about how things were going.*

This excerpt is taken from an instance during which A1 was asked to reflect on any of discussions which he deemed was crucial to how he reflects during group discussions. Significantly it explains the importance of the need to recognise established ground rules, as the complex group dynamics could affect the way the group interacts (Ahern, et. al 2006).

Research Questions 2: What discussions structure of interactions support the community to be effective in their interaction in Asutifi North District?

According to Fook and Gardner (2007), participants are able to respond to issues within any interactions by following explicit rules and procedures. However, Wellington and Osborne (2001) also posit that within interactions that involved free talk, tacit or 'unwritten rules' to guide the activities. The understanding here is that there could be tacit rules as well as explicit rules. These two forms of rules seemed to have an effect on professional cultures within which the members operated, as was evidenced in the study

The issue of following a set procedure during discussions proved contentious. The participants expressed mixed feelings regarding whether it was appropriate to have a well-structured procedure or whether their arguments were to be based on their experiences. The evidence indicated that there was a feeling that adhering rigidly to a set procedure has its own problems. For instance, A1 queried: "*how do you expect everyone to agree with me in an argument*?" His point raises lots of interesting ideas about the role of the chief during discussion. What the chief sought to know was what kind of strategy A1 was using. One relates to multiple perspectives based on specific choices and preferences, because the ability to agree on issues depends on one's background information, as explained earlier. Again it depends on the objective analysis of the issue. Using these two instances, it is difficult to adhere to a single procedure. However, for better understanding and uniformity of arguments, A1 later said: "*our argument need to be uniform, you pick the issue, raise reasons to support your claim"*. This was supported by A4 who asserted:

> *to me if we follow a well structured procedure where there are no ambiguities, certainly every one can follow it but where there are challenges then it will be of no use.*

The conclusion here then is that, aside from the substance of the argument, the procedure for the argument is necessary.

Similarly, following any rigid procedure or rule regarding using experiences which are tacit seemed difficult, because where the literature is cited or describes a critical incident it is easier for one to fall on his experience to support claims made. In such a situation, it is the appropriateness rather than a sequence of ideas that is required.

Conveying this idea A3 said:

> *selecting an appropriate evidence to support a claim, needs to be left to the individual and not on developed rules. The validity of the argument depends on the individual's analytical skills.*

A2 supported A3's view and added that a person's ability to advance an already raised idea to support any claim made irrespective of the focus of the discussions is important. He commented:

> *at times an incident reflects an already discussed event. Therefore it is how the individual can advance such idea to support an argument which is important.*

In spite of the fact that the idea behind these two excerpts downplays rules and principles in discussions, inherently it calls for rules when tacit experiences are concerned. Analytical skills mentioned by A3 follow principles and rules for advancing appropriate experiences, which also depends on procedures. Therefore in order to ensure conformity, rules are crucial in any discussions.

Even though Hatton and Smith (1995) have asserted that it is not sufficient that reflection is encouraged by a procedure and instead must be specified to demonstrate that particular kinds of reflecting are taking place. From my personal experience, it seems that when adopting either explicit guidelines or implicit tacit experiences for conformity's sake, procedures or guiding rules in discussions are crucial.

Another point worth noting is that when individuals are part of the development of activities, they stand to understand the procedures better than when they are not. In such a

situation they are in a better position to review and monitor the activities (Mattessich et. al., 2001) in order to address any shortcomings. To be able to do this requires standards. The evidence indicated that "in the absence of standards there is the need for guiding rules and procedures" (A1). Sharing this viewpoint, A3 said:

> *I think as we share our views without any standard to verify whether our views are the required one, we can follow a procedure where our claims can be consistent with our views.*

Acknowledging the impact of guiding rules, A1 stated that;

> *the way I have developed a better understanding of actions was because I had the privilege to be part of the development of our guiding rules in discussing. It has helped me a lot since it initiated the ideas we put in the discussions.*

The argument here is that in any activity which is underpinned by the aim of participants change, involving participants in such exercises go a long way to ensuring the participation is appropriately equipped with the necessary skills that could help them initiate ideas necessary for discussions.

When discussions end abruptly, as previously mentioned, one potential reason is inconsistency in guidelines. The conclusion here is that the quality of the rules is tied to how the interaction proceeds. Since the interactions have been found to influence the understanding of the practices, it can probably be concluded that the understanding of the practices could be linked to the nature of the rules. In view of this, the inability of the rules

to support better understanding from the case study resulted in some of the rules being modified. In addition, the rules also contributed to how the process supported monitoring the participants' practices.

As the process progressed, difficulties from the participants' viewpoints in relation to how the rules were related could not support discussions of the practices. However, re-examination and modification of some of the rules led to better understanding, and also led to the identification of new problems. The continuous identification of problems was possible due to new interpretations given to modified rules. The discovery of new problems allowed two participants to express their dissatisfaction regarding modifying rules. A1 was not in favour of modifying rules. He felt that a rule is a rule, and that it should not therefore be regularly changed. In support of this, A4 said:

> *if rules are to be changed regularly, then we have problems ourselves. Either we did not understand what we are doing or better still the rules are not serving the appropriate purpose*.

It is apparent that these two participants were not enthused with the frequency of rule modifications. However A2 was of the opinion that "rules that cannot stand the test of the time, and need to be modified as new challenges emerged from their environments". A2 raises a good point, which I support in the sense that rules need to be versatile and not static in their application.

Even though there were some reservations about rule modification, the evidence gathered shows that regular modifications stimulated some thinking about the process of

collaboration and reflection. It was indicative for a monitoring device to be part of this process. It is therefore argued that in any reflective collaborative activities, modifying rules is a necessary means of modifying the process. This in effect acts as a monitoring device and could be used as a guiding standard to assess process effectiveness. The aforementioned therefore points to the fact that, the rules support effective reflective collaborative dialogue.

Such a reflective approach is, in effect, an influencing factor on the thoughts of participants in trying to explain the importance of using rules. However, in order to address the time problem, which has been raised most frequently in relation to participants change activities, awareness of its importance need to be stressed during the development of the rules. But, it is argued here that, even though adopting such rules in the development stage is important, there is the need for flexibility as the context within which the rule is used is crucial (Fonk & Gardner, 2007; Ahern, et. al., 2006)

Developing confidence despite issues of doubt and feelings of being threatened, A4 believes

> *...in using rules, one can imagine what happens at the end of an interaction. During the discussion, each one's turn gave me an impression of what I needed to have done. I saw some challenges in the way they expressed their views.*

The understanding here is that the turn-taking order can be described as a stimulating device for reflection. The important point to take from this is that for A4, reflections depended on a specific rule and it goes to support the claim that for effective reflection, collaboration is vital (Day, 1999). Furthermore, it is argued that, from A4's

perspective, it is crucially important to have some projection during reflection, but I think, as remarked by A4, there are some challenges. The study however provided some respite through which the participants reflected on theirs and others' reflections to provide alternatives which served as a prediction.

This study suggested that the rules, including, but by no means excluding, the tacit and explicit rules influenced the opportunities for the participants to develop confidence in analysing practice, and engaging in collaborative dialogue in the messy and complicated interactions. Again the 'why' and 'how' questions shape their thoughts and could serve as a strategy which operates as a platform upon which one could develop understanding of a professional culture that is dominated by socio-cultural processes.

In examining the data, it was observed that the participants cherished how the activities provided them with a sequential ordering of activities. It enabled them to follow most arguments in an order which made their reflections easy. It also gave them the chance to question and uncovers some of their unidentified knowledge about their practices. The exit meeting analysis confirms this, with the participants acknowledging the efficacy of the structures:

> *as we hold discussions organised along the activities, I could easily reflect to link a previously discussed incident with what we would be discussing. (A4)*

> *...when we have our discussions practically discussed you actually know and understand issues well. I always seemed motivated more especially the well organised activities. (A3)*

> *...most of our discussions are culturally inclined. The activities here are more organised practically and it gives you the feel of what you know and what to do. It is not about what we can do but what we do. (A2)*

With the participants acknowledging the structured activities as influencing their reflective and collaborative practices, their preference for any participants change activity would be getting activities well organised. The commitment and willingness to attend to any participants change activity depends on their acceptance of such an activity. The case study evidence showed they were committed and willing to be part of the activities as they depended heavily on it to interrogate and understand their practice. However the systematic nature too could promote boredom and stereotyping as the evidence showed.

Research Question 3: How committed are individuals when dialoguing on chieftaincy issues in Asutifi North District?

What came out strongly in the analysis for this research was how the participants could engage themselves by committing to the trajectory of the discussion. A facilitator factor directed the discussion pattern.

Facilitator Factor

In trying to integrate into the reflective and collaborative activities, Fevre and Richardson (2002) have noted that, the perception of the one's roles and views about participants change is crucial. Evidence from this study indicates that the inclusion of someone considered as a facilitator only acted as a catalyst and impulse-giver, rather than

leading the group in their discussions. For the facilitator to integrate, coordinate and maintain the tempo of the interactions, in other words, to minimize any negative backlash in the study, in order to gain a better understanding about what he intends to do is crucial. This confirms the suggestive evidence for the need of a facilitator in any reflective collaborative exercise from Rarieya's (2005) study in Pakistan. Rarieya investigated the impact of a facilitator in reflective exchanges in Pakistan and came out with some interesting results. One of the aims of his study was to explore the facilitator factor on participants during discussions. The data sources included individual interviews, informal conversations, participant's observation, environment observations, personal documents, researcher journals and opportunities to engage in reflective dialogue. To support this A1 said;

> *Eric will be the right person to explain some of the concepts for us since he is a chief and do understand some of our discussions well*

> *I do not agree to what you are saying because he has told us to talk about what we think is appropriate if we are discussing issue in the palace. For example the manner to which the linguist suggests issues is not proper we need someone to interpret what we are saying (A3)*

> *Who should talk for who? Are we not all from the palace? To me let us talk about what is happening in the palace when it comes to resolving issues and not to think someone*

else will contribute to what we are saying (A4)

From all that you are saying it means we need someone to lead us during some of the discussion in the palace (A2)

The implication of this would be that the facilitator is critical and must be made part of the planning of the activity in order to have better knowledge about the rationale of the study. Part of the facilitator's role is therefore to relinquish all his background information in order to ensure that the participants are not intimidated by their presence, especially when they get to know of such background information. Whether one can completely relinquish such a background is a problem that needs to be investigated. Currently there appears to be insufficient information about how this could be done. The current lack of information is what prompted Ben (2005) to catalogue the dos and don'ts of the facilitator. The list generated places the facilitator in a better position regarding his neutrality in any collaborative activity. Clearly, the evidence of this case study seemed to support the outline. However, the positioning of the facilitator seemed to be linked to developing ground rules to support effective interactions.

Research Question 4: What is the form of interactions within communities in resolving challenges in Asutifi North District?

From the analysis, the following were what influenced the discussion from the interaction that the participants engaged with; deep thinking processes, sharing of multiple ideas and influence of cultural norms. Judging from the evidence gained in this case study; it appears the key determining factor to allow the participants to develop their own ground

rules was how they could initiate their own ideas to have control of the process. Because personal narratives require a significant degree of mutual trust, developing norms to guide the process with the locus on honouring confidentiality and refraining from commenting on views as told through personal reflection, until views made are essential in determining personal comfort levels as indicated by the case study evidence. As observed by Mercer and Wegerif (1999), a balanced and the integration of participants, into a well structured activities and individualised/group work provide an environment of discourse of practices where rules to guide a collaborative activity is crucial. However the study added another dimension of tacit rules regarding the disciplinary features of the social cultural norms and played significant role in the study. This being the case, the interaction also seemed to promote triad rule: ground rules developed by participants, the prevailing cultural norms rules as well as tacit inherent rules in everyday life of individuals.

In summary, there was ample evidence from the interviews, observations and RD to lead to the conclusion that as far as the interaction process was concerned the special characteristics of the participants are crucial components that need to be given the recognition in order to understand the nature of the process. The use of acquired expert knowledge, prior experiences, willingness and commitment were characteristics that can support better reflective collaborative activities. It is therefore reasonable to conclude that the need to identify participants with such characteristics is vital. As the review in chapter two shows, the ethos of collaboration implies getting participants who can provide relevant and appropriate information to such interactive activity is crucial. Again within the literature of collaboration, the processes and activities which are organised require logistics in supporting the process (Mattessich et. al., 2001). The multi reflective outcome from the

participants explains how the interaction process informed their reflective ability.

Deep Thinking Processes

Generally, the evidence from the research suggested that the participants' ways of expressing their views on what stood out referred to as 'call-out' (Gallimore & Stigler, 2008) describes how they engaged in rich and deep professional dialogue. Some empirical research evidence suggests that participants' change in the way they engage in professional dialogue is linked to their preferences for 'call-outs' (van Es & Sherin, 2008), and within the transcribed data from the RD, the issue of what stood out to them and how they attended to them came through with great emphasis. Following on from the identification, I drew on the strategies of the prior research of van Es and Sherin (2008) to create the categories considered appropriate to explain the behaviour of the participants.

Having identified the four dimensions from the outset, a further examination of the ways in which the participants discussed their practices over time revealed changes in their exchanges. The resultant changes in types of discussions and the extent to which evidence was used to support their claims. From re-reading the transcripts, it was revealed that specific comments and ideas from already discussed actions were used as evidences to support further claims made by the participants. The early sessions did not produce much in-depth reflection, as comments were mostly descriptions, judgemental remarks, recounting, agreeing and disagreeing, repetition and explanations. However as the process progressed, deeper and much more challenging reflective comments characterised their discussions. Feedback and interpretation, both of which involved individuals asking thought provoking and rhetorical questions, making references to already issues, which had

already been discussed climaxed the interactions.

The outset saw some attitudinal behaviour characterising the discussions. These initial behaviours were influenced by the fact that the participants thought that the exercise was an assessment of the quality of their environment. They later came to the realisation that it was a way of developing and understanding their practices. This influenced their later comments about the process and some behaviour like boldness, uniform criticism and cooperation within the discussions.

In sum, the participants' use of combination of the dimensions could be described as fostering rich professional dialogue or deep reflective dialogue. However, the case study evidence suggested that because of one of three reasons raised, the professional dialogue could be achieved over time and not instantaneously. First, as the participants interrogated each other, and shared their views with the intent of understanding their different practices, rivalry and conflicts forced the group to divide into factions, where sometimes each refused to accept the others' view(s). Second, the early part of the process was characterised by discussions, which were unrelated, unorganised, and involved non-conformity in advancing views, and third, there were no existing criteria to judge the authenticity of the views expressed.

Even though the wider literature suggested that talk-in-interaction needs to be contextually oriented and structurally organised (Hall, 2006), the case study evidence indicated that some behavioural and attitudinal issues, which intertwined with the dialogue patterns, did not help the systematic organisation of the dialogue, however the process seemed to support the development of rich and deep professional dialogue.

Generally, there was evidence that when participants engage in an interaction to discuss

their practices, what happen is characterised by divergent views at one point or the other.

How such divergence views are managed by the group is vital. Such characteristics sometimes result in the creation of factions within the interaction. However consistency in sharing of ideas, through engaging with the activities seems to influence how the participants made sense of what they had been confronted with. Acknowledging such behaviour enables one to reflect upon and learn from such a difficult challenge. The case study suggested that the participants were able to develop a better understanding of their practices from the difficult situation they found themselves in. This was achieved through consistent, continuous and systematic discussions of their practices. It can therefore be concluded that the increase in frequency of their focus on interpreting what stood out to them, helped minimise the effect of the conflicting situations, and rather made them develop a better understanding of the situation.

The case study evidence also indicated that as the participants reflectively collaborated to discuss their views, even though the focus was a random selection of one or two of the specificities, their initial descriptive comments gave way to more interpretive comments and developed better understanding. The researchers van Es and Sherin (2008) point out that when participants engage in consistent interaction, changes take place and can lead to important insights of the issue at stake.

The findings from the study raise some interesting issues. From the analysis, it could be seen that the participants were found to select any of the specificities at their own convenience. Depending on one's perceptions, claims and counter claims, as well as rejection or lowered attention to any proposal or alternatives are made. In a situation where a view is vehemently contested, entrenched stances are taken leading to chaos and

uncooperative behaviours. Such uncooperative tendencies led to other members withholding relevant and appropriate information. Mutual and beneficial sharing becomes absent or limited and some pressures in the environment suppress or stifle reflection and collaboration. There is evidence to suggest that sometimes a stifling environment can hinder reflection and collaboration. But a safe and conducive environment for self revelation in reflection (Hatton & Smith, 1995) is vital in addition to making the rest respond to any observed action. A theoretical explanation of how this might come about is "to investigate and improve interactions in a supportive environment" (Hatton & Smith, 1995, p.44), thus improving reflection and collaboration on what is observed among the participants involved.

Another finding was lack of conversational format. From the analysis, the unsystematic selection of the specificities and the corresponding dimension made fragmented discussions. When everybody within any group expresses reflective views differently, multiple views seemed to dominate the interactions. However, the chaos that could characterise such a situation does not generally support the development of better understanding. Significantly, inconsistencies in discussion would pose a threat to the validity of reflections since only self reflections without collaboration exist, and group understanding of an issue under discussion seems impossible. Developing insight becomes an individualised affair, but Day (1999) posits that for better understanding, people who are willing to collaborate are reflective persons. The case study evidence suggests that consistent and continuous editing of participants' assertion accompanied with questions on such practice is important for understanding. The following quote illustrates this: "*I seem to gain valuable insights from our analysed views when we discussed our views*

consistently. I think group discussion continuously is good" (A1).

This quote clearly shows that when groups reflect and collaborate on their practices better understanding and clarity of issues becomes real. Further, the interaction saw the following;

> *Most of the time when we are summon to the palace, whatever issue require individuals to deeply think before responding to issues because you may be subjected to many questions from others (A2)*
>
> *In resolving issues what you need to do is to use your stored experiences to resolve some of the conflicts brought to the palace (A1)*
>
> *If you are not a deep thinking individual you will always be found wanting (A4)*

It is therefore reasonable to conclude that group reflective collaboration triumphs over individual reflection on similar actions. It is possible to argue that allowing a group of participants to engage in reflective collaborative activities on their practices see participants developing rich and deeper professional dialogue. For example Hatton and Smith (1995) argue that:

> *"...it is important to structure situations, ask questions about what is happening and why, through this individuals will find it easy to identify what they want to learn, and have sound interpersonal*

relationship" (p. 40). In addition, Rarieya (2005) also argues that "participants are able to share alternatives with group members in a reflective collaborative session after discussing their views" (p. 323).

In my view, a concern of what good practice is seemed to elude the group as they reflected on their assertions. One particular instance in the study asked such a question, but the group never attended to it. There is evidence in literature which shows that in reflective collaborative activities, there are changes in thinking that are useful in practice (Fook & Gardner, 2007). This means thinking more deeply and broadly, taking into account different perspectives, being more rigorous *about* evidence for views expressed and integrating different views into their discussions (Fook & Gardner, 2007 p.139). For the group to ask questions and make it an important discussion regarding "what is good suggestion", it was within their own context of dialogue to decide what good suggestion was. This is illustrated in the following quotation: *"this deep and rich discussion is really telling us what good suggestion is" (A2).* In support A3 said *I have to analyse and develop deeper understanding before I come out with any suggestion*

The analysis indicated that there was the use of appropriate and relevant evidence used by each to support their claims. There was therefore a pool of discreet individualised views that were not systematically presented. Isolated views presented on any view expressed characterised the discussions. Mutual sharing was problematic and did not encourage better understanding of whatever one wants to articulate.

However as the interaction progressed changes in the way they interacted did occur. Multiple views expressed dominated the discussions. Each view was rigorously analysed to identify, select and adopt the idea(s) deemed relevant in the view expressed. This process

enabled them to identify differences and similarities in any idea expressed. Supporting this view A2 said:

> *the thorough interrogation of our views, on how the interactions are managed to me is good. The manner we express similar and different views have led me have in-depth understanding in continuous manner and also afforded me to learn new things about what I need to do.*

Adding his voice to what A2 said, A1 also commented by expressing his observation:

> *I now really see how we are displaying our knowledge as we use specific evidence to support what we say. In fact the different ways we expressed our thinking is showing how we analyse issues in different ways which I think is good.*

These two excerpts acknowledged how the participants used relevant and appropriate ideas are tied to any discussions. If these are well managed, accumulation of isolated views could influence new learning as claimed by A2. In the same way new ways of addressing issues can happen, as was the view of A1.

There is evidence from the literature to the effect that just engaging in mere dialogue is not a sufficient condition to describe deep and rich thinking, rather this may be better thought of in terms of how relevant and appropriate isolated ideas could be synchronized (Fook & Gardner, 2007). The case study evidence indicated that an outwardly inconsistent and flawed analysis, by one of the participants, which epitomizes 'know-all' character, was a compelling factor that inhibited other members within the collaborative group from airing their ideas during the discussions. The discussions were

therefore sometimes characterised by irrelevant and inappropriate views, rather than views that promote the search for an alternative (Mattessich et. al., 2001). Expressing his dissatisfaction about such behaviour A2 said: 'A1 you do not want anyone to talk about your view expressed, but your argument is not convincing'. A2 made a point, and others supported his view that to qualify to dominate a discussion an individual should ideally possess the relevant and appropriate knowledge. Furthermore, the inner belief that compelled anyone to engage in any discussion needs to be dealt with cautiously, as without the appropriate and relevant skills developing better understanding of views expressed cannot be possible.

The case study evidence supported this anxious moments and fear motivated participants to make analysis explicit. This is how A1 described his feelings:

> *the rationale is for us to find a way to understand our views, but the way some of our actions and comments are condemned, I find it difficult to say anything on any view expressed. Look at the way A3 and A4 have paired up to always see something wrong with what I say.*

This view demonstrated the important role group behaviour plays in such interactions. It is worth noting that it is not how A2 reflected on what happened, rather his concern was about what is hindering such reflection that seemed to prevent further analysis of views expressed. This de-motivating issue, if it occurs within any group discussions, could not support better understanding as one's ego becomes threatened. Addressing such ego issues in the study was about how issues are raised, how multiple perspectives are expressed, how members audit comments made and how unacceptable views are discarded

with newly analysed and adopted ideas. Such developed behaviour is what Pollard et. al. (2008) believed was needed to underpin participants change activities.

The case study evidence further indicated that the aforementioned effect of the environment on reflection was addressed by the process later on as could be deduced from A2's following comment: 'this last part of the discussions is helping me pick on an issue, analyse it, synthesis and evaluate it with possible feedback given where appropriate'. Reflection from this excerpt indicates that A2 at the end recognises the diagnostic process in the way the participants analyse issues which according to him could "support them engage in rich and deep professional dialogue". The conclusion here is that, since the mind plays a significant role in reflection, anything that has an effect on an individual's thinking also influences reflection. Therefore the environment needs to be rich enough to provide effective reflection and collaboration.

Making sense of the realities of any situation especially those related to individual's subjective comments seems difficult and challenging. As has been discussed in the literature, one's belief about development may be linked to how you have been trained. The belief that, a deficiency in thinking connotes a bad participants' subjective view, normally sees participants jumping in to defend comments made regarding deficiency. Discussions on views now become a win-win approach. Claims and counter claims, disagreement and differences in opinion resulting in heated arguments characterise environments where each tries to justify their stance. The case study evidence indicated that if such complex occurrences are not managed well, unorganised ideas, conflicts and tension occur. In addition, compromises are hard to come by with the resultant effects, which can hinder effective reflection (Mattessich et. al., 2001; Fook & Gardner, 2007).

How best to manage the complex occurrences was what the study unravelled through the consistent and systematic dialogue sessions which gave way to opportunities to justify claims with relevant and appropriate evidences. The understanding is that when participants within any interaction group do not have the opportunity to justify claims, developing meaning from practice becomes difficult. However within a dialogue if participants have the chance to justify behaviour, information unavailable from mere observation is brought out. Participants are able to pour out what occasioned, from within them, the exhibited behaviour. Participants therefore need to reflect within the discussions.

Thus, participants need to be reflecting as well as reflect on what is said. Discussions therefore make an important contribution to the concept of reflection, which is about the extent to which it contributes to a valid interpretation of participants' involvement in the reflective and collaborative practices. Schon's principle of reflection which includes reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action was something the case study evidence seemed to support from a different angle. Participants' abilities that support them to reflect when they are caught in the dialogue was what was shown, but this depended on how useful information discovered within the dialogue is used to support their reflective views. In the context of the findings of the study, this means developing rich and deep professional dialogue is for the participants to have the opportunity to ask questions and also have the chance to pour out their reflective ideas of what they think about ideas expressed.

In practice, measures to encourage effective reflection and collaboration need to embrace questions and answers, openness, reluctance to offer responses to questions and the readiness to accept feedback, whether negative or positive. The environment needs to

encourage one to defend and to provide deeper information of ideas expressed. Equity as well as the opportunity for each participant to contribute to the discussions is crucial. More than anything else, this makes the argument for appreciable recognition of each one's contribution in messy and complex interactions. The contention of the study is that the effect of understanding ideas participants pour out need for them to use their reflective and collaborative practices to support understanding which Schon (1987) calls is reflection-in-action. This is what individuals need to do to enable them compose a new situation, in a continuous manner, so that as they develop, they can make reference to, at any time in the course of their work. It is therefore reasonable to say that, providing an environment where views could be expressed and contested, but where the ultimate aim is to develop understanding, in order to guarantee consensus building and compromises through which challenging situations could be attended is critical in reflective collaborative interactions.. One step forward would be for the participants to tolerate multiple reflective views, increased and constant auditing of ideas, and also to be able to reflect when caught up in an activity in a collective decision taking.

The evidence provided information regarding how such development could be done. Similarly, according to Birenbaum and Pinku (1997), deficient knowledge of resources coupled with metacognition awareness of inadequate mastery stimulates anxiety. As stated above, once anxiety occurs, it becomes a vicious cycle and could influence the thinking of the individuals in the interaction group hence their inability to diagnose their actions. Evidence from the observation, especially from the outset, showed cracks within the group. There were seemingly two opposing factions within the group.

A4 bemoaned the division and blamed A1 for such cracks, as could be seen from

the following comment: "*The division caused by A1's behaviour seemed to affect our meetings. Views are suppressed making us lose valuable reflected ideas from all*". This evidence suggested that rivalry that has been raised already could be a cause of unreflective behaviour within any interaction. One opposes the others' views, but supported their partners' views. Each saw any event from different angles and there was an unending argument. Their comments seemed difficult to organise, as each had a biased view of the other. Quite apart from this evidence, A1 put out behaviour where he wanted everyone to adopt one strategy in their contributions. This behaviour defeats the aim of the study, as there is suggestive evidence in literature to support the fact that following one strategy in any reflective activity makes individuals unreflective. Dymoke and Harrison cited in Zeichner and Liston (1996) stated that:

> *participants who are unreflective about their behaviour tend to be more accepting of everyday reality and "concentrate their efforts on finding the most effective and efficient means to solve problems that have largely been defined for them by some collective code" (p. 9)*

If participants strictly adhere to the code of practice outlined for them and are not open to other ways, they will prevent them from framing identified problems (Dymoke & Harrison, 2008). However, Pollard et. al. (2008) think being reflective does not mean one should be concerned and interpretive of reflective practice. Rather, it should be an active concern with aims and consequences as well as means and technical competence to reframe and resolve a problem. Therefore, if the participants' contributions are influenced by the 'collective code' then it makes sense that the participants were not reflective practitioners. Because in supporting Dewey's view of reflective actions, the participants' ability to

identify and solve problems, suggest solutions, pose questions, hypothesize, reason and test their ideas in a sequential process of reflective thinking illustrates the potential skills and dispositions associated with reflective practitioners (Dymoke & Harrison, 2008).

With the interaction seen to spin around reflective collaborative activities (Pollard et. al., 2008), clustered around routine steps repeated over time, an avenue for the reinforcement of ideas in a continuous way was created. This means in the active or dynamic situation of the activities one could not help but be 'unreflective' in the curious sense. As the participants were constantly acting on the spot without stepping back to postpone acting, which is a reflective process to consider various alternatives to an action and consequences of the various alternatives, their reflections became problematic. However, the evidence provided opportunities to see where the participants carefully reflected about what to do or not to do in each and every step as the participants reflected on some actions and non-actions. Sometimes reflecting on all issues encountered is about thinking about all kinds of possibilities but while acting one could only do one thing at a time. In effect when rivalry sets in and is based on being forced to adapt to a single strategy, reflection becomes problematic just like collaboration as opined by Amoah (2011). This is why Zeichner and Liston (1996) think that participants who concentrate their effort to find effective ways of solving a problem defined by them or by some collective code are unreflective.

The progress of the process saw the participants embracing freedom of choice to accept implications. The way actions were set in motion to allow the participants to use what they already know in a unique manner enabled the participants to analyse issues collaboratively. This was achieved through the way the participants observed,

communicated, made judgements and made decisions through teamwork, which Dymoke and Harrison (2008) describe as a requisite competence for any reflective practitioner.

In summary, the conversation mechanics analysed lead to the conclusion, in spite of the problems of friction within the interaction activities. The process saw the participants engaging in rich deep professional dialogue. Also there are sufficient evidence that suggested the participants engaged in varied experiences that gave them the opportunity to audit and analyse their practices and offer deeper information which was shared and mutually beneficial to their discussions.

The case study evidence showed that as the participants tried to manage the observational and attitudinal behaviours they in fact were developing deeper and richer professional dialogue. When one considers the fact that emotional attachments normally put off people from engaging in activities that brought about such emotional pains, the participants engaged to minimise the pains and rather develop better understandings. Clearly the process needs to be given much attention as it could be a worthwhile activity if participants are to have autonomy and control over their development. However there are some critical issues that needed to be addressed which include participants 'orientation which is factionalism, irregular discussion format, not relying on only specific formats prescribed by one of the participants', rather it needs to be the one's own ingenuity used to resolve problems and participants' need to be ready to ask and be asked to justify reasons underpinning an assertion as posited by Amoah (2011).

An important question emerging from the analysis is that the views about the use of authority and exhibited by one participants saw the near disintegration of the group is linked to the one's beliefs enshrined in cultural norms. This leads to how such cultural

tenets could support better understanding of practise.

Multiple use of Ideas

Collaborative groups must experience a progression of 'successes during the collaborative process in order to be sustained' (Mattessich et. al., 2001, p. 10).

One of the issues which repeatedly showed up in the discussion was the whole idea of participants' beliefs in the discussions. This shaped their contribution to the discussions. The participants' beliefs were considered crucial for the study because it revealed something about their life.

Generally, events in interaction occur in a unique context and participants also attended to the context with unique characteristics. Within the interaction process, the multiple views expressed based on the individuals' understanding of what is said were as a result of how they attended to what they heard. The quality of the analysis that informed the views expressed seemed to depend on their competences. Views expressed by the participants indicated that if what is said by one participant is understood by another and adopted, then the individual has learnt a new idea. Emphasising this view A2 said:

> *I think how a person expresses what he knows depends on his competencies to be able to support us resolve our problems. A1 view on what he said made me understand what was being discussed well. Through his views I was able to discard some ideas I formerly held. I think I have learnt a lot from what he said.*

This view reveals the notion that participants attend to events in varied ways and in

each way help to update their knowledge. The comment suggested that the participants learn, re-learn and discard knowledge that are non- functional. It also illustrates how the participants recognise the influences of others' ideas on their thinking. The comments also reveal how someone could learn from what one tells the other. As it has been repeatedly pointed out that sharing others' reflective views in a collaborative endeavour provides an environment where one could view issues from different perspectives. The understanding of others ideas that encourages one to look again and learn from the provided idea, as corroborated by Rarieya (2005) idea of using reflective dialogue to discuss participants' views.

The results of the study suggested that the way in which the participants in the study acknowledged the process is atypical. This helped them to analyse a myriad of issues until they hit the 'eureka' to resolve what seemed problematic about views expressed. However they seemed to be challenged by their own personal beliefs as stated earlier. For example A4's belief in collaboration was extended to calling for colleagues to support others to resolve problems. Such belief shaped his reflection and became the object of his consciousness. In addition, A2 also felt role adoption is crucial in such reflective collaborative exercises. The implication, as the above beliefs of the participants suggest, is that basing one's ability to learn from others' unique capabilities means that within the interaction, the different facet of skills on display and used concurrently or appropriately provides multiple ways for each to learn from. What we have in this instance is how the participants' reflective analytical qualities are put into play.

The result of the above scenarios is adopting processes that can be emulated by the participants in the reflective corroborative environment that could support them to expand

their reflections and collaboration (Rarieya, 2005; Mattessich, et. al., 2001) to include their personal beliefs. This can, as the evidence from the views of the participants in the study indicated, depend on time since the unique characteristics of each individual will not allow all to develop such skills at the same time. The data supported the fact that each could process their ideas at different rates. A1 and A3 relinquished their beliefs regarding the ingrained cultural norms and the indifferent attitudes respectively as the process progressed.

The discussions so far pointed to the fact that the participants acknowledgement of learning from the sharing of their reflective views were triggered by unusual or uncomfortable experiences or where their expectations of reality did not match the systematic presentation of their reflection to strengthen their beliefs (Zeichner & Liston, cited in Clark & Otaky, 2006). However, they were more pleased with the outcome as illustrated in the following statement:

> *what I got from the exercise is overwhelming. I never knew my posture negatively affected our discussions until later on when I became aware. Dealing with such complex group is difficult but I think we managed it. (A1)*

In supporting what A1 said, A3 also noted: *"I now know how to organize my thought well, by involving my other colleagues*". The excerpts show how each saw the impact of the interaction process. This suggests that the interaction process is a powerful strategy for fostering reflective action that can promote varied learning experiences. It is a technique which can be structured to provide a process that encourages systematic

presentation, as gathered from the influence of the activities on linking these to what they know to what they do not know. The discussion so far points to the fact that beliefs and time frame had both positive and negative influences on any discussions. Being able to manage time can support learning in different ways as well as aid progression of 'success' and understanding (Mattessich, et. al., 2001).

When all is said and done, collaborative reflective dialogue is that which is underpinned by multiple perceptions and has the tendency to provide different ideas, either on the same issue or different issues. In a sustained manner, if ideas can be analysed to determine the appropriateness and relevance of the information provided, varied ways of meeting new things continuously can happen. This explains Eraut's (1994) view that knowledge can be acquired variously and that many factors influence such acquisition. He goes on to say 'new knowledge is increasingly sought to cope with external demands for change but rarely for ongoing improvement of practice' (p. 30). However for stability's sake, participants engage in numerous activities in search of knowledge to be able to meet the ever increasing needs (Gewirtz, et. al., 2009) as a way of improving understanding.

Again it has been suggested that beliefs shape practice and orient practical knowledge (Marland, 1998; Aguirre & Speer, 2000; Minnot, 2006; Virta, 2002; Kupari, 2003). Furthermore, the beliefs of the individuals shape the development process individuals go through. The belief one holds also determines one's readiness to respond to what might be new or different about new contexts. The understanding here is that belief and practical knowledge about an issue can coexist, and the transformation of beliefs into practical knowledge can happen through reflection. According to (Kyekye, 1997 and Owusu-Menasah, 2006) the Ghanaians' belief, which is influenced by the cultural norms that is

underpinned by communal spirit where “one is the others’ keeper”, is what supported them to develop understanding of any issues under discussion.

Cultural Norms and Discussions

The literature pointed to the need to pay much attention to prevailing cultural norms underpinning individuals’ behaviours, as it was found to assist participants in developing a better understanding of their practices. Saliently it helped them maximise the conditions under which they operated and opened up their deep assumptions that led to learning new perspectives (Fook & Gardner, 2007). Within the literature, apart from the societal cultural influence, the palace’s culture also plays a significant role, as argued by Scribner (1999), in developing understanding of issues. He also noted that the prevailing culture within any environment can influence the participants ' sense of efficacy.

However within the transcribed narration of the participants from the study, the idea of respect, communal engagement and the expectation for members to adhere to norms regarding the acceptance of views from the aged were prominent issues the participants struggled to tolerate and accommodate. These tenets are strong Ghanaian cultural demands.

While it is evident that collaboration emphasises trust, respect and cooperation, these constructs could also hinder collaborative activities. From this study, the behaviours of the participants suggested that tacitly, their societal cultural norms were so much ingrained in their daily lives and conversations to the extent that they influenced what they said during the interactions. Despite the fact that the cultural norms created an opportunity for giving voice to their own thinking, as well as making them sensitive and constructively very critical about what they said, it hindered their interactions from the

outset.

However, as the process progressed, the participants behaviours showed that they made sense of their experiences through the knowledge, beliefs, schema and attitude, which are culturally situated experiences (Richardson, 2004). Their actions, beliefs and ideas seemed to hold them up and help support how they engaged their colleagues to scrutinize their actions in a more willing manner. This is because as stated by Richardson (2004):

> *...the degree to which any one participant will actually engage in reflection depends on their individual propensities and abilities. Thus it is participants' underlying personal values and beliefs that effect (sic) their interpretation of ideas.... and their ability to engage in reflection is affected by their previous (and current) experiences of the..... its culture and climate (p.431).*

A1, who was the oldest among the group, was observed from the outset to be fairly dominant. He normally wanted each participant to follow exactly what he instructed them to do.

The case study evidence indicated that continuous insistence resulted in some resistances from the other. Their behaviour gives room to examining some hidden policies of the routine interaction behaviour (Quicke, 2000) of the participants. His behaviour, which is the influence of culture, could be described from the outset as prejudicial to such a process, however over time it changed. Therefore I suggest that such cultural norms need to be rendered responsive to the aim of any such interaction process.

A1's behaviour change appeared to be the result of his becoming aware of how the cultural

norms have influenced his behaviour. His request for further explanations, evidence to support justification, and his demand for support, shows his behaviour change which was made possible through reflections. The way he experienced different reflection could be attributed to how he separately used tenets within the same cultural norms. At one point he adhered to the age factor and at another point he was considering the communal aspect. Even though the two have their merits, the appropriateness of using any of the tenets is crucial. I therefore suggest that if the underlying cultural principles are well-identified and used, reflection is possible and effective.

As stated earlier, there are cultural characteristics which are tacitly used to reflect on the comments made. Some of the comments that portrayed such characteristics were observed to be serendipitous, and occurred without planning or forethought, but it was those which guided the individual' participants in their interactions within the environment. The participants instinctively were aware that they needed to share their views on any issue which arose. Supporting this idea A2 said:

> *...anytime I noticed a deficiency in any of our sayings, I always think about sharing it with all. It is something that has been with us right from our homes through school and now. I do not fear what others say about what I do.*

This confirms the fact that the communal cultural norm firmly entrenched in his behaviour, however this is tied to his thinking or reflection on any observed deficiency. The reflection made him aware of the cultural instinct for him to recognise the environment in a way that changes his perception of what is possible (Clark & Otaky, 2006).

Clark and Otaky (2006), following extensive research on reflection came to the

conclusion that "human's capacity is akin to our abilities to create and use language and other 'tools of the mind' to understand actions, even though the particular form it takes is shaped by historical, cultural and social factors" (p. 120). Furthermore, Hatton and Smith (1995) emphasise the need for consideration to be given to any form of knowledge or belief involved in terms of its support in reflection. This suggests that a more elaborate form of beliefs would have the potential to enrich the processes by which participants could support their understanding, on the grounds of cultural norms. By this definition much more information regarding how cultural norms could support understanding would be required than just their beliefs.

However, Bell and Gilbert (1996) have argued that participants need more ways to develop their practices. In contrast it has also been argued that participants have a more complex view of belief in their development (Adalbjarnardottir & Selman, 1997; Clarke, 1995; Geddis, Lynch & Speir, 1998). But Schon argued that the personal identity is very crucial in reflection, as it could influence a person's thinking. This is something, which the study unravelled, as the lengthy discussions helped the members to listen to others' perspectives and to share values to reach consensus. This meant that having honest and open intentions within an activity like the interaction process could support developing understanding.

In the case of sharing opinions, the issues of super-ordinate and subordinate demarcations are likely to be a thing of the past, as the evidence from this study indicated a way of erasing such dividing lines. Emphasising this A4 said:

I think we all need to put our heads together in helping A1 get the differences between what he is saying. I know we all have the

knowhow to get him over this problem. He is very good, older than us, he is our boss, and we have been learning a lot from him but this should not scare us from helping him out of this problems.

The excerpt indicates a two-way support from the dichotomy. Subordinates were found to support the change process of the super-ordinate. It is therefore important to focus on what participants know, rather than who the participants are, since what is said and how it is said are ultimate indicators of what needs to be taken seriously. Using such occurrences can help limit anxiety and disengagement, which is most of the time an outcome of participants' instructions (Clark & Otaky, 2006). A2's reflection could easily have been tacitly influenced by the underlying cultural disposition of the Ghanaian culture, which is embedded in his behaviour, and made explicit through his comments. This shows how he was exhibiting a socialising character to get along with others in the common good of the group, especially the super-ordinate.

Culture seemed to influence an interaction underpinned by multiple perspectives. On the contrary it could also promote compartmentalisation of views, more especially if the underlying principles show some inconsistencies. The evidence supported this view, emphasising this point A3 felt "we are expected to learn a lot from A1, but sometime he says something and does the opposite. For example, he expects us to follow a particular format when talking, but this view expressed is very confusing."

In a situation where views are to be shared on a practice, indecision can have a devastating influence on the interactions. Since according to Hatton and Smith (1995)

reflective thinking generally addresses practical problems, allowing for doubt and perplexity is necessary, before possible solutions are reached. Therefore the beliefs in framing and reframing practical problems to which solutions are being sought are crucial. It is therefore argued that the expectation of what cultural tenets seek to influence in the interaction is contrary to what was observed over time. Even though, it had influence during the interactions, discussing the impact of cultural norms in such an interaction needs to be looked at cautiously. However participants' knowledge and beliefs influence what they determine as important to attend to in complex situations (Schoenfeld, 2004). Such belief helps to identify differences in individual participants,' and how it could help them to advocate a specific approach (van Es and Sherin, 2006)

Imposition of ideas, where culture is used as a platform to advance behaviour is one revelation that came through the study. However, the evidence showed how such behaviour unravelled other behaviours that were being pushed on the other participants. Emphasising this A4 said "it is not everything that one knows that could be used anytime. It is its appropriateness that is important". A4 introduced another dimension-the appropriateness of such knowledge. I believe that the appropriateness of any information is vital to determine the extent to which the information could be used to develop understanding a practice. The suggestion therefore is that in the event of using cultural tenets to support the understanding of a practice, the relevance of the information to the context of discussion is vital.

The consideration of any belief or practice in the light of the support it gives and the consequences thereafter need to be taken into considerations. Open-mindedness, the ability to accept and adopt wholly any feedback and consequences needed to guide such

interactions. In addition, there is the need to suppress some dominant cultural norms that could hinder effective collaboration in order to develop better understanding of issues. In view of the nature of the study, where there is potentially reinforcement, replication and critical reflection, this cultural idea needs to be judiciously used to promote choices from the information provided so as to get relevant and appropriate information.

In conclusion, I have argued that culture could support developing the understanding of discussions in a collaborative reflective environment. The wisdom enshrined in the Ghanaian cultural structure allows, for example, the aged to dominate in discussions or reflections on issues. With reflection being considered as a human behaviour, and cultural norms seem to influence human behaviours, it is reasonable to conclude that in interactive activities that are underpinned by both reflection and cultural issues, for effectiveness, the two concepts need to be tied together in order to provide richer information.

Summary

The evidence reviewed in this chapter has suggested that opinion leaders could be used to address some fundamental problems that transcend collaborative and reflective practices. Issues like the promotion of effective collaborative environment, and managing the variety of observations and attitudes to the group discussions, and how cultural norms within an environment could support the development of understanding of participants. There are, however, some problems which make it difficult for these issues to be dealt with effectively. These include social, personal, professional and emotional issues.

Why the four factors were essential came through in a significant way, where

emphasis was put on the need for these factors to promote effective reflective collaborative exercises. The commitment and willingness of the individuals and the role they adopted, as well as the trust they have for each other, were considered to be very important. The systematic and regular nature of the activities helped the participants to develop new ways of interacting with their colleagues. It was also found to be important that the facilitator integrated into the process as well and strengthened how the participants collaborated with each other. In addition the development of the ground rules, even though this brought some emotional attachments, helped to prompt their ideas about what needs to be done in such complex, informal interactions.

The study revealed how individuals could develop deep and rich professional dialogue as they critiqued their practices. Such critiques often involved offering alternatives to identified deficiencies, and this revealed a mechanism for evaluating their practices. In theory such collaborative exercises need to help participants learn from different types of ideas. Even though it promoted it, lots of difficulties were encountered by the participants. Notably among them were the fear and risk of talking about one's practice, and the insecurity regarding the making public what was confidential information. In spite of this the study over time attended to these problems. Another significant issue is the way the process supported an understanding of participants' practices using their cultural norms as a springboard to stimulate such a discussion. The communal nature of the Ghanaian culture and the issue of respect for the older among the group were seen to have a big impact on their actions.

This chapter has indicated ways in which the participants changed in relation to several variables. This is really what the reflective collaborative activity is all about. The

changes in the way the participants then understood their practices seemed to result in them developing deeper thought processes. Such deeper thinking appears to result from the way they analyse what they observed, heard and said. The understanding here is that what is said and how it is said is an ultimate indicator of the individuals' reflection. In this case, it would be appropriate to know and understand the various changes that the participants went through, as they interacted with the process.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The study sought to find out how traditional leaders can collaborate with their people to develop an effective collaborative environment to push ahead interacting process that foster effective development with views heard from others. Adopting a case study with a qualitative approach, the study identified four participants (opinion leaders) used as the sample selected using purposive sampling techniques for the study. Both interviews and reflective dialogue were used to select data for the study. The thematic approach of data analysis was employed with emphasis on the constant comparative mode.

Major Findings

In support of the research questions generated for the study the following findings came out. With reference to question one, individual's personal identities and attitudes within the chieftaincy setup that supported effective reflective and collaborative activities among traditional leaders in Asutifi North District include individuals need to have in-depth knowledge about what ever issue that is discussed. This is because when there are disagreement and conflicts during the discussions, having such characteristics can support developing consensus. In addition having in-depth knowledge will support the development of better understanding. One other finding that came up strongly was how the individuals relied on their own personal historical precedence to solve some problems. This

means the participants used their prior knowledge to justify whatever they said. Using their personal experience led to the identification that mostly the prevailing cultural dimensions influenced a lot of their thinking. During the interaction, and with the focus of what the participants said the participants ability to effectively reflect was based on the repeated re-echoing their ideas. How issues were discussed was also another factor within the research question one that provided evidence on the identities, and this focused on the way issues were organized in terms of which came first for discussions and which follow.

Question two focused on the role chief's play in discussions to support the community to be effective in their interaction in Asutifi North District. In as much as the chief preferred the discussion to move in a particular direction, it came out from the study that whatever need to be discussed should follow some guidelines, hence, there was the need to develop ground rules to support any discussions within the interactions in the palace when issues are brought up for discussion. Even though some of the ground rules were enumerated, there were instances where tacit and unwritten as against explicit rules that were familiar to the participants were used. This suggest that the quality and understanding of the rules was paramount in discussion in the palace.

One major factor that influenced the use of reflection and collaboration was the facilitator issue. This came to answer research question three which was how committed are individuals when dialoguing on chieftaincy issues in Asutifi North District. Having a facilitator among the participants provided impetus to the participants to be committed to whatever they did. In view of this, the study findings indicated that the facilitator should be made part of the planning activities during the discussions and interactions. Since he need to have better understanding of what goes on during the interactions. However, the

facilitator has to relinquish all his background information in order to ensure the participants are not intimidated by his presences.

Analysis of the data shows that, question four, which identified the form of interactions within communities in resolving challenges in Asutifi North District, had the following as the answer; individuals need to engage in deep thinking process, should grapple with multiple ideas as well as being conversant with the cultural norms and dimensions within the interaction space. For participants to express their views on what stood out referred to as 'call-out' one needed to engage in rich and deep professional dialogue. This means one need to use evidences to support whatever is said about an issue. In addition, one needed to interrogate others views before drawing conclusions.

Making meaningful contribution in a unique context, the study found out that participants in such interactions would have to do more introspection with varied views at their disposal before concluding or come to consensus. This is because any view expressed by any individual came from how the individual is using his competencies within the interactions to develop any argument. Using multiple views enabled participants analyse multiple views before conclusions are made.

Within any cultural setup, there are some cultural dimensions that dictate how cultural issues are managed. The study evidence indicated that the participants behaviours showed that they made sense of their experiences through their knowledge, beliefs, schema and attitude, which are culturally situated. The show of respect among the older and one occupying high position within the chieftaincy setup tacitly influenced what the participants said. Comments that were unexpected show that the participants instinctively

were aware of the cultural norms being displayed. This provided a very conducive environment for discussion on how to resolve challenges.

Conclusion

Based on the findings from the study, the following conclusions were made from the study. In engaging individuals to support how committed to engage in any interactions within a traditional setup, the background information of those to be involved is very crucial. The individual's personal identities, his/her knowledge base on what is to be discussed becomes paramount in selecting who should be involved.

Again, there is the need for a well structured environment, where guiding rules and principles are developed to serve as basis for any discussions. Each member of the discussion group should be part of the development of the rules such that each will be familiar with what each need to do. Further, for effectiveness and for the group to be on-track but not to sidetrack, there is the need to find someone with the requisite experience to support interactions within the chieftaincy realm.

Another conclusion is that there is the need to ensure that traditional leaders within the community show commitments and to engage members to deliberate on critical confronting the community, there is the need to always include the community members collaboratively. In any interactive discussions, each member ideas have to be given prominence, because in an environment of multiple exchanges multiple views are mostly expressed hence the study results indicate that such multiple views need to be considered within any interactive environment.

It is required that members show in-depth knowledge about any situation, hence having deep thinking promote effective understanding of individuals involved in discussions in any interactive exchanges. In any collaborative exchanges, the need for one to manage the interaction mechanics is very crucial. To this effect, someone more experienced is required to support effective exchanges hence the need for a facilitator was evidenced in the study.

The structure of the traditional chieftaincy within any community of respected individuals who need to show expertise in knowledge which is underpinned by prior knowledge which are always imported and used when it comes to discussions related to the traditional setup, hence the exhibition of such knowledge is very crucial when issues bordering tradition are being discussed. Within any traditional community that is characterized with some degree of exchanges, members need to exhibit positive characters when discussions are ongoing, the study evidence brought one critical issues of members displaying positive characters that is underpinned by conducive environment.

Recommendations

Based on the findings that came out strongly from the study, the following recommendations are made;

1. To ensure commitment during interactions, the chief and his elders need to identify people who are information rich individuals, are to be selected to be included to preside over any challenge(s) that may come up for resolution. The group need not to be large (about four) is considered appropriate. Each member

should have in-depth knowledge of such tenets before making any contributions during royals and traditional discussions.

2. In resolving challenges and after members of a setup committee is selected, ground rule, either explicit or tacit need to be made clear before the commencement of deliberations. It is to be ensured that consensus building is the key for effective resolution of challenges. Members will have to develop a checklist on what to deliberate on at what period need to be made clear.
3. Roles and position of people within the traditional setup need to be clearly defined such that overlaps of duties are not compromised. An experienced one should be made to facilitate activities within the interaction. This then will make facilitation easier during discussions that are characterized with the expression of multiple views.
4. People who have the characteristic to analyse, engage others to develop consensus, share experiences and to empathize with anyone within the chieftaincy environ should be considered when getting people show commitment to solve challenges within the chieftaincy setup. Individuals who are abreast with cultural dictates within the Asutifi North District is preferable to be on any committee.

Area for Further Research

The study could be conducted using individuals within the Ntotroso palace who have about the same age. This will ensure that cultural dimension that did not allow participants to have equal chances in terms of how participants' voices are heard,

because of wider age range among the participants, could contribute to such interactions.

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APPENDIX A

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

KUMASI CAMPUS

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Background information

1. Can you tell me about your academic background?
2. Apart from your staying at the paramountcy what other responsibilities are of interest to you in the town?

Current approaches

1. How do you offer support to the paramountcy?
   i. Can you tell me an activity you recently engaged with which you were really pleased?
   ii. Why were you pleased with it?
2. i. What are some of the major approaches that you have been using when interacting with your colleagues?
   ii. Explain why and how some of the critical things you have been using influence the approaches you have been using.
4. What have you noticed in the past two years in your interaction with your chiefs and others?
5. i. What do you think you have been doing differently from what you use to do?

ii. What brought about the change?

6 Where and how have you been getting help in your everyday work?

7 i. Do you think you have been supporting your colleagues well?

ii. How have you been organising yourself which makes you think that you are a good mentor?

8. i. Why do you require personal needs and how do you think it can be addressed?

ii. Do you think there is the need to relook at the way you have been interacting with your subordinates?