

# CHALLENGES OF YOUTH ACCESS TO AGRICULTURAL LAND UNDER CUSTOMARY TENURE SYSTEM IN THE PERI-URBAN AND RURAL AREAS OF TECHIMAN IN GHANA.

## ABSTRACT:

This study examines challenges of youth access to agricultural land from both peri-urban and rural perspectives. Using the Techiman area as a case study, the study interviewed 455 youth and 23 elders made up of chiefs and family heads using multiple random sampling techniques. The results revealed that, the youth generally have access to small landholdings whether in the peri-urban or rural context but more pronounced among the peri-urban youth. These small holdings were a manifestation of the challenges underling the youth access to land under customary system. The predominant challenges facing the youth in both peri-urban and rural context included; high rental/ acquisition cost, land scarcity and land disputes. The youth also suffered more from the urbanization effects but do not benefit from proceeds arising out of peri-urban land use conversions. The study recommends youth agricultural land access policy and a compensation regime which benefits both the youth and adults in land use conversions in the peri-urban areas of Ghana.

**KEY WORDS:** Youth, land, access, challenges, Techiman

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The financial support from the IRE/BS Foundation for African Real Estate Research in the collection of data for this research and participation in AFRES 2017 Conference is deeply appreciated.

## INTRODUCTION

Youth constitute a vital social capital for economic growth. In Sub-Saharan Africa, the large cohort of youth or the youth bulge offers immense leverage in terms of labour needs, skills and knowledge to accelerate the developmental needs of the region. According to the World Bank (2014; 2007), the youth remains and will continue to remain Sub-Saharan Africa's abundant asset due to the transition in the demographic structure.

In Ghana, the youth<sup>1</sup> population was estimated to 8,992,300 representing 34.1% of the national population (GSS, 2014). Despite the sheer numbers of the youth, there is a growing problem of youth unemployment and underemployment the world over. Youth unemployment rates are estimated to be twice the general adult rate and close to half of the world's unemployed are youth (ILO, 2012) and the youth constitutes the largest group of job seekers in the developing countries (World Bank, 2007). The unemployment rate among the youth in Ghana was estimated at 5.5% (GSS, 2014).

Failure to channel the energies of the youth into productive activities could prove too costly for the society. This is because, youth agitations borne out of economic marginalisation can create insecurity and destabilise society. Youth as an intermediate social category can use their leverage to trigger off a process of change in a wider political setup (Sharp, 2002). The front role involvement of youth in world's street protests in recent years is as a result of their disillusion in the institutions' failure to tackle their employment needs and the disproportionate impact unleashed on the youth by the economic downturn (Annan, 2013). The World Bank also noted that; "Unemployed young people are more likely to feel alienated, express less confidence in existing political systems, talk less about politics, and more frequently support revolutionary ideas than their employed peers" (World Bank 2007: 175). The Bank again opined that, burglaries, drug offences and thefts are associated with youth unemployment.

In view of the visible threat and danger posed by the youth especially if not directed into productive activities, it is therefore imperative to pay attention to youth issues. There is increasing acceptance that developmental policies should at least address the needs and aspirations of the youth (Lintelo, 2011). The World Bank (2014) has advised that policy makers in Sub-Saharan Africa needs to prioritize youth employment issues.

In Ghana and the Sub-Saharan Africa generally, where agriculture remains a key sector in the national economies, youth involvement in agriculture to provide food, raw materials and at the same time secure employment cannot be underestimated. Agricultural sector could help alleviate the jobless situation of the growing youth population in Ghana. According to IFAD (2010) agriculture remains the world's single biggest source of employment. The sector has the potential to remain the developing countries' biggest source of employment (White, 2011). Again, the growing food demand and increasing demand for agricultural raw materials makes the sector a viable venture now and in the future (World Bank, 2014). The sector already employs more of the youth in the rural parts of Africa (Brooks et al. 2013) and could constitute a potential source of employment for many youth in Ghana. Access to land is crucial to enable the youth fully harness the immense potentials in the agricultural sector and to improve their economy fortunes. It is thus imperative to appreciate possible constraints to youth access to agricultural land.

Access to land is determined by the prevailing land tenure regime (FAO, 2002). Customary tenure system constitutes a central pillar in land rights access especially in Africa. The sector is dominant in Ghana and virtually all agricultural land rights especially in the rural areas emanate from the sector. The customary land owners are the principal actors in the Ghanaian land market providing land for various uses including agriculture. However, recent research has shown that the customary tenure system is fraught with a myriad of challenges and unable to guarantee equitable access to all within the social spectrum. It is noted that, in some parts of Ghana customary landholding arrangements often exclude groups such as the youth and women from equitable and secure access to land and partaking in decision-making on land matters (GCAP, 2015, Kwapong, 2009; CARE, 2004). [This study thus investigates youth access to agricultural land under the customary tenure regime in Techiman area of Ghana. The investigations were limited to the rural and peri-urban communities as these areas are the fulcrum of agricultural activities. Appreciate underlying challenges confronting the youth in their access to agricultural land within rural and peri-urban context makes it possible to ascertain if there exist any variations in terms of challenges given the](#)

<sup>1</sup> In Ghana, 'Youth' is defined as young women and men who fall within the age bracket of 15 - 35 years. This is the definition given in the Ghana National Youth Policy of 2010 by the Ministry of Youth and Sport

fast expansion of the city of Techiman. This understanding would be useful in making recommendations to enhance youth land access opportunities for agricultural purposes in the area.

#### CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY

Tenure system in a society attempts to answer a tripartite question as to *who* holds *what interest*, and in *what land* Okoth-Ogendo (1991). Tenure system regulates 'bundle of rights' or interests existing over a given piece of land (Cotula, 2007). Kameri-Mbote (2005) defined land tenure as the possession or holding of the rights associated with each parcel of land. She noted that land tenure ordinarily possesses at least three dimensions namely, people, time and space. Regarding people's dimension, she refers to the interaction between different persons to determine what interest an individual can hold over a given parcel of land; time dimension relates to the duration of one's interest or rights over land and spatial dimension refers to the physical limit of the space over which exercise of interests or rights relate to (Kameri-Mbote 2005). Land tenure is simply the relationship, whether legally or customarily defined, among people, as individuals or groups, with respect to land' (FAO, 2002: 3).

Customary land tenure is landholding in accordance with customary law (World Bank, 2010; Arko-Adjei, 2006). It is also defined as the "rights to use or dispose of use-rights over land which rest neither on the exercise of brute force nor on the evidence of rights guaranteed by government statutes but on the fact that those rights are recognized as legitimate by the community, rules governing the acquisition and transmission of these rights being usually explicit and generally known though not normally recorded in writing" (Fisher 1993, cf. Mends, 2006:9). Customary land tenure arises from the 'accepted practices and traditions of traditional society in obtaining, using, distributing and disseminating of its land (Mends, 2006; 13).

Institutional actors holding and administering customary lands on behalf of the subordinate members play key roles in the land rights allocation under customary land tenure systems. Institutions include norms, customs and informal social acceptable orders. According to Greif (2006: 30) institutions are system of rules, beliefs, norms and organizations which together create a regularity of social behaviour. In the view of North (1991), institutions 'are the humanly devised constraints that structure political, economic and social interaction'. These constraints consist of the formal (statutory laws and regulations) and informal (customs, taboos and norms) rules which define how individuals or organisations relate (North, 1990). The constraints according to North are the 'rules of the game' together with the enforcement framework. North further distinguishes institutions from organisations by noting that 'the underlying rules of the game' are institutions while organisations are 'groups of individuals bound by a common purpose'. Organisations are shaped by institutions and also in turn shape how institutions evolve.

Customary institutions are authorities drawing their legitimacy from 'tradition' but are sometimes regulated by legislation (Delville, 2007). Institutions in the context of land management refer to the authorities (individuals or organizations) who make the rules and enforce them, allocate land rights and arbitrate conflicts (Delville, 2007: 35). Customary institutions administer almost all of Africa's land area with immense institutional presence and trust by the locals (Deiningner, 2003). In the specific case of Ghana, majority of the land areas are controlled by customary institutions. About 80% of lands in Ghana are in the hands of stools and families (Kasanga, 1988, Sulemana, 2011, Bugri, 2013) and administered by customary authorities.

The relevant institutional actors or 'players of the game' under the Ghanaian customary tenure system are the chiefs, family and household heads. Youth access to agricultural land is shaped by the prerogative or authority exercised by these actors. Boni (2008) noted the chiefs and lineage heads are typically custodians of community and family land respectively, and household heads are custodian of households land on behalf of subordinate members. As noted by Delville, (2007: 36) customary tenure system is socio-political in nature and "based on status (nobles/ commoners/captives; founders/allies/outside), age (elders/youths) and gender (men/women) factors". This study focused on age dimension relating to youth agricultural land access within the context of authority exercised by these customary landholding institutional actors in both peri-urban and rural context.

### THE STUDY AREA LOCATION AND BRIEF PROFILE

The Techiman Traditional area is located within the central portion of the Brong Ahafo Region of Ghana (see Figure 1). The study covered all the two administrative districts (i.e Techiman Municipality and Techiman North district) within the Techiman Traditional area. The area shares traditional and political administrative boundaries with Offinso North district to the south, Nkoranza Municipality and Nkoranza North district to the east, Kintampo South district to the north and Wenchi Municipality in the West. This attests to the central position of the area within the geographical map of Brong Ahafo region and Ghana as a whole.

The population of the area both Techiman Municipality and North district was estimated at 206,856 with 47, 627 households as at 2010 (GSS, 2012). There is a relatively more female in the area than male. From the 2010 Census data the male population was estimated at 100, 498 (49%) while that of the female was also estimated at 106, 358 (51%). The population density is estimated to be over 316 persons/Km<sup>2</sup> (TENDA, 2013). The area is relatively more urbanised due to the rapid expansion of the city of Techiman, the capital of the traditional area. According to GSS (2012), majority of the population 123, 939 (60%) within the locality were urban with the remaining 82, 917 (40%) being rural. The urban population in the area is comparatively higher than the national proportion of 51% and the regional figure of 45% according to the 2010 Census data. Given the high proportion of the urban population in the area, more of the country's food is still produced in that corridor largely by this relatively small rural population. The fertile land in the area tends to attract a lot of migrant farmers mostly from the northern part of the country. The strategic location of the area and the presence of a big market in Techiman also make the area lucrative for marketing of farm produce and small scale businesses which also attract other people into the area for other non-agricultural business. This is largely responsible for the rapid increase in the population of the area (TENDA, 2013)

Agriculture is the main stay of the economy of the area. The area is generally regarded as an agricultural production corridor. This is largely due to the vast fertile lands across the traditional area. Over half of the economically active population is engaged in agriculture and related trade (TENDA, 2013). The major crops grown are food crops such as yams, maize, cassava, cocoyam, plantain and vegetables like tomatoes, garden eggs, onions and okro as well as cash crops like cocoa, cashew and mango. The soils in the area favour the cultivation of major cash crops and other agricultural produce. The Districts experiences both semi-equatorial and tropical conventional or savannah climates, marked by moderate to heavy rainfall. Major rains start from April to July and the minor from September to October with mean annual rainfall ranging between 1660mm and 1260mm. The dry season, starts in November and lasts until March. The average highest monthly temperature is about 300C (860F) and occurs mostly between March and April with the lowest of about 200C (680F) occurring in August (TENDA, 2013).

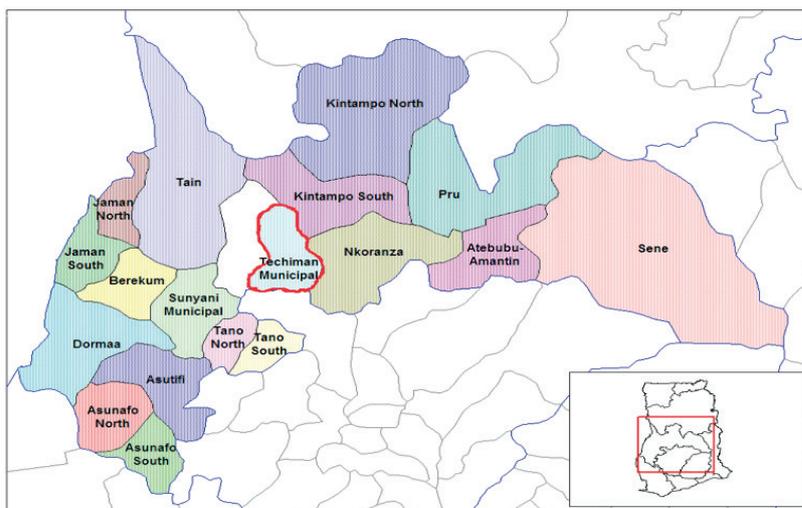


Figure 1: District Map of Brong Ahafo Region Highlighting the Study Area Districts

Source: Modified from [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Brong\\_Ahafo\\_districts.png](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Brong_Ahafo_districts.png)

The strategic location of Techiman serving as a contact zone and stopover point for traders from the North, the area exchanges products of two economic regions of northern and southern Ghana (Kasanga and Avis, 1988). The area is also host to a lot of migrant farmers from mostly the north of Ghana who are engaged in farming activities (TENDA, 2013). It is also a preferred area by some youth to engage in agriculture. Some youth in parts of this area are involved in agriculture especially the production of tomato (see Okali and Sumberg, 2012). It was thus an appropriate place to situate this study to understand youth land access needs towards recommending policy interventions to enable the youth fully exploit the vast opportunities in agriculture in the area.

## METHODS

Mixed research design (Convergence parallel design) was used in this study. This Convergence parallel mixed design requires that the researcher collects both quantitative and qualitative data at the same time during the study and then integrates the information in the analysis and interpretation of the overall results (Creswell, 2003). In this study, both quantitative and qualitative data were collected concurrently using both closed ended and open ended questionnaires from the youth, elders and chiefs. The different data sets were integrated in the analysis and interpretation. Mixed methods as a research approach is popular in the social, behavioural, and health sciences and the researcher collects, analyses, and integrate both quantitative and qualitative data to address specific research questions (Creswell, 2013). The combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches in the research processes are geared towards complementarity, in-depth understanding and corroborations (Creswell and Clark, 2011; Ganle, 2013). The mixed method is grounded on pragmatic research epistemologies or philosophical assumptions (consequence-oriented, problem centred and pluralistic perspective) (Creswell, 2003)

The decision to use mixed methods approach (*Convergence parallel design*) was to make it possible to ascertain youth landholdings and challenges based on their views and opinions while at the same time qualitatively explore the socio-cultural intricacies which underlie and govern land ownership and access regime under the customary tenure system in the study area from the elders who control land.

### SAMPLING APPROACH AND DATA ANALYSIS

The study applied multiple sampling techniques in a multi-stage sampling process. The study first purposively selected Techiman Traditional Area in Ghana for in-depth case study. The choice of the area was informed by the fact that the area is an important agricultural centre among others reasons espoused earlier. The communities in the Techiman area were first stratified into *urban*, *peri-urban* and *rural*. This stratification was necessary to enable analysis to be made based on peri-urban and rural dimensions to find out if there exist any variations in terms of challenges confronting the youth in their access to agricultural land. Given the fast expansion of Techiman, it was important to understand how this urban expansion affects youth land access in the peri-urban communities. The urban communities (i.e. Techiman Township) were excluded due to non-farm relative activities as this will not be useful for the purposes of this study. Stratification of the communities into urban, peri-urban and rural was based on functional aspect of the communities and not based on the demographic definition of urban. Communities which were predominantly agrarian though with high population and qualified to be urban per the demographic criteria were still classed as peri-urban or rural depending on their proximate to the city of Techiman and visible signs of urban sprout from the city of Techiman.

The next stage in the sampling process involves the selection of communities or towns stratified as either rural or peri-urban in the Techiman traditional area. The communities were numbered and a table of random numbers was used to select the communities to be covered. In all, a total of twenty (20) made up of 9 peri-urban and 11 rural settlements were sampled for field investigation. These communities are shown in the Figure below.

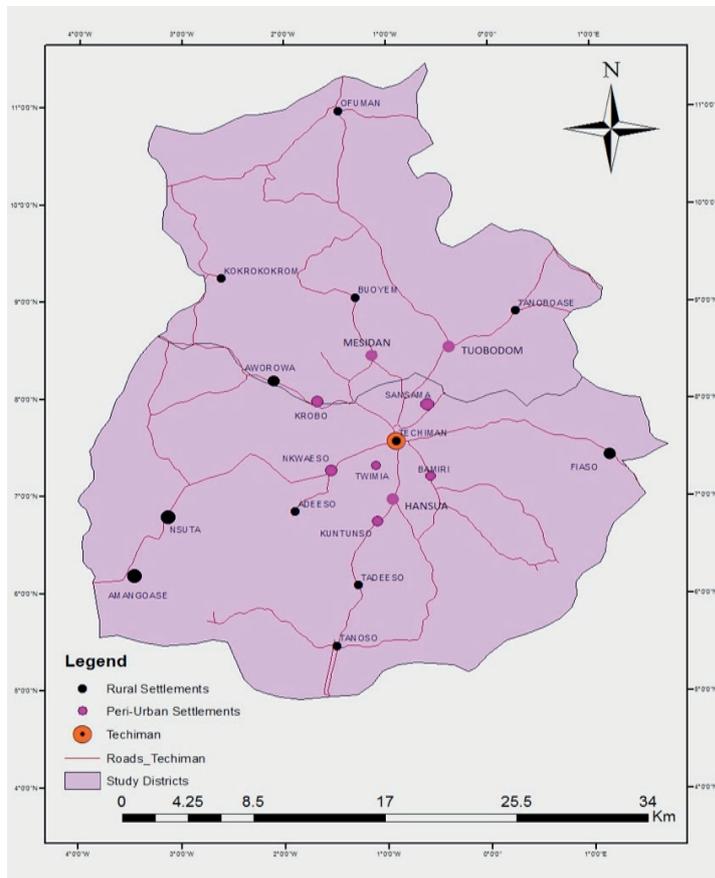


Figure 2: Map of Techiman Traditional Area showing the location of study communities

The final stage in the sampling process was the purposively sampling of the youth based on the age criteria of 15-34 years and involved in agricultural activities. Households were the key reference point for the sampling of the youth. Where a household had more than one youth qualified and willing to participate in the survey, one was interviewed through a ballot process so as to spread the coverage of the sampling process to other households to capture the various diversities possible.

Elders were purposively selected and engaged in an In-Depth Interviews (IDIs) using an open-ended interview guide. The interviews with the elders were recorded using an audio-tape recorder. The quantitative data was analysed using the SPSS software. In-built tools such as cross-tabulation, frequencies, Chi-square among others were used. The summary statistics from the SPSS analysis were further exported to excel where tables, graphs and charts were prepared for use in the report. The frequency tables and cross tabulations establishing relationships as well as the charts were grouped under themes as presented in the results.

The qualitative data from IDs with the elders and notes taken from interview with the youths were transcribed and organised into notes. By adopting content analysis approach espoused by Taylor-Powell and Renner (2003), the qualitative data obtained from transcribed data from the respondents were studied, summarised and organised under themes developed in line with the objective of the study. Attention was paid to the areas of consensus and disagreements in analysing the transcribed conversations. The analysed data from the transcripts and notes provided the descriptive information and direct quotes used to triangulate the quantitative data from the youth respondents as evident in the results.

Table 1: Communities and respondents covered in the survey in the Techiman Traditional Area.

Community	Youth	IDIs (Elders)
Peri-Urban		
Hansua	20	2
Krobo	27	3
Tuobodom	89	-
Nkwaeso	20	4
Bamiri	12	1
Twimia-Koase	21	1
Mesidan	8	2
Sansama	13	-
Kuntunso	12	-
Subtotal	222	13
Rural		
Aworowa	39	1
Nsuta	18	-
Buoyem	14	2
Tanoso	53	3
Adieso	5	-
Tadieso	11	-
Amangoase	9	-
Tanoboase	6	2
Offuman	51	2
Kokroko	5	-
Fiaso	22	-
Subtotal	233	10
Total	455	23

## RESULTS

### CUSTOMARY AUTHORITY OVER LAND IN THE TECHIMAN AREA

Ownership of land in the Techiman area reflects the traditional power structure. The ultimate authority (allodial) title is vested in the *Omanhene* who is the traditional head of the Techiman Traditional area. The *Omanhene* of Techiman combines the roles of political leader and landownership. Families and individuals hold usufructuary interest and other lesser interests acquired by their ancestors in the past mainly for agricultural purposes. The land ownership arrangement in the Techiman area is similar to the system in Ashanti (see Benneh et al, 1995; Gildea, 1964: 102) and other parts of Ghana.

The authority of the *Omanhene* over land in the Techiman traditional area from the findings of this study is exercised through the Divisional and Sub-divisional Chiefs in the various communities within the traditional area. In practice, the divisional chiefs are in charge of the daily management and control over land on behalf of the *Omanhene*. The authorities as exercised by these sub-chiefs were more visible in the peri-urban land use conversions and allocations. The chiefs are clothed with power to allocate land in the peri-urban area especially for non-agricultural purposes.

Any family or user who refuses to incorporate in the conversion into residential land could be forcefully dispossessed by the chief or reported to the *Omanhene*. The power of the town chiefs to demarcate farm lands into building lots is backed by the *Omanhene* (paramount chief of Techiman). This is what one elder said;

“If the town develops to your land and you refuse to allow for residential development and the chief reports you to the *Omanhene*, you will find yourself in deep trouble.... If you find yourself in the palace to face these charges, it will not be easy for you. Because of this, everybody understands, so when the town catches up with your farm, whether it is cashew or cocoa, the land is readily released.” (Elder 65 years, IDI, Bamiri, 2015).

Thus, any potential resistance by a family not to allow for its farm land to be demarcated as residential lots is quelled by the fear of being summoned to the Palace of the *Omanhene*.

### YOUTH ACCESS TO AGRICULTURAL LAND; PERI-URBAN AND RURAL ANALYSIS

In terms of rural agricultural land, family heads are the final authority regarding allocation. Family heads oversee lineage lands and exercise final authority in terms of allocation for agricultural purposes. As depicted in Table 2, relatively more of the rural youth respondents 45 (19%) owned the lands they were in occupation at the time of the survey compared to 29 (13%) among peri-urban youth respondents. This was expected as rural areas still have relative abundant land which can likely be accessed on permanent basis compared to the peri-urban areas which are confronted with agricultural land challenges arising from the effects of urbanization. In terms of the access mechanisms, more of the peri-urban youth respondents 115 (52%) accessed land through licence compared to 109 (47%) among the rural respondents. There were no marked difference between the peri-urban and rural youth in terms of rentals and sharecropping arrangement as depicted in Table 2. Outright purchase and pledge land access mechanisms were extremely limited among the youth respondents both in the rural and peri-urban. Only one incidence each was recorded for purchase and pledge and these were all in the rural area. Majority of the youth respondents both peri-urban and rural accessed agricultural land on temporary basis through rentals and licence as captured in Table 2.

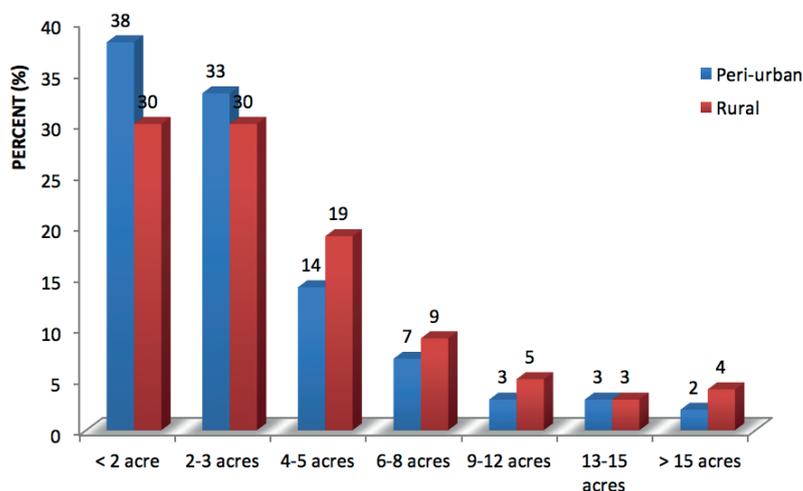
Table 2: Land ownership and access mechanism among the peri-urban and rural youth.

Item	Residence		
	Peri-urban	Rural	Total
Owns land?			
No	193 (87%)	188 (81%)	381
Yes	29 (13%)	45 (19%)	74
Total	222	233	455
Land Access Mechanism			
Purchase	0	1 (0.4%)	1
Gift	23 (10%)	30 (13%)	53
Sharecropping	28 (13%)	32 (14%)	60
Inherited	7 (3%)	13 (6%)	20
Licence	115 (52%)	109 (47%)	224
Pledged	0	1 (0.4%)	1
Rented	49 (22%)	47 (20%)	96
Total	222 (100%)	233 (100%)	455
Source of land			
Community elders	1 (0.5%)	0	1
In-law	5 (2%)	6 (3%)	11
Chief/ Queen mother	2 (1%)	2 (1%)	4
Father/ Mother	97 (44%)	107 (46%)	204
Government	0	1 (0.4%)	1
Family head	7 (3%)	11 (5%)	18
Household head	6 (3%)	0	6
Other land owners/Usufructs	81 (37%)	85 (37%)	166
Grand Father/Mother	13 (6%)	9 (4%)	22
Uncle	3 (1%)	2 (1%)	5
Others	7 (3%)	10 (4%)	17
Total	222 (100%)	233 (100%)	455

Source: Field data, 2015

In terms of the suppliers of land to the youth for agricultural purpose, there was no major difference between the peri-urban and rural youth respondents. For instance, both the peri-urban and rural youth almost equally depended on their immediate parents (father/mother) and other land owners for land (as shown in Table 2). The study also sought to understand the landholding sizes of the respondents, and appreciate whether there are any major variations between the peri-urban youth closer to the action of urban spills and their rural counterparts. As presented in Figure 3, small landholdings were generally a common feature among both peri-urban and rural respondents in this study. However, the issue was more pronounced among the peri-urban youth compared with their rural counterparts. For instance, as depicted in Figure 3, 38% of the peri-urban youth respondents held land sizes of less than 2 acres and another 33% held land sizes between 2-3 acres compared with 30% among their rural counterparts respectively.

Figure 3: Landholding size among the peri-urban and rural youth



Source: Field data, 2015

Per-urban (n=222), Rural (n=233)

Clearly, more peri-urban youth respondents (71.2%) held land sizes not exceeding 3 acres, compared with 59.2% among the rural youth respondents (see Table..). This difference is statistically significant (Chi-square value= 7.13, df =1, p-value=0.008) at 95% confidence interval and margin of error of 5% as depicted in Table 3) It can be noted from the results that more of the rural youth respondents had relatively larger land units compared to their peri-urban counterparts.

Table 3: Analysis of land size of Peri-urban and Rural Youth in the TTA

Residence	Land Size <sup>2</sup>		
	1- 3 acres	≥ 4 acres	Total
Peri-urban	158 (71.2%)	64 (28.8%)	222 (100%)
Rural	138 (59.2%)	95 (40.8%)	233 (100%)
Total	296	159	455

Source: Field data, 2015

<sup>2</sup> Land size categories not exceeding 3 acres were merged and other remaining categories exceeding 3 acres were also merged together to allow for Chi-square statistical analysis

This result is not surprising because, one immediate impediment on the peri-urban youth's ability to perhaps access more land units is land scarcity occasioned by competition from urban expansions and other related commercial activities. The underlying challenges would be analysed later to provide a full appreciation of the issues undermining the ability of the youth in peri-urban areas to access viable land parcels for agricultural activities. For the rural youth respondents, it is not too surprising more were able to access a relatively larger land units compared with their peri-urban counterparts. Rural areas perhaps still have more agricultural land available compared to the peri-urban areas coupled with relatively low pressure from other competing land uses. However, the fact that majority of the rural youth also held unviable land units (less than 3 acres) suggests that, there are some challenges they also face which may not be similar to that of their peri-urban counters. These underlying challenges are addressed in the next section.

### YOUTH LAND ACCESS CHALLENGES

Challenges facing the youth in accessing land were also analysed based on peri-urban and rural dimensions to ascertain if there were any peculiar cases in each situations. From Figure 4, the dominant challenges among the peri-urban youth were 'Competition from residential developers', 'Unwillingness of elders to release land', 'Land rather given out to outsiders' as well as 'Productive family land fully occupied'. These were less applicable to their rural counterparts. For instance, 78% of the peri-urban youth mentioned 'Competition from residential developers' as one of their key challenges compared to 9% among the rural youth respondents. The rapid expansion of the city of Techiman is affecting the agricultural land access of the youth in the peri-urban areas. Residential developers who are comparatively resourceful are able to offer higher bids and compete out the youth from the peri-urban agricultural lands. High monetary offers influence the elders such as family heads, household heads and chiefs to be unwilling to release enough to the youth for agricultural purpose. As captured in the Figure 4, more peri-urban youth (33%) noted 'Unwillingness of elders to release land' as a challenge compared to 18% among the rural youth respondents. The customary authorities (household heads, family heads, chiefs and others elders) rather give out land to residential developers. In this connection, some youth in the per-urban communities believe that land is rather given out to outsiders (in this case residential developers) and see this as a challenge. As shown in the Figure 4, 37% of the peri-urban youth considered 'Land is rather given out to outsiders' as one of their key challenges compared to 25% among the rural youth respondents. In the case of the rural areas, land grants to outsiders are more for the purpose of farming activities. This was also a concern for some rural youth respondents but this concern is greater among the peri-urban respondents due to high land demand from property developers.

This what one youth respondent narrated the effects of the urbanisation and the actions of their elders and chiefs on his land rights during the interview;

*It is really worrying (referring to land allocation for residential development) especially with our cashew crops. These tree crops are cut down and no compensation is paid. The chief will not pay for the crops if a plot is allocated to your family. (Kyeremeh, 25 years youth, Interview, Tuobodom, 2015)*

However, during the interview with the elders and chiefs, they insisted that expansion of their towns to provide more shelter and non-agricultural livelihood opportunities was more important than farming. They were more willing to sacrifice food for shelter. This is what some of the elders interviewed noted about the necessity of the urban expansion which is even a welcome a development.

*Even where we are sitting now, some people farmed on it many years ago. Kumasi which is now a big city used to be some people's farms. So if the town expands to your farm land, there is no reason why one can refuse to give way just to frustrate the growth of the town. (Elder 65 years, IDI, Bamiri, 2015)*

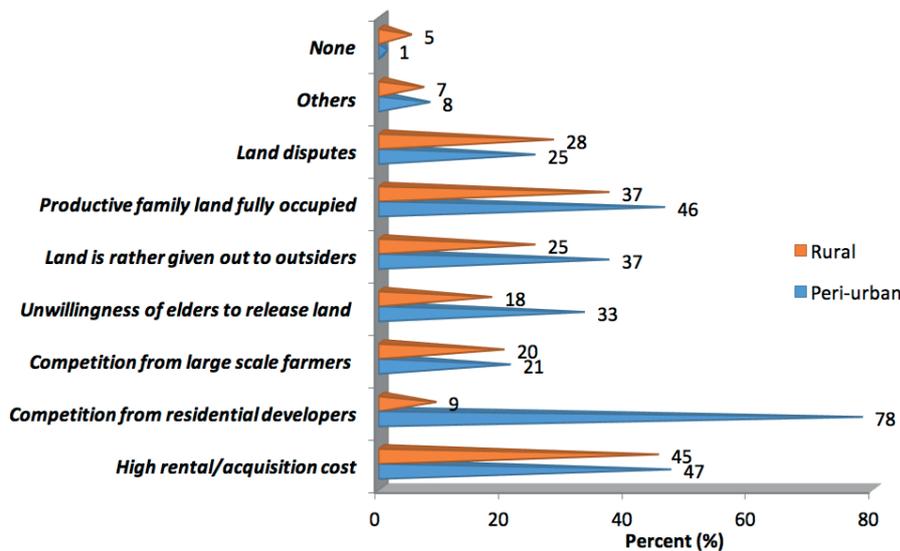
Another elder added;

*If the town grows to meet your farm you have to give way. Even if the town developers to Nana's (referring to the chief) own farm land, he has to release the land. He cannot resist the development and say he does not want his town to grow. We want the town to grow. (Nana Dwantuahene, IDI, Krobo, 2015).*

Land scarcity was also a key challenge for more peri-urban youth relative to their rural counterparts. For instance, a relatively high proportion (46%) of the peri-urban youth cited 'Productive family land fully occupied' as a key challenge compared to 37%. This shortage thought cut across both rural and peri-urban communities, it was relatively acute in the peri-urban areas as more of their youth found this as a challenge to their access to land.

High rental/acquisition cost as a challenge affects both the rural and peri-urban youth almost equally. Whiles competition from property developers and general land scarcity might be responsible for the high cost of accessing land in the peri-urban areas which is a key challenge among some respondents; equally, some rural youth respondents especially the migrants who depend on market land access mechanisms also face competition from large scale farmers and other older adult farmers. The cost especially under rental access mechanism tends to inhibit their ability to access land and on viable holdings.

Figure 4: Youth agricultural land access challenges from the peri-urban and rural perspective



Source: Field data, 2015

Per-urban (n=222), Rural (n=233)

There was no major difference in terms of land disputes and competition from large scale farmers as key challenges among both peri-urban and rural youth. These challenges appear to affect both peri-urban and rural youth in almost equal proportions. It must however be stated, it is unexpected that relatively more rural youth (28%) compared to 25% among the peri-urban youth would consider land disputes as a key challenge. This is because, given the pressure on peri-urban lands arising from intense demand for varied uses, one would have expected prevalent of disputes.

#### PERI-URBAN LAND ALLOCATION PROCEEDS AND THE YOUTH

The power to allocate land shifts from the family head (*abusuapanin*) and other usufruct holders to the chief (town chief) who do so on behalf of the *Omanhene*, when it comes to the allocation of land for residential or non-agricultural uses. Engagement with the elders during the in-depth interviews revealed that, the sharing arrangement of the proceeds from peri-urban land allocations do not trickle down to the youth. The chiefs mostly benefited from the allocation proceeds. In almost all the peri-urban communities covered in this survey, the chiefs directly allocate

peri-urban land and receive proceeds thereof. The families holding usufructuary interest benefit little from these proceeds. For instance, when land is demarcated for residential use the affected family might only be compensated with some amount of money or allocated building plots<sup>1</sup> at the discretion of the town chief. The town chief receives greater proportion and also remits a portion (1/3) to the *Omanhene* (paramount chief).

The youth were most vulnerable in the sharing arrangement regarding peri-urban land allocations. Their ability to benefit from the proceeds arising from the lands they occupied was at the discretion and mercy of their family heads. Since the families already receive a meagre proportion, it becomes more difficult for the youth at the lowest echelon of social power to benefit. Some youth respondents in the peri-urban area reported of been refused a share of proceeds or plots allocated to their families from land conversions by the chiefs. No compensation was provided for their crops either by the chiefs or their family heads. Where compensation was provided, it was at the benevolence of the developer and often did not reflect the value of crops lost. The family heads and other senior members hijack the share of proceeds due the family without recourse to their young members (youth) whose investments may well have been affected.

It is at the discretion of the family head and senior members to offer some compensation to the young member affected by conversion of agricultural land to non-agricultural use in the peri-urban areas. This elder noted;

*"For the plots allocated to the family, it is the family head who will decide that this person or young person in the family has worked so hard on the land, so I will give him/her something". (Elder 78 years, IDI, Krobo, 2015)*

It was argued by the elders that, the agricultural lands which are converted into residential uses in the peri-urban areas are largely family lands and as such they (elders) were rightful recipients of any proceeds or compensation on behalf of the rest of family members. The youth only possess use rights on family land and are not supposed to benefit from compensation due the family if all or portions of the family land is taking for residential development or other purposes.

Some of the youth respondents corroborated the claim by their elders. The youth opined that the landholding system only allow them the use right to cultivate land for food. Family elders always assert their authority when the town expands to lands they (the youth) occupy for farming purposes. The rules are interpreted to determine the rightful beneficiaries of any income arising from land use conversions and they (the youth) are often the losers. The experiences of some youth respondents in the peri-urban communities shed more light on this state of affair.

A youth respondents at Twimia narrated his experience with his family in the following;

*My father left about 10 acres of land on which I cultivated 6 acres. The chief demarcated the land into residential plots. The family head received a number of plots as the share of the family, but he sold everything without giving me anything (Takyi 32 years male, Interview, Twimia, 2015).*

Another youth respondent shared a similar experience in Tuobodom;

*They have cut down all my cashew trees with no compensation. When I requested for a plot of land to compensate for the crops, the family head refused to give me. He said the land was a family property and my mother inherited, so one of the plots would be reserved for the family and the rest will be sold to renovate the family house. (Sarkodie, 29 years male, Interview, Tuobodom, 2015).*

Another youth continued with her experience;

*My land was a gift from my father and just about a month ago, the chief went to erect pillars on the whole land and demarcated it into plots. Later, abusuanin (family head) came to inform me that, when I harvest the maize I have cultivated, I should leave the land because somebody has bought it to build a house. (Fosuaa, 26 years*

<sup>1</sup> According to the chiefs and elders interviewed, a family will only qualify for a building plot, if the land the family occupies contains four building plots. The chief will normally take 3 and remit one of the plots to the family. The chief can still refused to give the family.

*female, Interview, Kuntunso, 2015)*

The youth are clearly vulnerable in the hands of their elders in terms of benefiting from land use conversions in the peri-urban areas. Their agricultural land rights are truncated without compensation and they will have to look elsewhere for alternative land to continue with their farming.

## DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSION

The youth respondents' access to agricultural land was largely on temporary basis through licence from their immediate families and rentals in the land market whether they were located in the peri-urban or rural communities. Their land sizes were grossly small generally below 4 acres. The youth (both peri-urban and rural) land access limitations in terms of rights and sizes were a reflection of the challenges they face. The challenges were broadly demand and supply related. The demand related challenges facing the youth in their access to agricultural land bordered on high rental/acquisition cost, competition from residential developers as well as large scale farmers.

The supply-related challenges were unwillingness of elders to release land, productive family land fully occupied, land grants to outsiders and land disputes. The combined effects of both demand and supply related challenges generally made the youth landholdings temporary, small and unviable whether in the rural or peri-urban areas. In the case of demand related challenges they tended to drive up cost of accessing land. This limits the land size of the youth as they lack resources to effectively participate in the land market through rentals. The supply related challenges also created land shortage for the youth as the elders, who wield significant authority over land under the customary tenure system either held back land or gave out land to more resourceful adult farmers and property developers. *For instance, as presented in Figure 4, property developers often compete out the youth who then move into the rural areas to acquire land.*

Again, conversion of land from agricultural use to more valuable uses like urban development often creates a forum for the interpretation of customary rules regarding land ownership and renewal of authority. This happens at different levels of the social power hierarchy. The chiefs assert their allodial power over the usufruct families by claiming the ultimate authority in land which then entitles them to change use and profit from the process. This was the case in the peri-urban areas of Techiman as revealed by the findings of this study. Ubink (2008) similarly noted such a power play in the peri-urban areas of Kumasi where the chiefs asserted their authority and interpreted customs to dispossess families and other farmers.

It is needful to state that, the authority of the chiefs over land in deciding on its use change and profit substantially at the expense of the families and their youth as gathered from the Techiman area amount to abuse of their trusteeship roles under the customary land tenure arrangement. Customary tenure system vests allodial rights in the chief to manage on behalf of their communities (existing and future generations) (Feder and Noronha, 1987) while their 'subjects' hold user rights in land (Amanor, 2008). Thus, chiefs are trustees and managers of land on behalf of their communities (see Asiamah, 2008). The ruling in the Nigerian case, *Tijani v. Secretary*<sup>2</sup>, (1921), 2 AC, 339 also reinforced the land trusteeship role of the chiefs (see also Cowen and Shenton 1994: 242).

However, instead of being trustees of land in their respective jurisdictions, the influence of chiefs over land in most areas in Ghana has graduated into complete ownership. In the view of Asiamah, (2008:78), "In the urban areas the traditional authorities have practically ceased to be administrators of the land on behalf of the communities. They have virtually become the owners as they take all decisions in relations to land and keep the benefits as well". Yeboah and Oppong (2015) also confirmed that the chiefs were increasingly becoming land owners instead of trustees. As noted by Berry (2009a: 30), a Ghanaian chief is more than a landlord and the chief's authority over land is both proprietary and territorial especially in southern Ghana. She opined that, the chiefs occupy an ambiguous position in the Ghanaian political life and this allows them to make claims over land without accounting for the benefits arising

<sup>2</sup>The Colonial Court in Southern Nigeria held that ownership of land by individuals was alien to native custom and that land was vested in chiefs as trustees.

from the disposition of the land to their communities (Berry, 2009b). Evidence from the Techiman area regarding control over peri-urban land and enjoyment of benefits thereof supports the claim that, chiefs are no more trustees of land on behalf of their subjects but have rather become owners.

At the family level also, the family heads (*abusuapanin*) also assert their power and their level of interpretation of customary rules are geared towards denying other family members (especially young members) the right to benefit from the proceeds arising from land use change. In the Techiman area, interview with the youth affected by urban development, revealed that family heads regard them (youth) as possessing only use rights over land which are family property and refused to give them anything from the proceeds allocated to the family even though they may have investments on the land. Some family heads during the interviews also confirmed that the youth do not own land; they (family heads) were rightful recipients of any proceeds arising from family land and must determine its use on behalf of the family.

The study recommends youth agricultural land policy and a compensation regime for land use conversions which benefits both the youth and adults in the peri-urban areas of Ghana. There is also the need to carryout sensitization for the customary authorities to appreciate the need to make land available to the youth engage in productive economic activities. These processes would require active support of the Customary Land Secretariats (CLSs), Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) to carry out sensitisations during community durbars as well as organise seminars for the traditional authorities. CLS should also be resourced by the government to undertake the exercise of documenting and clarifying land ownership arrangements at the local level. The tendency for some family heads to deny the youth opportunity to have a share in land proceeds as exist in the TTA could be minimised through the process of documenting and clarifying sharing arrangements mediated by the CLS. Again, state regulation of the activities of the land investors and peri-urban land developers is necessary to improve youth land access. This regulation can be done through strict implementation of existing guidelines developed by Lands Commission of Ghana for land acquisitions in the country. For instance, the guidelines among other things require that land investors and developers ensure land acquisitions from customary authorities do not harm local food security and land rights of the vulnerable. Effective implementation of these regulations and planning laws in the peri-urban land markets would help protect the land rights of the youth who are vulnerable in the hands of their elders in land matters.

## REFERENCES

- Amanor, K. S. (2008). The changing face of customary land tenure. In: *Contesting land and custom in Ghana, State, Chief and the Citizen*, Ubink J. and Amanor.K. S., (eds) Leiden University Press, Amsterdam.
- Annan, K. (2013). "Let the young lead". A speech delivered on the occasion of World Youth Day, August 12, Accra. Available at: <http://edition.radioxyzonline.com/pages/news/08122013-1625/13880.stm> Accessed on August 13, 2013.
- Arko-Adjei, A. (2006). A Conceptual Approach for Enhancing Customary Land Management: Case from Ghana. *5th FIG Regional Conference Accra, Ghana*, March 8-11, 2006.
- Asiama, S.O. (2008). Land Administration and Security of Tenure in Ghana- The Legal Framework, *Journal of Ghana Institution of Surveyors*, Vol. 1, No.1, pp76-84.
- Benneh, G., Kasanga, R. K. and Amoyaw, D. (1995). Women's Access to Agricultural Land in the Household: A Case Study of Three Selected Districts in Ghana. *Fadep Technical Series*, No. 8, University of Ghana.
- Berry, S. (2009a). Property, Authority and Citizenship: Land Claims, Politics and the Dynamics of Social Division in West Africa. *Development and Change* Vol. 40, No. 1: pp. 23-45, Institute of Social Studies.
- Berry, S. (2009b). Building for the Future? Investment, Land Reform and the Contingencies of Ownership in Contemporary Ghana. *World Development* Vol. 37, No. 8, pp. 1370-1378.
- Brooks, K., Zorya, S., Gautam, A. & Goyal, A. (2013). *Agriculture as a Sector of Opportunity for Young People in Africa*. Policy Research Working Paper 6473. Agriculture and Environmental Services Department, The World Bank.
- Bugri, J. T. (2013). Issues and Options for Improved Land Sector Governance in Ghana: Application of the Land Governance Assessment Framework (LGAF). *The Ghana Surveyor*, Vol. 1, No. 1, pp 21-35
- CARE. (2004). *ANR Programme component document (Security of Land Tenure [SLATE])*. Accra, Ghana
- Cotula L. (2007). Changes in "Customary" Land Tenure Systems in Africa ISBN: 978-1-84369-657-5, London: IIED
- Cowen, M. and Shenton, R.W. (1994). British neo-Hegelian idealism and official colonial
- Practice in Africa: The Oluwa land case of 1921. *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* Vol. 22, No.2: 217-250.
- Creswell, J. W. (2003). Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed method Approaches, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, Sage Publications, Inc. London.
- Creswell, J. W. (2013). "Steps in Conducting a Scholarly Mixed Methods Study" (2013). DBER Speaker Series. Paper 48. <http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/dberspeakers/48>
- Creswell, J. W. & Clark, P. V. L. (2011). *Designing and conducting mixed methods research* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Deininger, K. (2003). *Land policies for growth and poverty reduction, a World Bank Policy Research Report*. Washington DC and Oxford, World Bank and Oxford University Press.
- Delville, P. L. (2007). Changes in "Customary" Land Management Institutions: Evidence from West Africa In: Lorenzo Cotula (ed.) *Changes in "Customary" Land tenure Systems in Africa*. London: IIED. Pp.51-63
- FAO, (2002). *Gender and Access to Land*, Rome, Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), Land Tenure Studies No. 4, Rome, Italy
- Feder, G. and Noronha, R. (1987). Land Rights System and Agricultural Development in Sub-Saharan Africa. *Research Observer* 2, No. 2., The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development/The World Bank, July, 1987.
- Fisher, R. (1993). Tensions and Tenures in Post-Apartheid South Africa. December 1993 International Land Tenure Conference. Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors and the University of East London.
- GCAP (2015). Ghana Commercial Agriculture Project; Community/Investor Guidelines for Large-Scale Land Transactions. Republic of Ghana, Ministry of Food and Agriculture, July 2015, Accra.
- Gildea Jr., R. Y. (1964). Culture and Land Tenure in Ghana. *Land Economics*, Vol. 40, No. 1, pp 102-104.
- GSS (2012). 2010 Population and Housing Census, Summary Report of Final Results, Ghana Statistical Service, Accra.
- GSS (2014). Ghana Living Standard Survey Round 6 (GLSS 6), Labour Force Report, Accra, Ghana Statistical Service, August 2014.
- IFAD (2010). 'Rural Poverty Report 2011'. Rome: International Fund for Agricultural Development
- ILO (2012). Global Employment Trends for Youth 2012: preventing a deeper jobs crisis, International Labour Office - Geneva
- Kameri-Mbote, P. (2005). The Land has Its Owners!: Gender Issues in Law Tenure Under Kenya Customary Law, *International Environmental Law Research Centre Working Paper, 2005-9*, <http://www.ielrc.org/content/w0509.pdf>, Accessed, August 28, 2012.
- Kasanga, R. K. (1988). Land Tenure and the Development Dialogue, The Myth Concerning Communal Landholding in Ghana, *Occasional Paper 19*, Department of Land Economy, University of Cambridge, Granta Editions Ltd
- Kasanga, K. (1999). Land Tenure and Regional Investment Prospects: The Case of the Tenurial Systems of Northern Ghana, *Land Management and Environmental Policy Series*, No. 1, Vol. 1, Institute of Land Management and Development (ILMAD), University of Science and Technology, Kumasi-Ghana.
- Kasanga, R. K. and Avis, M. R. (1988). Internal Migration and Urbanisation in Developing Countries - Findings from a Study of Ghana. *Environmental Policy* No. 1, March 1988.
- Kwapong, O. (2009). The Poor and Land: A Situational Analysis of Access To Land by Poor Land Users in Ghana, *Journal of Rural and Community Development* Vol. 4, pp 51-66
- Lintelo, D. (2011). Youth and policy processes, *Future Agricultures*, Working Paper 025
- Mends, T (2006) A study on the Customary Land Tenure System and its Impact on Urbanization. Case Study: The Peri-Urban Area of Accra, Ghana. MSc. Thesis ITC Netherlands
- Okali, C. And Sumberg, J. (2012). Quick Money and Power: Tomatoes and Livelihood Building in Rural Brong Ahafo, Ghana, *A Research Report*.
- Okoth-Ogendo, H.W.O., (1976). *African Land Tenure Reform*, in J. Heyer, J.K. Maitha and W.M. Senga, *Agricultural development in Kenya - An Economic Assessment*, Nairobi, Oxford University Press, pp. 152-186..
- Sharp, L.A. (2002). *The Sacrificed Generation. Youth, History and the Colonized Mind m Madagascar*, Berkeley, Los Angeles & London: University of California Press.
- Sulemana, M. (2011). "Some impacts of Judicial decisions on urban land administration in Greater Accra), Paper presented at a Conference of Africa Real Estate Society (West Africa Chapter) at Noda Hotel, Kumasi-Ghana, August 10-11, 2011
- Taylor-Powell, E and Renner, M. (2003). "Analyzing qualitative data". Available at: [http://learningstore.uwex.edu/assets/pdfs/g3658-12pdf-\[Accessed:20th October 2015 \]](http://learningstore.uwex.edu/assets/pdfs/g3658-12pdf-[Accessed:20th October 2015 ])
- TENDA, (2013). Profile of Techiman North District Assembly, Techiman, Tuobodom,
- Ubink, J. M. (2008). *In the Land of the Chiefs: Customary Law, Land Conflicts, and the Role of the State in Peri-urban Ghana*. Leiden, Leiden University Press.
- White, B. (2011). Who will own the countryside? Dispossession, rural youth and the future of farming. Valedictory Lecture on 13 October on the occasion of the 59<sup>th</sup> Dies Natalis of International Institute of Social Studies (ISS), The Hague.
- World Bank (2010). Land Governance Assessment Framework: Implementation Manual for Assessing Governance in the Land Sector. Washington DC 20433: The World Bank.
- World Bank (2014). *Youth Employment in Sub-Saharan Africa*, Africa Development Forum, Washington DC: The World Bank
- World Bank (2007). *Development and the Next Generation: World Development Report 2007*. Washington DC: The World Bank.
- Yeboah, E. and Oppong, R. A. (2015). Chiefs, Changing Trust Relations and Land Use Planning in Ghana. *Journal of Science and Technology*, Vol. 35, No. 3, pp 60-72