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**MSc Thesis Rural Development Sociology**

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**PEASANTRY AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP**

The Case of Smallholder Farmers in Northern Ghana and the Ghana School Feeding Programme

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**MSc Management of Agro-Ecological Knowledge and Social Change**

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**Nashiru Sulemana**

**Supervisor: Dr. Paul Hebinck**



**WAGENINGEN UNIVERSITY**  
**WAGENINGEN UR**

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<b>Acronym</b>	<b>Full Name</b>
ADRA	Adventist Development and Relief Agency
CAADP	Comprehensive African Agriculture Development Programme
CRS	Catholic Relief Services
DA	District Assembly
DCD	District Coordinating Director
DCE	District Chief Executive
DGL	District Ghana School Feeding Programme Liaison
DIC	District Implementation Committee
DPC	District Procurement Committee
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation
FFE	Food for Education
FFS	Food for Schooling
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GHS	Ghana Health Service
GMOs	Genetically Modified Organisms
GoG	Government of Ghana
GSFP	Ghana School Feeding Programme
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MoFA	Ministry of Food and Agriculture
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NS	National Secretariat
PTA	Parent-Teacher Association
RCO	Regional Coordinating Office
SEND	Social Enterprise Development
SF	School Feeding
SICs	School implementation Committees
SMC	School Management Committee
SNV	Netherlands Development Organisation
UN	United Nations
UNICEF	United Nations Children development Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WFP	World Food Programme

## ABSTRACT

The first of the Millennium Development Goals is to halve extreme hunger and poverty by 2015. Home Grown School Feeding Programmes have been identified as potent in reducing hunger and malnutrition of children in school as well as boosting domestic food production through local procurement. It was against this background that the Government of Ghana in collaboration with its development partners and NEPAD started the Ghana School Feeding Programme. The programme targets smallholder farmers engaged in food crop cultivation to provide market for them so they will respond by increasing production and so increase their income and escape hunger and poverty. However the response to this opportunity by farmers has not been as expected. This study sought to explain this phenomenon by investigating how smallholder farmers organize their farming practices and whether the Ghana School Feeding Programme is jeopardizing or enhancing such organizing practices. To do this I made a distinction between peasants and entrepreneurs and argued for farming and markets to be seen as a socially and culturally embodied.

Actor-oriented approach was adopted for the research in order to accommodate social heterogeneity and multiple realities among smallholder farmers. A qualitative case study design was employed for the study and samples were purposively selected. Data collection instruments included interviews, participant observations, focus group discussions and secondary sources like project documents and reports. In all 8 households were involved in the study, 56 people interviewed and 5 focus group discussions were conducted in a period of 3 months.

Results of the study indicate that the organizing practices of smallholder farmers in northern Ghana and particularly the Kpalun community are embedded in local cultural repertoires. These cultural repertoires reflect largely the peasant mode of farming rather than the entrepreneurial mode. Trust for the local and distrust for the foreign govern relationship with the outside world including markets. The labour process is craftsman-like and allows for flexibility. These cultural repertoires that guide production decisions reinforce the autonomy of peasants which is very important given the hostile environment they operate in. Procurement under the Ghana School Feeding Programme is done by private caterers without involvement of local traders. Price and profitability drive procurement decisions rather than the origin of food. Farmers are involved in trust relations with local traders through which

farm produce are distributed. The relationship between farmers and the caterer (and hence the programme) is that of distrust. Thus the school feeding market does not resonate with the organising practices of the farmers which are embedded in local cultural repertoires that reinforce autonomy. This is generally characteristic of interventions based on modernization notions; they do not resonate with local environments.

It is thus recommended that initiatives of this kind should resonate with local environments and appreciate local dynamics rather than ignoring or condemning them. It is therefore important that the design of interventions begin with what makes the clock tick locally.

## CHAPTER ONE

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

This opening chapter serves to situate the thesis in the context contemporary development agenda, theory and methodology by presenting to the reader the necessary background information as well as the theoretical and methodological assumptions that underpinned the research.

#### **1.1 Background to the Study**

The first of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) is to halve extreme hunger and poverty by 2015. The World Bank (2007:3, 65) argues that 75% of the poor people in developing countries live in rural areas and about 86% of them directly or indirectly depend on agriculture for their livelihood. The type of agriculture practiced by the rural poor is subsistence oriented and usually on a small scale. The World Bank (2007:155) sees smallholders in the developing world as farmers operating a farm of 2 hectares or less. It is therefore not surprising that the overall message of the 2008 World Development Report is that agriculture is a vital development tool for achieving the first MDG. Thus addressing issues of poverty and agriculture becomes paramount in world agenda. Hunger and poverty are interrelated and one cannot agree more with the FAO (2004) when it argues that hunger is as much a cause as an effect of poverty. The World Food Programme documents that about three hundred million (300,000,000) children in developing countries are chronically undernourished, many of whom are among the estimated one hundred and twenty million (120,000,000) who do not attend school (WFP, 2001). Food for Education (FFE) programmes have been identified as potent in dealing with both problems simultaneously (Ahmed and Sharma, 2004). School Feeding programmes have been used as a remedy to alleviate short term hunger and malnutrition in developing countries as well as increase enrolment and retention in schools. Here children are given at least one hot meal a day in school. Another category of Food for Education Programmes is Food for Schooling (FFS) where families are given food if their children attend school.

Ahmed and Sharma (2004) observe that the most studied impacts of FFE programmes are those on education and nutrition outcomes and argue that one additional potential impact that has received less attention is the effect of FFE programmes on local agricultural production.

They argue that one possible reason for this gap in research is that stimulating local food production has not been an explicit goal of FFE programmes. There could not have been a better argument than this because traditional School Feeding Programmes have focused mainly on feeding children and increasing enrolment and retention in schools. Thus in developing countries food for such programmes have mostly been imported from the countries that sponsor those programmes. As examples, the Catholic Relief Services (CRS) and the World Food Programme have been the main organizations involved in school feeding programmes in Ghana and food have mostly been brought in from the United States of America usually through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). Perhaps the argument for this is that if the beneficiary community or country had enough food their children would not be hungry or undernourished in school; which is a logical one.

In recent times the need to boost food production in the world's food insecure areas has received a lot of attention with the advent of the MDGs and its targets that require world leaders to do something different in order to meet those targets. The call by the former Secretary General for the United Nations, Kofi Anan, for a Green Revolution in Africa has renewed efforts at finding solutions to the food insecurity situation especially in Sub-Saharan Africa where the situation is more glaring. To move these efforts forward, the United Nations set up a Taskforce on Hunger which has the responsibility of finding solutions to the problem of hunger. In conjunction with the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), Home Grown School Feeding Programmes were identified as potent means of "killing two birds with one stone" since it will alleviate short term hunger in school as well as stimulate local food production through local procurement of food for the programme. It was therefore based on this premise that the Ghana School Feeding Programme was started through the collaboration of the Ghana Government, the United Nation's Taskforce on Hunger and NEPAD. Thus, the Ghana School Feeding Programme became a development intervention that has as one of its explicit objectives to stimulate local food production in addition to the traditional objectives of improving nutrition and increasing school enrolment and retention.

However the response to this opportunity by farmers has not been as expected. For instance a recent survey by SNV, a Dutch NGO in Ghana concluded that local production is hardly used in the school feeding (SNV, 2007). Eehoorn (2007:53) also notes that in spite of the success of the programme in increasing enrolment figures in beneficiary schools, 'the farm communities are not yet "playing ball" and the sustainability of the programme is in

jeopardy'. These observations raise a number of challenging questions for research. Why are local farmers not responding to the programme as expected? What do local farmers think about the programme? How can such observations be explained? Could some measures have produced different results? In this research I try to explain this phenomenon by exploring the organising practices of smallholder farmers and how the school feeding programme reinforces or weakens such practices. The argument here is that the school feeding programme needs to resonate with the organising practices of the smallholder farmers to generate the needed response anticipated by the programme.

## **1.2 Theoretical Framework**

Agriculture has continued to evolve in response to changes in the environment and human needs. In this journey of transformation of agriculture increasing output has been a core objective. Technological increases have been the focus of human efforts at achieving agricultural development. In the 1950s, modernization theories focused on the diffusion model of agricultural development which assumed that farmers could increase their output substantially by allocating existing resources more efficiently and by adopting technologies from industrial countries (Eicher and Staatz, 1998). Thus agricultural extension became imperative in the agricultural development process to ensure the transfer and diffusion of appropriate technologies among farmers of developing countries. However, like many development interventions, the agricultural extension programmes did not lead to the anticipated rapid increase in output and so new theories or at least explanations to the failure of the extension programmes were sorted.

Schultz (1964) with his "efficient but poor" hypothesis argued that the lack of anticipated rapid increase in agricultural output per capita with the distribution model was far from inefficient allocation of resources on the part of farmers. He maintained that farmers through a long process of experimentation have learned how to allocate efficiently the factors of production available to them. As such "no appreciable increase in agricultural production is to be had by reallocating the factors at the disposal of farmers who are bound by traditional agriculture..." (Schultz, 1964: 39). He thus argued that farmers in developing countries could only improve their per capita output through access to new and more productive factors and the necessary skills to exploit them. It was therefore necessary to invest in human capital and

research to achieve agricultural development. Explaining agrarian change then became crucial in bringing about agricultural development.

Two theoretical perspectives in explaining agrarian change has been that of commercialization and commoditization. These schools, though different, are similar in that they are based on the notion that agrarian development signifies the movement from some traditional social order or natural economy towards a fully market-integrated modern type of agriculture where farmers behave according to supposed logic of markets (Long and Van der Ploeg, 1988). This linear model of agrarian change assumes “a kind of zero starting-point for development characterized by a general lack of commoditization or integration into markets” (Long and Van der Ploeg, 1988: 33). Thus it is beyond this zero point that development is assumed to take place and progresses through distinct phases of commoditization until there is complete integration into the commodity economy. Such a linear model of agricultural development assumes homogeneity among farmers and the way farming is practiced and hence uniform effects of externalities. But farming and farmers are far from being homogeneous which explains the great variety of forms, directions and rhythms of agrarian change. Thus seeing farming as a heterogeneous and non-linear process holds the key to explaining the variations in agricultural development.

### *1.2.1 The nature of farming*

Farming is essentially a socially constructed process and hence heterogeneous (Long and Van der Ploeg, 1994). Even though technological and economic aspects of agriculture mostly have been emphasized by analyst, they are all social eventually. Kearney (1996) notes that agriculture is carried out in a complex set of social and economic relationships. These relationships coupled with agency attributed to social actors in the sense of Long (2001) give agriculture a dynamic image. The practices reflect their social situation embedded in what Van der Ploeg (2003:23) describes as ‘cultural repertoires’. These cultural repertoires are normative frameworks or collective memories that describe the set of views about farming and the way it should be practiced. This is why some technologies never get adopted even though they pass all the technological and economic tests.

For analytical purposes it is important to make a distinction between farmers and hence different forms of farming. Such a distinction is necessary in understanding the variation in

agricultural development and the different responses of farmers to development programmes. Peasants and entrepreneurs have been identified as two analytical classes of farmers based on their mode of farming (van der Ploeg, 2008). Peasants are involved in peasant mode of farming and entrepreneurs, entrepreneurial mode of farming. Table 1.1 summarizes the main differences between the peasant and entrepreneurial modes of farming.

### *1.2.2 Peasantry*

Kearney (1996) uses two criteria to characterize the peasantry. He calls the first one the production criterion that sees peasants as rural people involved in cultivation and makes autonomous decisions regarding the processes of cultivation. The second one is that of subordination which indicates that peasants are subject to the dictates of a superordinate state. Thus, peasants operate within the confines of a complex political structure that they do not control. The second criterion is at odds with current thinking because it deprives peasants of agency. Van der Ploeg (2008:21) argues that this is ‘an unintended consequence of their epistemological stance’. However Kearney is not alone in this. Shanin (1971:115) also argues that peasants have been kept at ‘arm’s length’ from the social sources of power and are therefore in a subordinated position. Arguing in the same line, Wolf (1966:11) wrote: ‘only when the cultivator becomes subject to the demands and sanctions of power holders outside his social stratum that we can appropriately speak of the peasantry’. I will not dwell much on this second criterion of Kearney because it denies peasants of agency and makes them look controllable by such a super-ordinate state that acts as an impervious and inflexible structure which I disagree with. Turning to the production criterion of Kearney, he writes:

All households have access to farmland that is communally owned by the town, and most households also have some de facto private land they also work. Almost all production is for auto consumption and is produced with simple technology powered by human and animal energy. In addition to self employment, agriculture production is carried out within a complex set of social and economic relationships that include labor exchange, varieties of share cropping, and hired labor. And in nearby towns, a few large landowners absorb some labor of small holders by means of feudal like relationships (Kearney, 1996:15-16)

*Table 1.1 the main differences between the peasant and entrepreneurial modes of farming.*

Peasant mode	Entrepreneurial mode
Building upon internalizing nature; co-production and co-evolution are central	Disconnecting from nature; ‘artificial’ modes of farming
Distancing from markets on the input side; differentiation on the output side (low degree of commoditization)	High market dependency; high degree of commoditization
Centrality of craft and skill-oriented technologies	Centrality of entrepreneurship and mechanical technologies
Ongoing intensification based on quantity and quality of labour	Scale enlargement as the dominant trajectory; intensity is a function of technology
Multifunctional	Specialized
Continuity of past, present and future	Ruptures between past, present and future
Increasing social wealth	Containing and redistributing social wealth

Source: Van der Ploeg (2008: 114)

One can understand Kearney because in some cases land is communally owned but communal ownership is not a defining characteristic of the peasantry. What is at issue is whether or not people have access to land on which they work for the production of food.

Other attempts at conceptualising the Peasantry can be found in Byres (1991), Hariss (1982) and Ellis (1993). In these writings the world have been divided into developed and under developed parts and peasants occupy the underdeveloped parts and their ways of practicing agriculture seen as backward and thus a hindrance to development. In this conceptualisation, peasants are pushed aside and gradually disappearing and giving way to superior forms of

production. As such, attempts at bringing development to peasants must first aim at changing their backward practices that hinder development. The theoretical and methodological implications of this conceptualisation are that different concepts and theories are required in research for the developed and the underdeveloped parts of the world. Van der Ploeg (2008) in his comprehensive definition of the peasantry rejects this notion and argues that it is only when the similarities of peasantry and other modes of production are well understood that the dissimilarities can well be understood.

Van der Ploeg (2008) starts his argument by a re-conceptualisation of the peasantry making a comprehensive definition of the peasant condition and then flowing from it describes the peasant mode of farming. I will discuss the main highlights of this conceptualization starting from the peasant condition and then the peasant mode of farming.

### *1.2.3. The peasant condition*

Peasants operate in a hostile environment (Shanin, 1971). Characteristic of the hostile environment is dependency relations, marginalization, deprivation and unfavourable natural conditions such as poor soil fertility, irregular rainfall patterns and disease and pests conditions. The hostile environment is a source of uncertainty and therefore puts peasants in a position to struggle for survival. Pearse (1975: 42) calls this struggle for survival as the 'pursuit of livelihood' which Hebinck and Borudillon (2001:2) conceptualizes as 'striving to make a living'. Here unity of units of production and units of consumption is sought in an attempt to reproduce ones existence and hopefully improve it above mere survival. The notion of survival could be based on the ability to meet the nutritional needs of the farming family, the level of income obtained, or the ability to meet the conditions imposed by external parties like banks, agro-industrial groups and the state. Inherently linked to survival is the struggle for autonomy which involves increasing and defending one's room to manoeuvre in such hostile environment where uncertainty is the norm. Autonomy creates room for manoeuvre at both micro and meso levels. In order to achieve this peasants engage in off-farm activities that supplement income from farms as well as allow for further investment in farms. Through off-farm activities they therefore avoid dependence on banking circuits and money lenders which leads to already paid for factors of production and strengthens their autonomy.

The struggle for autonomy takes place alongside the creation and development of a self-controlled and self-managed resource base. To achieve this, production also leads to reproduction of resources. Thus seeds, family labour, and capital are all reproduced in the production process that strengthens the autonomy of the peasant. This self-controlled and self-managed resource base is the result of, and also leads to a mutual interaction between man and living nature in a process Van der Ploeg (2008:24) describes as 'co-production'. Here the craftsman-like organisation of the labour process allows for the moulding and remoulding of social and natural resources which reinforces autonomy. The labour process also strengthens autonomy by allowing for learning and innovative ways of doing things on the farm leading to flexibility and fluidity in the ways things are done. Thus 'through co-production progress is wrought' Van der Ploeg (2008:24).

Also important in the struggle for autonomy by peasants is the way relations with the outside world (markets, technology, state etc.) are patterned. Here flexibility and fluidity as in the case of the labour process is still important. Relations are patterned to allow for expansion or contraction depending on the situation at any moment. Thus there is always a constant processing and reprocessing of the information available and decisions arising from such processes incorporated into the production process. It will therefore be an unpleasant thing for peasants to be entrapped in relations that do not allow this flexibility and fluidity. This takes place in a context of trust for the local which are usually embedded in the cultural repertoires and distrust for the non-local which usually is at variance with the cultural repertoires. To reflect this balance of trust and distrust, the flow of resources is usually autonomous in which resources are produced and reproduced within the farm unit itself.

It is worth mentioning however that this characterisation is a typology and for analytical purposes because in practice there are a whole lot of in-between situations. Then there are forms of cooperation that balance the individual interest with that of the collective in order to make the system sustainable. These forms of cooperation serves as a 'safety belt' (Tepicht, 1973, in Van der Ploeg, 2008) which helps protect both individual and collective interest through mutual arrangements. It is in the condition discussed above that the peasant mode of farming flows from and is practiced.

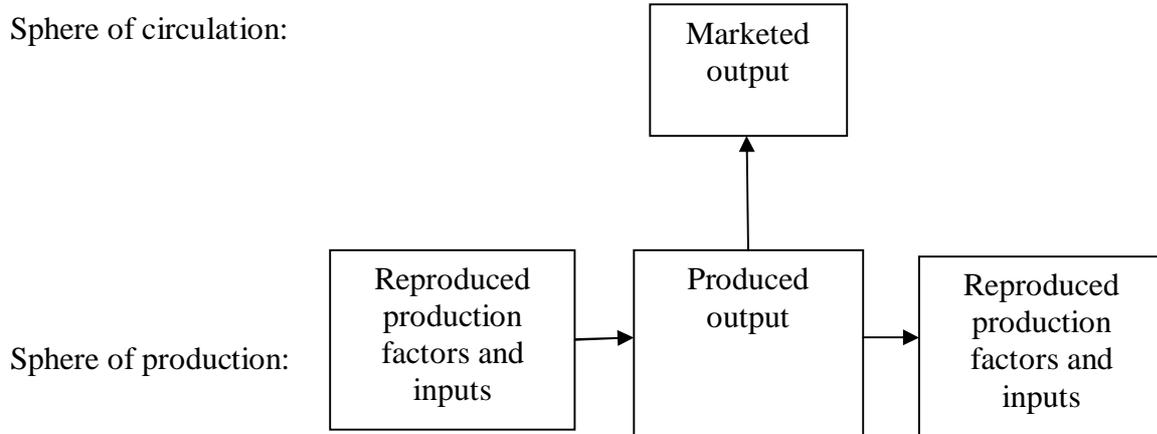
#### *1.2.4 Peasant mode farming*

The peasant mode of farming is organised as to allow for and strengthen autonomy given the hostile nature of the environment in which it operates. To resonate with this, self-managed and self-made resources are used. As a consequence of the hostile environment resource base per unit of production and consumption is nearly always limited (Janvry, 2000 in Van der Ploeg, 2008). In spite of this limitation, peasants avoid expansion of the resource base through mobilization from markets because such moves will weaken their autonomy and also increase transaction cost. To go around this limitation in the resource base, peasants seek to get as much produce as possible from the available resource base without depleting or reducing its quality. Here availability of labour as well as its quality is decisive. Thus it becomes important to distinguish skill from mechanical way of doing things in the labour process.

Key in the peasant mode of farming is the way resources are mobilized. The peasant mode of farming is relatively autonomous and historically guaranteed; resources enter the cycle of the production and reproduction as use-values (already paid for). This is what reinforces the autonomy of the peasantry. This means that the 'peasant production is only partly commoditized' (Schejtman, 1980:128). Thus in peasant agriculture it is not just an issue of the production of commodities; it is also an issue of reproducing the factors of production for the next cycle of production.

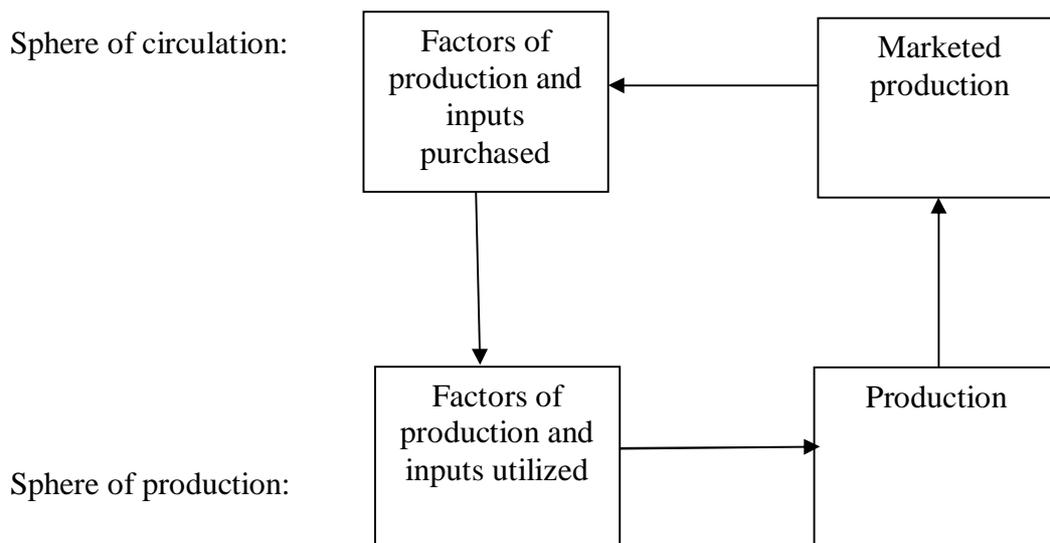
The relationship between peasant agriculture and markets is shown in figure 1.1. It can be observed from the figure that marketed output is the only item in the sphere of circulation and factors of production are all reproduced in the sphere of production. This makes such a mode of production relatively autonomous and historically guaranteed. Contrast to that is illustrated in figure 1.2 which depicts a market dependent mode of production that peasants would want to distance themselves from as it weakens their autonomy. Thus the peasant mode of farming is focussed on value addition using the available resource base and quality labour to further autonomy.

Figure 1.1 The relatively autonomous, historically guaranteed scheme of reproduction



Source: Van der Ploeg (2008:44)

Figure 1.2 Market-dependent reproduction



Source: Van der Ploeg (2008:45)

### *1.2.5 Entrepreneurship*

Eenhoorn (2007:10) writes that: 'Entrepreneurship is a state of mind that identifies rewarding opportunities, takes action to pursue these, is willing to take calculated risks, and is capable of managing uncertainty'. Thus at the heart of entrepreneurship lies opportunities to be pursued, people to pursue them, skills and strategies needed to organize and exploit, and favorable conditions (Shane, 2003).

This assertion demonstrates that entrepreneurship, and in this case entrepreneurial farming, thrives only under specific conditions that favour its development. Again going back to Van der Ploeg (2008), the conditions under which entrepreneurial mode of farming can thrive have been outlined and discussed as a prelude to the discussion of the entrepreneurial mode of farming (see box 1.1). Van der Ploeg (1991) notes that the relations between farming practices and markets have unmistakable influence on agricultural development. The World Bank (2007) identifies improving the productivity, profitability, and sustainability of smallholder farming as the main pathway out of poverty in using agriculture for development. It maintains that improving price incentives and making product markets work well are some of the forms this can take. These are attempts at conditioning the environment for entrepreneurial farming. I will therefore tend my attention to discuss these conditions following Van der Ploeg (2008).

### *1.2.6 The entrepreneurial condition*

Box 1.1 below sets out the conditions that are necessary for entrepreneurial mode of farming to thrive. Straight away under these conditions everybody will be an entrepreneur for nothing could possibly go wrong. But once again this is a typology; in reality it is almost impossible to find such perfect conditions. These conditions reflect the focus of the entrepreneur; the future. This future focus requires adequate planning of all details regarding cost of production, yields as well as price margins of outputs in order to determine the profitability of the enterprise. But such planning and calculation cannot be possible in the peasant condition characterised by uncertainty as discussed above. It is the insecurity of this condition in the real world that brings the concept of risk and risk management into entrepreneurship. Thus those who are risk loving and able to manage risk better eventually become successful entrepreneurs; the converse is true. But even with the risk lovers, who are able to manage risk, something can always go wrong in the real world and so as safety net, there is need for state intervention to bail out affected farms in eventualities like floods and the outbreak of

diseases and pest which cannot be calculated for ahead of time. Another interesting aspect of the conditions is the opportunity of the outflow of bad farmers to liberate resources to allow for the good ones to expand. Then the economy should be able to absorb this outflow of labour into other sectors otherwise there is a problem of unemployment.

*Box 1.1 Entrepreneurial condition*

To prosper, farms structured according to the entrepreneurial mode of production need a specific politico-economic context that is characterised by, and secures, the following conditions:

- Relatively stable prices and avoidance of steep fluctuations are imperative since entrepreneurial farms require large investments due to their dimensions, structure and accelerated expansion. These can only be realised when there is long-term stability in off-farm prices – too much turbulence, planning, investments and further expansion become difficult if not impossible.
- Price levels must allow for a positive margin between costs and benefits.
- Markets must be ordered in a way that prevents a sharp rise in costs, interest levels, energy prices, etc.
- State intervention is needed to ‘rescue’ affected farm enterprises when dramatic events interrupt the normal reproduction and growth of entrepreneurial farms (e.g. BSE, foot and mouth disease and climate conditions that cause massive harvest failures).
- The state must secure relatively cheap capital and/or allow for cheap labour.
- The state must create the spatial and institutional conditions that allow for ongoing and accelerated expansion.
- Entrepreneurs need to control farmers’ unions and be able to impose their programme on the majority of farmers.
- There must be expert systems that allow for a flow of well-tested innovations that contribute to further scale enlargement and industrialization labour process.
- There must be an outflow of ‘bad’ farmers who manage ‘economically unviable farms’. This liberates resources badly needed by the expanding entrepreneurs. Whenever hindrances occur to this outflow, the state must remove them.
- Civil society and the state are to grant entrepreneurial farming ‘safe havens’, where spatial, ecological, social and economic conditions that best fit with such farming may prosper.

Source: Van der Ploeg (2008:128)

It is clear from the above that the entrepreneurial condition is a highly controlled one and therefore a highly dependent one. Dependent not just on markets in requiring adequate and stable prices and transaction relations, but also on state and civil society to intervene when

things do not go well. It is on such conditions or at least assumptions of such conditions that the entrepreneurial mode of farming is built on and sustained.

#### *1.2.7 The entrepreneurial mode of farming*

The entrepreneurial farmer aims at making profits through scale enlargement and market integration. This scale enlargement is usually as a result of the takeover of the resources of other farmers in the form of land and labour as well as capital through financial institutions. Van der Ploeg (2008:129) argues that such expanding farms increase 'cost levels' and thus decrease profit margins. These cost levels often stem from the fact that expansion is financed by debt and interest rates have to be financed from the proceeds of farms. However, classical economics view is that economics of scale compensates this. In this type of production, resources do not enter the production cycle as use values but as debt which therefore deprives the farm entrepreneur of any autonomy since such debts and the resulting interests must be paid for anyhow. Thus the attention of the farm entrepreneur then shifts from caring for the resource to getting the best from them. This could lead to the degrading of soils which will eventually need heavy inputs of fertilizer which further increase the cost of production. Van der Ploeg (2008) describes this as the conquering of nature which eventually leads to its destruction.

Supporting the expansion is market integration. Farm entrepreneurs literally produce for the markets and what the markets requires determines what is produced. In basic economics this is the demand-supply equilibrium. Thus farm entrepreneurs can suffer a lot if there are imperfections in the market as a result of problems with physical infrastructure or information problems. Market integration means that production activities respond and adapt to movements in the market (Fafchamps, 2004). This market integration with its associated scale increase favour specialization which is seen to be efficient and favours the implied mechanization of such farms. The problem is that the entrepreneurial condition that favours this kind of farming is just too good to be true. It cannot be maintained for long and this is especially so with the current globalizing trends where state governments do not have total control over their economies. Price levels are as a result of what happens in the world markets and most likely decreasing price levels as well as increasing price fluctuations will be the result of this globalizing trends. What then will the farm entrepreneur do? Van der Ploeg (2008:146) observes that farm entrepreneurs react to low prices and eroded prospects

of the business of agriculture through 'deactivation'. This took the form of either reverting to a more extensive form of agriculture or moving slowly out of agriculture and investing into other sectors of the economy which are more promising and vibrant.

### *1.2.8 Peasants, Agricultural Entrepreneurs and Markets*

Both peasants and agricultural entrepreneurs find themselves in the market either as buying inputs or selling outputs. As a result the question is not about who is in the market and who is not but how these analytical groups relate with the markets. Peasants and entrepreneurs relate differently with markets in the agricultural production and distribution process.

Peasant relations with the market is that of distantiation where conscious efforts are made by every means possible to reduce dependence on the market and increase autonomy. Van der Ploeg (2008) argues that such efforts at distantiation from markets are not only limited to the input side of production but also includes the output side. At the input side conscious efforts are made to mobilize capital outside the capital markets. Where possible there is total mobilization outside markets, otherwise minimum use of the markets is employed. At the output side peasants pattern and re-pattern relations with market agencies which could allow for greater autonomy and hence further distantiation.

Van der Ploeg argues that when capital is mobilized outside the markets, then they are not expected to yield market-comparable profits. This is because other processes of conversion are important and other benefits apart from market profits matter to peasants but are not captured by neo-classical profit calculations. Institutional arrangements like land tenure and landholding, family capital and labour arrangements govern conversion processes that ensures distantiation of the peasant farming from markets.

Entrepreneurial agriculture on the other hand moves towards market integration in which the market governs conversion processes. Inputs are mobilized through the markets and outputs distributed through the markets. Market interest rates, wages and rents must be paid for capital, labour and land respectively. Outputs must be valued at market prices. Van der Ploeg (2008) notes that market integration is based on the assumption of neoclassical theory that "it does not matter whether cows are bred on the farm or bought on the market". That is to say that the social history of how inputs are mobilized does not matter; the only thing that matters

is their prices as set by the market. Market integration thus eliminates the advantages derived from the social significance of distantiation from markets since such do not avail themselves to market pricing mechanisms. So peasant agriculture is usually seen as inefficient and non-profitable.

Market integration makes agricultural entrepreneurs dependent on markets. Production on such farms is dependent on future productions from suppliers of inputs and demands of outputs by customers. Thus future market movements govern conversion processes and therefore make it more vulnerable to activities outside the farm compared to market distantiation in the peasant agriculture which strengthens autonomy.

#### *1.2.9 The Peasantry in Modern Farming*

Modern farming is characterised by, and reflects the global nature of the modern world. The “radical acceleration in the flows of capital, people, goods, images and ideologies – subjects and objects, in short – across the face of the globe has brought even the remote parts of the world in contact with metropolitan centres” (Xavier and Rosaldo, 1971: 5). For agriculture, the flows of capital, technology and commodities have had the most effect. Globalization and the accompanying market liberalization have made agriculture a different field than any time in the past. Modern farming is characterised by increasing commoditization, improved technology, specialisation and scale enlargement. Peasant agriculture has traditionally been conceptualised as being in the margins of modern societies and as such expected to disappear with modernisation to give way to superior forms of production (see Byres, 1991; Hariss, 1982; and Ellis, 1993). But is peasant agriculture really disappearing in today’s modern world? Or is it just being misunderstood as perhaps has been the case throughout the ages (Van der Ploeg, 2008)?

Van der Ploeg (2008: 149) describes farm entrepreneurs as the “children” of the modern globalised agriculture. This is not surprising because the characteristics of modern agriculture fit in the logic of the entrepreneurial mode of farming. However, the entrepreneurial condition (see box 1.1) within which entrepreneurial farming thrives is being threatened by globalization itself. This is because globalization with its attending market liberalization eventually leads to decreasing commodity prices as well as frequent price fluctuations. Heavy investments in scale enlargement and technology make entrepreneurial farms rigid. The fact

that most of investments are done through loans make it very vulnerable under deteriorating entrepreneurial conditions. Thus “globalization eats its ‘own children’ (the entrepreneurs)” (Van der Ploeg, 2008: 149). The reversal of the entrepreneurial condition by the very process of globalization then needs a robust and resilient mode of production that has the flexibility and autonomy to cope with such rather hostile conditions. This is where peasant agriculture comes into focus.

Peasant agriculture manifests itself in modern farming in a process van der Ploeg (2008:151) describes as “repeasantization”. He argues that repeasantization expresses itself qualitatively and involves enlarging autonomy and widening of resource base. This is achieved through diversification as seen in the establishment of on-farm processing, regrouping of farms in nature as seen in ecological and organic farms, pluriactivity as seen in farmers doing other things next to farming as well as new forms of local cooperation as seen in trade and resource use agreements. Van der Ploeg (2008:152) observes that “European farmers are enlarging the pleasantness of their farms, and reconstituting themselves as *new* peasants – not as ‘yesterday’s peasants’ but as peasants located at the beginning of the third millennium”. Thus in the phase of deteriorating entrepreneurial condition brought about by globalization itself, the peasant mode of farming is resorted to. Therefore peasant agriculture is far from disappearing in modern agriculture but it is rather “moving from the countryside to big metropolises of the world” (Van der Ploeg, 2008:37).

### **1.3 Problem statement**

The Ghana School Feeding Programme assumes that farmers are a homogeneous grouping and that farming and markets are neutral and culturally and socially disembodied. Peasant agriculture is embedded in cultural repertoires and decisions are made to reinforce autonomy and reduce dependency.

### **1.4 Research Objective and Research Questions**

#### *1.4.1 Research Objective:*

The objective of the research is to study the organizing practices of smallholder farmers and how the Ghana School Feeding Programme affects their autonomy.

#### *1.4.2 General research questions:*

The study seeks to answer the following general research questions:

1. How do smallholder farmers organize their farming practices?
2. How does the school feeding programme reinforce or weaken the autonomy of smallholder farmers?

#### *1.4.3 Specific research questions:*

The specific research questions that will enable me answer the general research questions above are:

##### *Organizing practices of smallholder farmers*

1. How do smallholder farmers mobilize resources for agricultural production?
2. What is the nature of the labour process among smallholder farmers?
3. How do smallholder farmers pattern relations with the outside world (markets, state, technology, civil society etc)?

##### *School feeding and autonomy of smallholder farmers*

4. How is food procured for the School Feeding Programme?
5. How does the procurement of food under the school feeding programme affect the autonomy of smallholder farmers?

## **1.5 Methodology**

This section describes the methodology employed to collect and analyze data for the research in the light of available literature and theoretical propositions. It starts with a description of the study area making use of relevant facts and figures, discusses the research approach and then describes the research design. The data collection techniques and sampling procedure used are also described. An explanation of how data was analyzed and interpreted concludes the section.

### *1.5.1 The Study Area*

The Northern Region of Ghana shares boundaries with Upper East and West Regions in the north, the Volta and Brong-Ahafo Regions in the south, Togo in the east and Ivory Coast in the West. Savelugu/Nanton District is one of the twenty (20) administrative districts of the Northern Region and located north of the region. It shares boundaries with West Mamprusi in the North, Karaga to the East, Tolon/Kumbungu in the West and Tamale Metropolitan

Assembly to the South. The District's total land area is 1790.70 sq. km. The area receives an annual rainfall averaging 600mm, considered enough for a single farming season. The annual rainfall pattern is erratic at the beginning of the raining season, starting in April, intensifying as the season advances raising the average from 600mm to 1000mm. The District finds itself in the interior (Guinea) Savanna woodland which could sustain large scale livestock farming, as well as the cultivation of staples like rice, groundnuts, yams, cassava, maize, cowpea and sorghum. The trees found in the area are drought resistant and hardly shed their leaves completely during the long dry season. Most of these are of economic value and serve as important means of livelihood especially for women. Notable among these are shea trees, (the nuts which are used for making sheabutter) and dawadawa that provides seeds used for condimental purpose.

The population of the district was 91,415 (2000 population census). With a growth rate of 3%, the projected population as at March 2006 is about 109,442. This is broken down into 49% male and 51% female. With a land area of 1790.7 sq. km., the population density is about 61 Persons per sq. km. Households are predominantly male-headed. The proportion of female-headed households was 3.1%. In 2004, it rose to about 3.6% and subsequently to about 5.5% in 2005. The average household size is 8.7 with the smallest household comprising one member and the largest household having 47 members. There are 149 communities in the District. The communities are administratively demarcated into one urban/town Council (Savelugu, the district capital) and five Area Councils, namely, Nanton, Diare, Pong-Tamale, Moglaa and Tampion. The 143 other communities could be described as rural. Nearly 80% of the populace resides in these rural communities and 20% in the few urban towns. Agriculture engages about 97 percent of the labour force, majority of who produce staple crops on subsistence level. Cash crop production is very minimal and includes sheanut, Soya beans, cotton and cashew. Agro-processing is generally done by traditional methods and on very small-scale bases.

### *1.5.2 Research Approach*

Insights from the Actor-oriented approach guided this study. The approach takes as point of departure actor-defined perspectives. It starts from an interest in explaining differential adaptations or responses to the same or similar circumstances (Long 1989, p. 222). Researchers using the actor-oriented approach argue that the outcomes of interventions are

the results of processes of negotiation, involving dialogue and bargaining, between actors (Long, 1997). Thus the outcomes of interventions are not determined entirely by planners, implementers or beneficiaries; it is negotiated and hence not fully predictable from the beginning of the intervention. Rondinelli (1993:18) rightly notes this when he describes development projects as 'social experiments' and suggested that development projects be seen as learning processes and be flexible enough to reflect the complex and uncertain nature of such projects. The assumption of the approach is that variations in organizational forms and cultural patterns are largely a measure of the outcomes of the different ways in which actors deal with problematic situations. Thus the actor-oriented analysis accommodates social heterogeneity and multiple realities. In this approach, individuals (social actors) are treated as such and not as part of a particular (homogenous) group.

According to Long (1989), social actors may be persons, group of persons or institutions. These actors have interest which may conflict with social norms. This brings into focus the concept of agency which is central to this approach. Agency refers to the capacity of the individual social actor to 'process social experience and to devise ways of coping with life even under the most extreme forms of coercion' (Long (1989. p. 223). Social actors possessing agency means that they are knowledgeable and capable of processing information in the environment and taking action. This notion of agency allows for the understanding of the constitution of social structures and how it influences behaviour due to the constraining and enabling effect it has (Giddens, 1987).

### *1.5.3 Research Design*

A qualitative case study design was employed in the research. Mitchell (1983) defines this methodology as a detailed examination of an event (or series of related events) which the analyst believes exhibits (or exhibit) the operation of some identified general theoretical principle. As a result of this, cases are deliberately chosen based on information richness rather than typicality. Thus instead of selecting a statistically representative sample, I chose a peasant community that is enrolled in the school feeding programme and has done so for over two years. Yin (1984:23) sees the case study as an empirical 'enquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context; when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident; and in which multiple sources of evidence are used'. Here the phenomenon under investigation is the response of a peasant community

to an external intervention – the Ghana School Feeding Programme. The organising practices of the farmers are believed to be the explanation of the observed phenomenon. The context is not clearly distinguishable because it is not possible to separate the farmers from what they are doing (farming). This coupled with the fact that it is a contemporary issue currently taking place makes the case study methodology in the sense of Yin the best to explore. For Van Velsen (1967) a case could be a group of individuals/institution or even just an individual. Because the case study is a particular instance of a broader issue, only one community was studied as a single case. The idea was not to generalise the findings of the research to other areas where local people encounter external interventions but to give an in-depth understanding of the specific case. Nonetheless some of the findings from such a context specific research may well have wider relevance. For, as Bernard (1995:47) contends, ‘Many theories are developed to explain a purely local phenomenon and turns out to have wider applicability’. Thus studies of this nature are better seen ‘generalizable to theoretical propositions and not to populations or universes’ (Yin, 1984:21)

#### *1.5.4 Data collection techniques and sampling*

The researcher made use of participant observation, semi-structured and unstructured interviews as well as focus group discussions to gather information for the research. This is to ensure that multiple sources of evidence are used for the research so it conforms to what Erlandson et al. (1993:317-318) identifies to improve the ‘credibility’ of research findings in a process called ‘triangulation’. This serves to improve the internal validity of the findings of the research. The combination of participant observation and interviews is particularly important for the researcher to distinguish what people say they do and what they really do. The actor-oriented focus of this research also makes it important to focus on actors and what they do rather than rely on key informants that are suppose to “know-it-all” which usually is not the case anyway. For the interviews conducted, a lot of attention was given to the way questions were asked which was aided by the use of an interview guide (Gentile, Ozolins, & Vasilakakos, 1996). This ensured that questions were not ambiguous and also covered the range of topics the researcher wants to explore (see appendix B). Interviewees were assured of anonymity and their consent sought for taking notes and where necessary the use of tape recorder.

As mentioned already, generalizability is not the aim of this research and therefore sample and sampling were not done to be statistically representative. Samples were thus selected purposively. This sampling procedure allows the researcher to ‘learn in the field as you go along to select units of analysis that will provide the information you need’ (Bernard, 1995:95). In all, 8 households were involved in the research, 56 interviews were conducted, 5 focus group discussions and 4 farms visited (see appendix A). These numbers were not selected beforehand. The procedure was to select households and persons who had the relevant information and willing to be part of the research. Spending time in the community afforded the researcher the opportunity to make observations which eventually resulted in interviews and focus group discussions. Interviews and group discussions went on until further interviews added not much new information to what was already gathered. This is not to claim exhaustiveness in data collection though, since some information was still gathered in the last week of my field work when I thought I had it all and was only cross-checking. In the semi-structured and unstructured interviews, notes were taken and recordings made where interviewees consented. The purpose of the recordings was not for it to be transcribed into text for analysis, but for the researcher to have the chance to listen to them again to fill in gaps in his notes. It would have been useful to make transcripts of recordings but the time and resources available for the research makes this practically impossible. The fact that I conducted all interviews directly (not through interpreters) makes the notes, and the opportunity to listen to recorded interviews again still a good option. It is worth mentioning that language was not a barrier since the researcher understood and spoke the language of the people which also contributed to quick rapport building with the local people. Apart from the local people in the community, people involved in the implementation of the programme were also interviewed.

#### *1.5.5 Data analysis*

The main theoretical models used for the analysis were Van der Ploeg (2008) models of peasant and entrepreneurial conditions and modes of farming. These were used both as descriptive models to guide data collection as well as analytical models to identify main themes from the field. Because it was important to learn in the field and use the knowledge to improve data collection, data analysis also was done simultaneously in the field during data collection. The idea is that new perspectives from the field shapes data collection instruments and gives directions as to further observations and interviews. Thus data collection and

analysis are not separate entities in research of this nature where learning is important to improve research while on the field. The simultaneous data collection and analysis allowed the researcher to employ what Lincoln & Guba, (1985:314) described as “member checking” in order to improve “credibility” of findings (see also Erlandson et al., 1993:142). The procedure makes it possible to cross-check identified themes in data gathered with respondents while still in the field. It is also an opportunity to gather new data as well as strengthen rapport between researcher and research subjects. Interface analysis was also employed to examine the points of interaction between the programme and actors involved in the implementation. This kind of analysis makes it possible to understand the conflict situations involved in such interactions and also explains how observed outcomes are negotiated and bargained at such interfaces.

### **1.6 Justification of the study**

This research is of both theoretical and social importance. At the theoretical level, it contributes empirical evidence that is needed for the attempts at building a comprehensive theory on development which has so far proved elusive. More specifically it contributes to the explanation of the failure of the many development projects embarked upon by both policy makers and practitioners since the inception of the development industry. Its focus on theoretical conceptions both as descriptive framework to help in data gathering and as analytical framework to identify emerging themes from field work make it especially useful for other people interested in theorizing in this field. Thus students, researchers, lecturers in this field will find the results from the study a very useful document. Socially the research is of practical relevance as it contributes to explaining how the outcomes of development interventions are negotiated and constructed at points of implementation which are usually very different from those anticipated by planners. This explanation can go a long way to assisting policy makers and development practitioners to adopt interventions to the practices of local people both during planning and implementation to increase the success of such projects.

The research findings will be particularly useful to the government of Ghana and the implementers of the GSFP. Even though the research does not make prescriptions how the desired goals can be achieved, it explains why current approaches have not worked and can therefore be useful information to reform current approaches. The recommendations that flow

from the conclusions of the research if given attention can also be a great step at ensuring the success of the programme.

### **1.7 Delimitation**

The scope of the research is restricted to the immediate objective of the GSFP of boosting local agricultural production through local purchases. Thus the research does not unpack the entire implementation of the programme and so findings and statements made from the research are only limited to this immediate objective. Attention has been focused on the organizing practices of smallholder farmers and the purchasing behavior in the implementation of the GSFP. As such other dimensions like the political and administrative as well as activities geared towards the achievement of the other objectives of the programme that do not directly affect this scope have been ignored to give the research a sharper focus. The research is also geographically limited to the Savelugu/Naton district of the northern region of Ghana. More specifically it studies the implementation of the programme in the Kpalun community which is 15km from the district capital, Savelugu.

### **1.8 Chapter Summary and Organization of the Rest of the Thesis**

This introductory chapter gave background information to the research and then discussed the key theoretical concepts on which it is based. The methodology employed for the research is described in the light of relevant theoretical underpinnings. The chapter also provided justification and delimitation for the study. Chapter two will discuss the design of the Ghana School Feeding Programme as it is set out in the project document. Chapter three will focus on farming in Ghana in general zeroing in on farming in the study area. Chapter four is dedicated to school feeding in practice and discusses the empirical data from the field about what actually goes on in practice. Chapter five is the concluding chapter and presents an analysis of the interface situations between peasants and the Ghana School Feeding Programme culminating in an explanation of the construction of the current outcome of the programme. A separate section positions peasant agriculture in modern farming. The research findings are also summarized and conclusions drawn in the light of the research questions and some recommendations suggested for the improvement of the programme. The chapter, and for that matter the thesis, then concludes with some theoretical and methodological reflections on the study and their implications for future research.

## CHAPTER TWO

### 2.0 THE GHANA SCHOOL FEEDING PROGRAMME

This chapter discusses the Ghana school Feeding Programme as set out in the project documents. In order to contextualize the discussion I start with a condensed history and overview of school feeding programmes in Ghana.

#### **2.1 School Feeding Programmes in Ghana.**

Fisher (2007) notes that school feeding programmes in Ghana date as far back as 1958. It was started by the Catholic Relief Services (CRS); an American based NGO. CRS was joined later in the 1960s by the World Food Programme (WFP) and since then both organizations have remained major players in feeding school children in Ghana. Other actors in school feeding in Ghana include World Vision, Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA), Netherlands Development Organization (SNV) and SEND. The focus of these school feeding programmes have widely been geared towards satisfying the nutritional needs of school children in food insecure areas and also to help keep such children in school and improve their performance.

School feeding in Ghana has exhibited some of the characteristics of what Ahmed and Sharma (2004:1) have described as 'Food for Education' (FFE) programmes. To them School Feeding (SF) programmes is just an aspect of Food for Education. Another aspect of Food for Education programmes they identified is Food for Schooling (FFS). In SF children are fed in school and in FFS parents are given food if their children attend school. Since the inception of school feeding in Ghana one or both aspects of Food for Education have been employed at one point in time or another.

CRS with funding from USAID in 1997 implemented school feeding in the three northern regions of Ghana namely Northern Region, Upper East Region, and Upper West Region. This was geared towards improving school enrolment and attendance through meals in school and covered approximately 200,000 primary school children in 296 pre-schools and 967 primary schools (Fisher, 2007). Recently, the agency has concentrated its efforts on rural communities and phased out urban and peri-urban schools. CRS integrates food assistance with other

interventions such as water, education and school health. The community provides some of the ingredients in the preparation of food, fuel (wood) and water, either through canteen fees or contributions in kind. Equally, infrastructure and other accessories are the responsibility of the community and increasingly the District Assembly. In most places, the community now controls the food, which was formerly stored at the school and managed by the teachers. CRS does not provide assistance with local production and storage. The agency is now gradually phasing out of school feeding (GoG, 2006).

World Food Programme implemented a take-home ration programme in its Girls School Feeding Programme in 25 districts in the 3 northern regions of Ghana. This programme gave girls take-home food rations every month to get them enrolled in school and also to ensure continued attendance in primary and junior secondary schools (WFP, 2006a). World Vision provides lunch during the lean season to children in primary schools in the Gushiegu and Bongo Districts only, where it also operates Area Development Programmes.

In all these programmes, food has always been imported for the purpose. Food imports for school feeding programmes have mainly been from the United States food surpluses in the form of grains and oil (Jones, 1981). Fisher (2007) notes that CRS, one of the major players in school feeding programmes in Ghana, imports the food supplies and will continue to do so until the end of its programme. Thus school feeding programmes in Ghana have mostly depended on imported food supplies since the association of food with schooling in 1958. This is not surprising since such programmes have been almost always external donor funded and run by such international agencies that champion the funding. It is however worth mentioning that in 2005 the WFP made some changes in its programme and started sourcing some of the food it needed locally (Fisher, 2007) though only a minor part of it. This included corn, salt and palm oil.

## **2.2 The Era of Home Grown School Feeding: “killing two birds with one stone”**

Home Grown School Feeding programmes are initiatives of the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD) and the Millennium Development Task Force on Hunger in collaboration with the WFP, UNICEF and FAO (Ahmed and Sharma, 2004; Fisher, 2007). This initiative is strengthened by support from the new Alliance for a Green Revolution for Africa, headed by Kofi Annan, the former UN secretary general, which is also committed to

school feeding. The idea of this new initiative is to see school feeding in a new light beyond alleviating short term hunger and malnutrition of school children in schools but also promoting and boosting local food production to ensure long term food security; thus “killing two birds with one stone”.

Local procurement of food for the programme became the “golden stone” which kills the two birds; alleviate short term hunger and boost local food production. The assumption for the objective of boosting local food production through local food purchases are based on neo-classical economics theory of demand and supply. Movements in demand and supply will cause a disequilibrium which will lead to further movements in search of a new equilibrium. Thus if the school feeding programme creates an imbalance in demand and supply through local purchases, farmers will swing into action to produce more and thus force the relationship back into an equilibrium.

Ahmed and Sharma (2004) employed econometrical procedures to demonstrate the effect of local purchases on food production using maize as an example. The study concluded that a rightward shift (increase) in aggregate demand curve for maize due to additional demand generated by food for education programs would raise the equilibrium price of maize and then farmers will respond to the higher prices of maize and produce more and thus achieve increased production and subsequently food security. This analysis admits that both price and non-price factors contribute to farmers’ production decisions but falls short by limiting the non-price factors to improved technology and infrastructure. The argument of the initiators of the programme is that the demand created by local procurement could trigger market mechanisms especially in marginal, rural areas which could eventually lead to increased food production (NEPAD/Hunger Task Force Initiative, 2003). This is perfectly in line with the linear model of agricultural development discussed earlier in chapter one that holds market integration as key in achieving development.

Ahmed and Sharma (2004) have identified some key organizing principles of a successful Locally Grown School Feeding Programme which are listed below:

- Reliance on domestic food production,

- Diversification of diets based on locally available foods, with micronutrient supplementation and fortification,
- Stimulation of farm productivity and market systems,
- Crop diversification and cottage industry development,
- Infrastructure development,
- Resource mobilization and community ownership,
- Control over the flows of products and funds by local communities through good governance,
- Quantification of solutions and benefits,
- Targeting of small holder farmers and school children in food insecure areas of the country,
- Targeting most vulnerable food insecure children including street children and HIV/AIDS orphans.

### **2.3 The Ghana School Feeding Programme Document**

The Government of Ghana is implementing the school feeding programme in public primary schools in the country. The programme is an initiative of the Comprehensive African Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) Pillar 3 of NEPAD and seeks to enhance food security, reduce hunger and improve enrolment and retention among school children. Ghana is one of ten countries in Sub-Saharan Africa selected to implement the programme under CAADP. National school feeding is part of Ghana's efforts at attaining the United Nations Millennium Development Goals on extreme hunger and poverty as well as achieving universal access to primary education and reducing under-five mortality by 2015. The school feeding programme is based on locally-grown food and targets children in public primary schools and kindergartens in the poorest areas. The political commitment for this kind of special school feeding programme at the international level coupled with the strong political will locally gave the Ghana School Feeding Programme the initial boosting it needed to take off. It is worth noting that the pledge by the Dutch government to support the initiative (SNV, 2006) also went a long way to making the programme a reality. In the new programme, the Ghana Government made it its own project and was fully involved and donor funding came only to supplement its efforts.

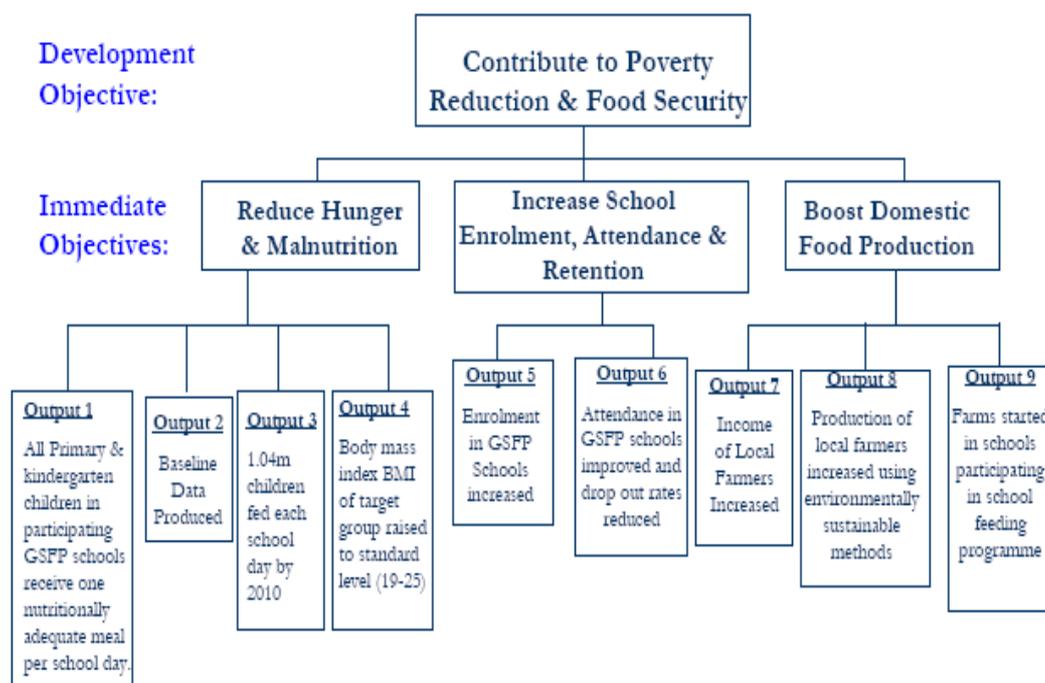
## **2.4 Goals and objectives of the programme**

The long-term objective of the GSFP is to contribute to poverty reduction and food security in Ghana. The Programme will also create opportunities for greater availability, access, utilization, and stability of food crops at the community level. The increased demand for food production will lead to development of other economic activities such as processing and cottage or small and medium enterprises using the surplus agricultural produce as inputs. Women are envisaged to benefit more because they are those mostly involved in food crop production. Improved food security through increased rural household wealth will greatly impact human capital formation which has been noted to start from early childhood. Purchases of food for the programme will be prioritized as to benefit poor rural households. The first order of priority is to purchase from local community where the beneficiary school is located followed by purchases at the district level. The last order of priority is purchases at the national level. Figure 2.1 presents the main objectives and outputs of the programme as set out in the project document. The overall development objective is to contribute to poverty reduction and food security. Three immediate objectives will achieve this goal. The first two are related to nutrition and education which are the focus of conventional school feeding programmes. The third immediate objective is the distinguishing feature of the Home Grown School Feeding. It is aimed at enhancing domestic agricultural production by providing greater demand for food crops, efficient procurement and marketing practices and improved storage of food crops that are basic/central to the school feeding programme. It is targeted that 80% of feeding cost for the programme will go into the local economy.

The objective of boosting domestic agriculture has three output indicators which are:

- Incomes of local farmers increased: this is expected to come about through increased prices of food items as a result of increased demand through purchases for school feeding
- Production of local farmers increased using environmentally friendly methods: expected to come about through farmers response to increasing prices of food items as an incentive for investing more in their farms
- Farms started in schools participating in the programme: a sustainability measure aimed at decreasing cost of feeding in the long term.

Figure 2.1: Objectives and main outputs of the GSFP



Source: GoG, 2006:4

## 2.5 Planned implementation of the GSFP

The implementation of the GSFP is planned to centre on the District Assemblies (GoG, 2006) as part of efforts to decentralize the programme. According to the programme document this will be done through a District Implementation Committee (DIC). This committee consists of the district chief executive, two representatives of the social services sub-committees, three members from the national secretariat, an opinion leader (retired civil servant or business executive), a traditional ruler or his representative, the district directors of education, health, food and agriculture, and selected primary school head teachers. This committee oversees and supervises the procurement of food stuffs and all the activities that contribute to the successful running of the programme at the district level.

The DIC thus becomes the coordinating unit at the district level for the GSFP that exercises direct oversight over all the schools in the programme. It directly disburses funds to SICs and holds the SICs accountable for use of the funds for the feeding and related activities. The DA will appoint or second a dedicated District GSFP Liaison (DGL) to link the DIC to the DA, the SIC's, the GSFP Regional Coordinating Office (RCO), as well as the National Secretariat

(NS). The DGL will be the focal person for the GSFP and also serve as the secretary to the DIC. He/she will be responsible for the proper documentation and reporting of the committee's activities, as well as collating feedback from the SICs. The DIC will also be formalized as a sub-committee of the DA to coordinate all school feeding programmes at the district level. The DA may co-opt representatives of other school feeding programmes in the district to serve as ex-officio members of the DIC, as well as other experts and district level actors in related or collaborative programmes including NGOs.

At the school level, each school has a School Implementation Committee (SIC) which is the implementing unit at that level. The SIC sets the menu, employ cooks, procure food as well as oversee the cooking and feeding. This committee comprises the head teacher, a representative of the Parent-Teachers Association (PTA), two representatives of the School Management Committee (SMC), a representative of the traditional leader, a teacher in charge of the programme within the school and a religious leader which could either be a pastor or an Imam depending on the religion that dominates in the particular community.

The school level implementing unit plans and executes the actual feeding. It receives funds from the DIC, procures needed inputs, supervises the food preparation and feeding activities, and accounts back to the DIC. The SIC directly manifests ownership of the programme by local communities who are its ultimate beneficiaries. The SIC will also lead community mobilization to support and sustain the feeding programme. It will also provide the frontline for the programme objective to build food security at the community level through linkage between the school feeding initiative and local farmers. Sensitization for the SIC will also include exposure to other strategies employed by ongoing school feeding programmes by the WFP and CRS to reduce cost and improve reach.

## **2.6 Assumptions of the GSFP**

The Ghana School Feeding Programme is based on the following assumptions:

- Government funding will be forthcoming
- Donor contribution is available and adequate
- MDAs will carry out their roles and commitments
- Most schools in the urban areas might not have land available for farming.

- Majority of basic public/primary are available in the urban areas.
- Funding institutions and extension services will support the programme
- Funds for feeding are released on a timely basis
- MDAs collect data routinely and make them available to the Programme.
- Local household food security, especially of the poor, is not affected adversely by the increased demand for food commodities through the GSFP.

With respect to the last assumption, poor rural households will increase their incomes from sales to GSFP by selling food not intended for their own subsistence. Moreover, increased incomes will strengthen their capacity to purchase food during the lean seasons when hunger is at its peak. On balance, the improvements in income brought about by the market created through the GSFP for farm outputs are expected to favour poor rural households. The motivation of a ready market to farmers to produce more will also help to reduce cost pressures that may emerge from the increasing demand from the school feeding programme purchases.

## **2.7 Implications of Programme Assumptions**

One major assumption of the programme is that food purchases for the programme would be large enough to affect domestic food prices. Poor rural households are expected to embrace these high prices of food because they have food to sell and which should fetch them more income. The increased income from selling at higher prices and availability of ready market in the programme is expected to provide adequate incentive for farmers to invest more in their farms and move towards market integration. This model is too linear and simplistic. Farming is not a linear process and farmers are a heterogeneous and not a homogeneous group. As a result a linear model of this sort which does not capture the complexity of farming and the people involved in it will find it difficult if not impossible to see the light of day.

## **2.8 Chapter Summary and Conclusion**

This chapter discussed the official document of the GSFP. It started with a condensed history and overview of school feeding programmes in Ghana in order to put the discussion into context. Then Home Grown School Feeding Programmes were discussed generally bringing out the major features and assumptions. I then zeroed in on the Ghana School Feeding

Programme discussing its goals and objectives, planned implementation and major assumptions placing emphasis on those related to boosting domestic agriculture. The final section of the chapter reflected on the implications of the assumptions of the programme.

The major argument in the chapter has been that the programme design has been very simplistic and draws very much on neo-classical economic assumptions. It does not take into consideration the heterogeneous nature of farmers and the social context in which farming is practiced.

## CHAPTER THREE

### 3.0 THE NATURE OF FARMING IN GHANA

This chapter discusses farming in Ghana with respect to peasants and entrepreneurs as presented in chapter one. I will begin with a brief description of the agricultural sector in Ghana and then zero in on small-scale farming systems in Ghana. This will lay the foundation for me to discuss the characteristics of farming in the study area.

#### **3.1 Ghana's Agricultural Sector**

Agriculture is the dominant sector in the Ghanaian economy. It employs about 60% of the labour force and contributes about 40% to Ghana's GDP. It accounts for over 50% of the foreign exchange earnings of the country. The agricultural sector in Ghana can be divided into 5 subsectors namely:

- Cocoa subsector
- Non-cocoa crop subsector
- Livestock subsector
- Fisheries subsector
- Forestry subsector

Cocoa is the most important agricultural export crop and that is how come it has a subsector of its own. All the other crops apart from cocoa also make a subsector of their own. In this subsector we have non-traditional export crops that include horticultural crops like pineapple, mango, pawpaw and vegetables. This is also the subsector in which food crops are located. These include cereals like maize, rice, sorghum and millet; legumes and pulses like cowpea, beans, groundnuts and soybeans; and root and tubers like cassava, yam, and cocoa yam. There are also industrial crops like cotton, oil palm, rubber and coconut. Other crops in this subsector are plantain, banana and ginger. The livestock subsector consists of poultry, ruminants and non-ruminants. The fisheries sector consists of both fresh water fishing as well as sea fishing activities. The forest sector produces timber and other wood products.

##### *3.1.1 Characteristics of Ghana's agriculture*

Agriculture in Ghana is predominantly rain fed and therefore seasonal. The seasons depend on the agro-ecological zone within which an area is located. These zones vary in vegetation

cover, rainfall distribution, duration and intensity. There are five of these zones in Ghana namely; the rain forest, deciduous forest, transition zone, coastal savannah and northern savannah. The southern part of the country is where the forest zones are located and those zones experience the most rainfall in the year. There are two cropping seasons in a year; the major and the minor seasons. This is where the tree crops are also grown. In the northern part we have the savannah which experiences little rainfall which is concentrated in only one season. Here seasonal food crops are grown. The transition zone has characteristics of both the forest and the savannah zones and therefore sustains both tree and arable crops.

Ghana's agriculture is mainly small-holder based. About 80% of the total agricultural production in the country is produced on a small-scale with land holdings of less than 2 hectares. Talking about smallholder farmers and small-scale farming has the tendency of assuming homogeneity among farmers and the farming systems. This is however far from being the case. Nonetheless programmes and projects in developing countries that have targeted smallholders seem not to recognize this. This is largely due to the difference between agriculture in the developed and the developing countries. Benneh (1973) notes that agriculture in the developing world is influenced very much by ecological factors of the soil and farmers make decisions based on assessments of those conditions and the economic resources available to them. In the developed world however, ecological factors may not unduly influence farmers' decisions. Using intensive case studies, Benneh (1973) classified Ghana's small-scale farming into six systems to which I now tend my attention.

### **3.2 Small-scale Farming Systems in Ghana**

Benneh (1973) have used the method of maintaining soil fertility as a major criterion in classifying small-scale agriculture in Ghana. He notes however that the method of obtaining soil fertility largely depends on the ecological conditions of an area and the level of technology available. The method of obtaining soil fertility in turn indirectly determines characteristics of farming systems such as land use patterns, capital inputs, yields, intensity of cultivation and the permanence and impermanence of rights in cultivated land. Using this criterion Benneh (1973) distinguished two broad systems of small-scale farming in Ghana to be bush fallow system and permanent tillage. Permanent tillage may be based on the application of compost, manure, and fertilizers to restore soil fertility or on tree cropping to maintain soil fertility while bush fallow relies on the natural nutrient cycle systems of the

soil. The two systems are subdivided on the basis of land tenure which largely determines field patterns and the intensity of cultivation in terms of capital inputs. There is also a combined system which has characteristics of both broad systems. Table 3.1 summarises the classification of small-scale farming in Ghana according to Benneh (1973)

*Table 3.1 Classification of small-scale farming systems in Ghana*

Bush fallow systems	Permanent systems	Combined systems
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mosaic pattern of land ownership and land use</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cash Tree Cropping (Mosaic and Strip patterns)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Compound and Bush Fallow (Infield-Outfield)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strip pattern of land ownership and land use</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Compound Farming</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mixed Farming</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Specialized Horticulture</li> </ul>	

Source: Benneh (1973: 136)

### *3.2.1 Bush Fallow System*

In this system fields are rotated when they are exhausted from overuse in order to allow natural processes to replenish nutrients. Thus the method of maintaining soil fertility is through bush fallow. This system requires that land is in abundance so that some field can be cultivated while others lie fallow. Two categories can be distinguished namely mosaic pattern and strip pattern.

The major characteristic in the mosaic pattern sub-system is that land is easily acquired for cultivation. Other characteristics of the system include the use of fire for clearing vegetation, the use of simple implements that depend on muscle power (e.g. hoe, cutlass and dibble-stick), mixed cropping, production of food crops and the restoration of fertility of the soil by fallow vegetation. Physical inputs are also limited in this system.

Land ownership is communal in this system and people have right to cultivate a piece of land by virtue of being a member of the land owning group which could be a family, clan or tribe.

Members obtain the right to cultivate a piece of land by being the first to grow crops on it or inheriting such right from their fathers who did that. As long as a family continue to cultivate the land they keep it and for their descendants. Fertility differences and soil suitability for different crops have led to farmers having different plots at different locations. At any particular site the farms of an individual may be interspersed with those of other farmers and give rise to a mosaic pattern of land ownership hence the name.

The bush fallow system works satisfactorily if there is enough land so as to allow farmers to leave their land long enough to regain its fertility. Boateng (1962) suggests that the population density possible in the forest region of Ghana under the existing systems of cultivation and transportation is 150 persons per square mile<sup>1</sup>. Benneh (1973) has observed however that the fallow period has been shortening with time leading to decline in yields and deterioration of cultivated soils.

The strip sub-system of the bush fallow is distinguished by a special land ownership which gives rise to the strip pattern of land use and hence the name. Other characteristics which distinguish it from the mosaic sub-type are its orientation towards a market economy, a lesser degree of scatter of individual holdings and the use of hired labour. Ownership of farm land is acquired through purchase; the individual farmer thus acquires permanent and absolute interest in a well-defined parcel of land. This form of acquisition makes it a business since people who purchase land for farming must farm in such a way as to pay for the land and make profits. As a result this system is oriented towards the cultivation of tree crops (e.g. oil palm and cocoa) or food crops for large urban centres such as Accra and Kumasi. Hired contract labour is used for clearing the fallow vegetation when fields are being prepared for sowing (Benneh, 1973). Local farmers are employed as labourers on *Dibimamennibi* (literally eat and let me eat) terms<sup>2</sup>. The main implements are the cutlass and the hoe. After two or three seasons of cultivation when yields begin to decline, the field is left fallow. The efficiency of the system depends on low population density since this would ensure a longer rest for an exhausted soil. In the past, farmers solved the problem of population pressure on their strips of land by buying more land; there was thus always some land in reserve. With the depletion of virgin forest land in the country as a result of the rapid expansion of cocoa

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<sup>1</sup> 1 square mile = 2.589 square kilometres

<sup>2</sup> Under this arrangement the owner of a strip of land divides the field which is cleared in a farming season by a labourer into two, and each cultivates one half during that particular season. The labourer returns his half to the landowner at the end of the harvest.

cultivation, it has become difficult for farmers to acquire more land. This solution is therefore no longer possible because of population pressure and so the fallow period is becoming shorter.

### *3.2.2 Cash Tree Cropping System*

In this system the nutrient status of the soil is maintained through the decay and decomposition of vegetable matter which falls on it. Tree crops like oil palm and cocoa are the main crops and production is geared towards the market. The unique nature of this system limits it to the South of Ghana where the climate supports tree crops. Because trees stay in the field for longer periods, individuals cultivating them need to have near permanent ownership of the fields they cultivate. This is achieved through being part of a landholding family or through purchasing.

### *3.2.3 The Compound Farming System*

This farming system is characteristic of my study area and northern Ghana as a whole. It is based on the cultivation of food crops on land immediately surrounding the homestead. The nutrient status of the soil is maintained through refuse from the compound, the droppings of goats, sheep, poultry, and night soil. In order to increase the area under permanent cultivation, women and children are encouraged to deposit refuse further afield (Benneh, 1973). The crop sequence also involves a deliberate inclusion of legumes like groundnuts and bambara beans in the outer zone to help increase the nutrient status of the soil. Although the compound fields are normally tilled, small patches of fallow are left for tethering sheep and goats during the growing season.

In the Kpalun community where I did my research, there is a lot of cooperation among community members that allow this system to thrive. This is because small ruminants that are very distractive of food crops especially at the early stages are kept through free range<sup>3</sup>. At the start of the rainy season, the community agrees on when animals should be restricted to allow for crops to be grown around the compounds. This system restricts the number of small ruminants a household can keep since restricting them during the cropping season means providing housing and feeding which can be time consuming. Households with a lot of

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<sup>3</sup> A system of keeping animals with little or no housing or feeding and animals roam about feeding on what they like unrestricted.

children are better able to manage this since children are usually the ones who are responsible for the animals during the farming season.

The system is becoming increasingly important because of continuous decrease of soil fertility in fields farm from home which now require heavy application of fertilizer. Maize is the main crop grown in the Kpalun community around the homestead. Recent floods that have destroyed crops in fields away from home have made this system in the community a very important one in terms of livelihood pursuits. The system ensures there is enough food to eat while farmers work on other fields which they normally crop with cash crops like rice and groundnut. Some people employ the use of chemical fertilizer to enhance the fertility of the soils and herbicides to control weeds. This is because continuous cropping of the fields year in and year out is taking nutrients from the soil faster than the rate of replenishment.

#### *3.2.4 Mixed Farming System*

In this system of farming cultivation of crops is combined with the keeping of livestock. Conscious efforts are made to house and feed the livestock which distinguishes this system from the others where animals may be kept on free range basis. Normally bullocks and other large livestock like donkeys provide power in the form of animal traction for soil tillage and carting farm produce. Crop farms are fertilized by the droppings of the animals. The Colonial Administration in the early parts of the 20<sup>th</sup> century introduced the system to north-eastern Ghana to check the rapid deterioration of soils as a result of population pressure on land and to increase agricultural productivity (Benneh, 1973). Benneh (1973) notes that in spite of the demonstrable advantages the mixed farming system has over the other systems, its adoption depends on how effective extension services are in persuading farmers to produce feeding stuffs and manure, and the availability of capital to purchase bullocks and ploughs. Survey results reported in an earlier publication of the author revealed that 7 out of 24 farmers who owned or once possessed bullocks in Manga Bawku in the north of Ghana had acquired them through loans raised from the Ministry of Agriculture and the Bawku Co-operative Society while the rest had purchased them from their own savings (Benneh, 1972). This is an indication of how farmers in Ghana love autonomy and continue to pursue it even when the opportunity to get credit to finance inputs through markets in the form of the government establishments and co-operative unions exist.

### *3.2.5 Specialised Horticulture (Shallots)*

This farming system differs from the others in that it is very intensive and does not depend on the rain. It is therefore possible for cultivation to take place all year round. It is characterised by irrigation, application of manure and the rotation of crops. The system is market oriented and shallot is the main crop cultivated on narrow drainage ditches which run almost parallel to the coastline of Ghana. The crop is cultivated in a sandy poor soil in an area which receives less than 30 inches of rain. The system is restricted to the coastal areas of Ghana where the rainfall is scanty and the soils are sandy and poor in nutrients (Benneh, 1973). Shallot farming is not only capital intensive but also labour intensive. As a result hired labour is often used since family labour is not enough for the time and energy demanding tasks on the farm.

Since farming does not depend on the weather and physical conditions of soil, farming actually takes place all year round and yields depend entirely on the quantity and quality of investments in physical inputs and labour. A major environmental setback is flood which Benneh (1973: 145) says “occur quite often”. Farmers under this system are able to cultivate the same piece of land for a long time because they do not depend on the innate fertility of the soil but build up a capital of nutrients in the sandy soils through both organic and chemical fertilizers. The intensive nature of the system has made farmers dependent on a number of services some emanating from outside their immediate environment (Benneh, 1973). Farmers thus depend on fishermen for fish, Fulani kraals for manure, and agricultural extension officers for chemical fertilizers. In this network of relationships, the primary concern of the shallot farmer is to ensure that he can sell his produce at a sufficiently high profit in order to remain in business. This is one system in Ghana that can easily pass for a classical entrepreneurial farming. It however falls short because most the inputs though organised outside the farmers’ home are mobilized within their social networks. Chemical fertilizer is the only input organised through the market.

### **3.3 Farming in Kpalun**

In this section I discuss the farming practices in the Kpalun community. The discussion is organized under cultural repertoires which describe the social context of farming; land tenure, landholding and land ownership; the labour process; rotational labour associations; risk and investment in farms; drivers of production decisions; and relationship with markets.

### *3.3.1 Cultural Repertoires*

Farming is done in a way that will not separate community into ‘haves’ and ‘have-nots’; thus creating and reinforcing social cohesion. Farmers in the village are each other’s keeper and will, within limits, come to the aid of other farmers be it in weeding, seed, or food. Labour in planting is usually the most done with help from other community members. This is reflected in sayings like: “ninvugi yino bi nyeri buni” (one person doesn’t become rich); “nuu ku mali ka mong noli”(the hand cannot deny the mouth what it has’); and “nubli yini ku pii kugli” (one finger cannot pick a stone). Thus success of only a few people is scorned; perhaps a strike on capitalism. Therefore farming is seen as successful not so much about the individual gains but the collective gains to the community. For example, women because of their place in the household (do all household chores and raise children) are not able to make and keep large farms though their contribution to household food security cannot be overemphasized. As a result during harvest they keep a part of the harvest for themselves. In the case of groundnuts, which is exclusively done by women after men dig out the nuts from the soil, the harvest of each woman is divided into four equal parts and she takes one and the owner of the farm takes three parts. If you analyze the farm as a business unit, what this means is that the plugging (picking nuts from vines) of the groundnuts takes away one-quarter of the total harvest which is way too much and unreasonable. However in the social context this makes a lot of sense. For example, men do not have to give women money for food ingredients and other things to keep the house apart from the main diet that comes from the farm. Young girls use the money from such practices to buy the things they need when they marry and the guys won’t have to buy such things for them when they marry them. Because of such practices, women who would have been disadvantaged because they do not make and keep farms have assumed a power position that in the lean season they may be the ones relied upon for household livelihood.

This practice is a source of wealth creation for women and young girls and some women will even come from other villages during the season if they think they don’t have enough in their own village. This temporal migration is called “ayugba” and it is usually done for groundnuts and sheanuts picking though other crops are involved. The “ayugba” is also an opportunity for young girls to find husbands and vice versa in other communities apart from their own. The period could last anywhere between one to six months or even a year depending on the individuals involved and their social ties in the communities they visit.

Practices like this in which farming is embedded allow for what Van der Ploeg (2008) describes as forms of cooperation in his analyses of the peasant condition. A direct manifestation of this is the restraining of livestock during the farming season to allow for farming around the village because it is realized that those soils are more fertile than the ones further away which have been over cultivated. As Van der Ploeg (2008) argues, these forms of cooperation reinforce the resource base and in this case fertile soils to boost production. Thus the number of small ruminants you can keep will depend on whether you are able to restrain them in the farming season so they don't destroy other people's crops. It is worth mentioning that livestock are kept through free range. The difference between small ruminants and cattle is that there is a Fulani man who takes care of the cattle and guides them to graze and water.

The crops grown and how they are grown also form part of these cultural repertoires. Maize, rice, groundnuts and yam are the major crops grown by the farmers. Sorghum, millet, and cassava are intercropped with the major crops. Rice is cropped alone because of the special water requirement. Other crops are cowpea, beans, soybeans and watermelon. Women intercrop okro and other vegetables on their farms and also the family farms. Farmers keep livestock but livestock-crop integration is very minimal. Farming is constructed like this to the extent that a farmer remarked: "I did some insane thing this year by cultivating an all cassava farm". Normally cassava is planted to divide the yam farm into smaller units and then after the harvest of the yams the cassava remains and then joined by maize as the next crop the following season before it gets harvested that season depending on time availability and food needs that year.

### *3.3.2 Land tenure, land holding and land ownership*

Farmers have access to land on which to work. Land ownership is vested in the village chief who may allocate to people outside the village to work on. Individuals in the village inherit family lands from their (fore) fathers. Individuals can also get land by clearing virgin forest through cutting of trees and removing stumps. In this community landholding may be the best concept to use since there are no titles or official paper to indicate ownership. Perhaps here Kearney's (1996) communal land ownership is what applies. When outsiders want land to farm they can do so through the chief or members of the community who have their old plots to spare. These persons may or may not inform the chief about it as long as the scale is not

any larger than the average in the village. Land holdings are usually about five acres (2 hectares) per person which is in line with the World Bank's (2007: 155) assertion that smallholders in the developing world operate a farm of two hectares or less though some few exceptions exist. For example Ibrahim who owns the only tractor in the village cultivates about 30 acres (about 12 hectares) a year.

Farmers have discovered some fertile land in the river belt of the White Volta that gives high yields especially for maize even without fertilizer. Recent floods however have turned this into a nightmare. Farmers suffered floods for two consecutive years and some have given up the idea while others have devised ways of going around it. The farmers who have persisted in cultivating the river belt do so very early in the season and are able to harvest just before the floods with the help of canoes. Even though farmers say there is virgin land that they can cultivate, the current soils on which they crop have become infertile from overuse and therefore require heavy external input of fertilizer to yield. Distance to the virgin lands and the labour required for putting virgin lands under cultivation have kept farmers within the overused soils.

### *3.3.3 The Labour Process*

Family labour provided by members of the household is the main source of labour on farms. Labour plays an important part in deciding on what size to farm. Male members of the family usually provide labour for tillage and weeding. Planting of cereals and legumes are done mostly by women and children. Planting of yam and cassava is done by the male members (and if possible older ones ) of the household as it requires a lot of experience and good judgment based on the weather and soil conditions at the time to achieve good results. For example, under dry conditions planting should be deeper than in wet conditions. Also sandy soils require deeper planting than clayey soils. Besides the orientation of yam setts in the mound, the side of the mound that planting is done is also important in achieving good germination and yields and cannot therefore be left in inexperienced hands. The harvesting of yam is not different as it still requires the experience and craftsmanship of older male members of the family. This is even more important since the ability of the yam to produce yam setts for the following season depends on how well and timely the harvesting is done. In harvesting, the goal is to remove the tuber with as minimum damage as possible to the roots of the plant since they are needed to produce following seasons planting material. Harvesting

should be avoided when soils are very dry and should be done at the time of the season when some few rains are still expected otherwise, there will be a problem of obtaining setts for the following season. In the case of cereals and legumes, harvesting is done mostly by women and children because there isn't much at stake. It is only in the early maize that experience is needed to select and prepare healthy cobs to store as seed for the following season.

In practice, the amount of labour a household can afford for weeding and tillage is the most important in determining farm sizes even though manual tillage is fast being replaced by tractor and bullock services. Nonetheless in the case of yam and cassava which are planted on mounds, mechanization is yet to begin and family labour size totally decides farm sizes though some few farmers make use of hired labour. The household is very diverse because of the extended family system. There is usually the eldest male member who is the head of the family and takes responsibility of the family farm that provides food for the household. All other male members of the household then owe him the afternoon (approximately between 4 and 5) hours of their labour. Women's labour is needed on the family farm during planting and harvesting. During tillage and weeding, they prepare food for the male members while they work.

There are parallel economies in the household. Every other person aside the time spent on the family farm has their own farm that they work on during the hours they do not work on the family farm. These are referred to as "zaawun nakpaa" literally translated as the "evening plot". The idea is to allow members to have some financial means to live normal lives without having to depend on the family farm unless in emergencies. It is usually small (about a hectare or less) but may be cropped with cash crops like groundnuts, rice and soybean though some crop maize on their "zaawun nakpaa". Members of the household are aware that they are all responsible for ensuring household food security. Because of this they will reserve a portion of their produce for the lean season in anticipation that when the household food reserves run out they will fall on it. Older male members are usually the first to be called on in cases of food shortage and so they are most likely to crop maize on their "zaawun nakpaa". Women are usually the last to be called on to support the family food needs during the lean season. This is because they always have to spend something in order to get ingredients to cook food on daily basis. Nonetheless they make sure they do not consume all their harvest and other valuables like sheanuts until they are sure the family has enough food till the next harvest.

### 3.3.4 Rotational Labour Associations

Rotational labour associations enable farmers to accumulate their labour when they have less work on their farms and use it when it is most needed. These labour arrangements play a very important role as an organizing tool in the community. In the Kpanlun community there are five types of these labour associations. They include: *Daakparaba*, *Yidaankpariba*, *Nachinkpariba*, *Daadalikpariba*, and *Zaawunkpariba*. *Daakpariba* is on Monday and Thursday. It is for the elderly many of whom are also household heads. *Yidaankpariba* is on Saturday and Tuesday. This involves the whole community and the purpose is to work on the family farms and therefore household heads are responsible and decide the plots on which to work. *Nachinkpariba* is on Wednesday and Sunday and it is for the youth most of who haven't yet got the status of household heads. A special labour arrangement is seen in the *Daadalikpariba* which is on market days. On market days people may go to market so the arrangement is to go early and come early to allow for people who would go to the market. Market days do not always fall on a particular day of the week. They come after every six days and therefore every week it is on another day of the week. As a result the other labour arrangements recognize this by postponing to the following week when the day falls on a market day. The last arrangement is *Zaawunkpariba* which is an evening arrangement mostly for the youth to work on their evening plots. Friday is a day of rest reflecting the domination of the Islamic religion in the community.

### 3.3.5 Investment in Farms and Risk

Tilling the land before planting is one major external input that has become unavoidable by farmers. Land tilling which previously was done by hand through raising ridges with a hoe is now by either tractor services or by bullocks. Exceptions are cassava and yam which are planted on mounds. Nonetheless the use of tractors and bullocks to loosen the soil is required in some cases before raising the mounds. Farmers who are able to afford to buy their own bullocks are able to plough when they want and thus reinforce their autonomy. Farmers most often need to have money to pay for tractor services to till their land for planting at a time they do not even have money to buy food (lean season). Even when they are able to get the money, timely access to the service is a problem; tractor and bullock owners will have to work on their own farms first. Fertilizer and herbicides are the other external inputs used on smallholder farms as a result of decreasing soil fertility. Seeds are often the result of previous

season's harvest. Labour is often from family. Capital comes from previous season harvest and sale of some already acquired assets. Labour can also be exchanged for tractor or bullock services. In the application of fertilizer farmers do not follow the prescription by Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MoFA) or manufacturers; they just apply what they are able to afford.

Farmers know the risky nature of farming especially when farms are rain-fed. In an informal conversation with one of the farmers during a visit on the farm, I inquired about the many crops on one farm and here was the answer I got: "Farming is like searching in the dark; you never know what you find or if you find something at all so you have to be prepared". Multiple cropping have been used to counter the uncertain nature of farming so that in one year the failure of a particular crop for whatever reason do not leave the farmer with nothing. Here livelihood is at stake. This also demonstrates coproduction (see section on peasant condition in chapter 1) where peasants align production activities and patterns with nature.

Livestock are the most valued assets by peasants and can only be sold in emergencies. When farmers have surpluses from their farms they buy livestock and keep and the more livestock you are able to accumulate, the more successful you are as a farmer. As a result investments in farming are usually such that risk management is incorporated. For example, farmers will usually not sell livestock to farm. They will not usually also sell harvest from one season to invest in farms in the same season. For instance harvesting early maize or groundnuts to invest in late maize farms. To them doing so is like "leaving what you have in your hand to search for what is under your foot". That is leaving the certain for the uncertain. Some may interpret such behaviour as risk aversion which does not favour entrepreneurial development. But under such hostile situations (Van der Ploeg, 2008) where livelihood is at stake, such attitude is indispensable.

### *3.3.6 Drivers of production decisions*

Previous season's weather conditions and crop performance are important in farmers' decisions regarding cropping in the current season. Farmers will reduce farm sizes of particular crops if their harvest the previous season was not good and vice versa. Farmers will plant early in the current season if they planted late in the previous season and the yield wasn't good and vice versa. As regards crops grown, farmers prefer to grow the crops they will consume reflected in the saying "vari daguli bi nyangdi bua" (the goat never fails in the

business of leaves; for it will always need leaves anyway). So maize is usually something every household head will want to grow first. And then other crops like rice and groundnuts they can sell to get money for other social needs. Yam is multipurpose; it is grown both for food and for cash needs. Farmers will make sure they have the most benefit from labour and so they will put as many crops as possible on the land. For example, on the yam farm there is cassava, pigeon pea, millet and some vegetables. Some even intercrop maize with the yam. Survival is the number one priority of peasant mode of farming and diversification is employed to enhance this given the ever changing weather conditions.

Key also is farmers' perceived ability in terms of labour and capital to manage particular acreages of particular crops. Farmers do also consider crops that have higher market demand and higher prices so they could sell and buy foodstuff. But this usually results in market gluts of such food items the following year because of over production. Farmers usually patronize external projects that come with input support eg. cotton by Ghana Cotton Company and soybean by Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA). These increase the amount of land they are able to cultivate a year and so increase income if everything go on well. The situation however can become complex when things don't go well. For instance when the cotton company delayed in coming to buy the cotton or the money delayed, farmers just decided to quit the project and it collapsed on distrust. These distrust relations built with experience of other projects affects the way farmers relate with other external projects that are implemented in their communities.

The social context also plays a key role in the agricultural practices of farmers. For instance, the position of one in the household determines what kind of crops they cultivate. The household head typically will grow staples like maize, millet and yam because they are needed for food. Next in responsibility to providing food for the household is the eldest son and so he would also grow some staples. Those further in the line turn to grow more of rice and groundnuts which are mostly for cash though are also eaten in the household. Women will grow okro, pepper and other vegetables or intercrop them with other crops on the family farm.

### *3.3.7 Relationships with Markets*

The Savelugu market is the major market near the community. Women traders from Savelugu come on market days to buy grains and other food stuff from farmers. There are also women in the community that buy foodstuffs from farmers to accumulate and take to market. Farmers do not have problem where to send their foodstuff when they want to sell. Because of trust relationships farmers are able to get money from traders even before they hand in the commodity. For instance maize and groundnuts need to be shelled before selling and farmers can already have the money to solve their problems whilst they do the shelling. On the input side farmers buy fertilizer and herbicides as well as some seed from the market. The selling behavior of farmers can be described as “piece meal”. Farmers will want to sell their farm produce when the price is highest but this is usually not the case because they need the money before that time. They also know that after harvest prices of foodstuffs keep rising until the peak usually in the lean season<sup>4</sup>. As a result, they will keep their produce and sell as and when they need money.

The relations with the market on the input side is more of distantiation than integration. Even when chemical fertilizers and herbicides are used on farms, they are bought with farmers’ own money from sales of already acquired assets like previous season’s harvest or livestock. Seeds are the product of previous season’s farming activities. Typical of this is seen in yam and maize where farmers attach a lot of importance to the source of the setts and seeds respectively. For groundnuts farmers do not care so much about the source of the seed; they only need to be sure it is good seed usually by observation. Even then purchase of seeds from the open market is avoided. If farmers for any reason are not able to use seeds from their farm, they will take seeds from other farmers or women who always store groundnuts from their share during harvest. Mobilizing inputs in this way distances their production from markets and market dynamics. Thus production is historically guaranteed and hence autonomy is reinforced.

On the output side differentiation is the norm and not commoditization. Farmers make a difference between maize from the farm and maize from the market. Foodstuffs are not just commodities; they have social significance. Yam for the in-laws must come from ones farm

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<sup>4</sup> The period between May and July when previous season’s harvest is depleted and current season’s crops are not yet ready for harvesting. Some people refer to it as the hunger gap. It is known as “sigli” in Dagbani.

and preferably from the mounds of the middle line referred to as “vuglaa”<sup>5</sup>. Also buying foodstuff from the village is preferred to doing so outside the village. Also selling surplus farm produce to a trader in the community is more desirable compared to one outside the village even if they pay the same price. Sometimes farmers are even comfortable with lower prices because of the other relations they have with the traders. For instance they can take money in advance or get loan for their farms. Social relations like being of the same tribe also matter.

### **3.4 Chapter Summary and Conclusion**

In this chapter I have discussed the agricultural sector in Ghana bringing out its major characteristics and the place of the sector in the larger national economy. I then turned my attention to discussing smallholder farming systems in the country having pointed out that Ghana’s agriculture was largely smallholder based. In the final section I discussed how agriculture is practiced in the village of Kpalun in Northern Ghana where I did my research. The discussion was organised under the following headings: cultural repertoires; land tenure, land holding and land ownership; the labour process; and rotational labour associations. The other headings include investment in farms and risk; drivers of production decisions; and relationship with markets.

These headings allowed me to explore the characteristics of farming in detail and relating it to those of the peasant and entrepreneurial modes of farming. It can be concluded from the chapter that farming as it is practiced in the community reflects more of the peasant mode of farming than the entrepreneurial mode though in-between situations exist.

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<sup>5</sup> Usually contains the biggest mounds in the yam farm and planted with the best yam variety and setts. The tubers are bigger and more quality compared to those of the rest of the farm.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### 4.0 SCHOOL FEEDING IN PRACTICE

This chapter is dedicated to the discussion of empirical data about how the School Feeding Programme functions in practice. Specifically the discussion will centre on procurement of food for the programme, different relations with peasants and entrepreneurs in terms of demand and supply functions of the programme as well as the role of knowledge and transparency in farmers' involvement in the programme. I begin by describing the life worlds and interest of the social actors involved in the programme.

#### **4.1 Social Actors, Life Worlds and Interests.**

In actor-oriented research, and in this report, the term social actor is used to mean individuals or social groups with the capacity for agency; that is processing information in the environment, making decisions and taking actions (Long 1989) that affect the issue in question. This definition distinguishes the concept from stakeholders which refers to all individuals or groups who are affected and may not necessarily affect the process investigated. The main focus is the social relations in which actors engage in and around the implementation of the school feeding programme. As such, the identification of social actors and analysis of their life worlds and interests is done against this background. The main social actors can be divided into four categories namely the community members, local implementers at community level, distant implementers seen in the district assembly and the regional and national secretariat of the Ghana School Feeding Programme and those at the level of policy (state and ministries). It should be noted however that these are not homogeneous groupings. For example at the community level there are different power levels leading to different levels of involvement. As such the discussion will go behind these groupings and construct the social actors involved in the programme based on their relations with the programme implementation as well as with other members of the society deemed relevant for their role in the programme. The focus of the discussion will be on actors at the community level.

#### *4.1.1 PTA Chairman*

Jehinfo is the PTA chairman and also the eldest male member of the community. He is one of the sub-chiefs in the community. The chief of the village passed away and the funeral is not yet performed so there is no substantive chief. By virtue of being the eldest in the community he is acting as the caretaker chief. His eldest son is married and has his own house and owns the only grinding mill in the community. Jehinfo got to be the PTA chairman because of his role in reviving the school when it went dormant some years ago. This was the decision of the education authorities in the district capital as a kind of reward for his efforts. Even though the Ghana Education service has rules and regulations regarding PTAs and how they should operate, this was not the case in Kpalun. He most probably will be the PTA chairman for life. He visits the school often in his capacity as the PTA chairman and has good relations with the school teachers. This perhaps is possible because he stays in the house whilst the sons are working on the farm. If he goes to the farm he comes early because he doesn't do much work on the farm. The teachers like this because he is the link between them and the community and they tell him their concerns. His relationship with the school and the teachers and officials at the Ghana Education Service is a source of social status for him. Being the PTA chairman, he is the first point of contact for visitors to the community with regard to education and the school. As a result of this his house accommodates the cook for the programme employed by the programme at the level of the district assembly. He was also my contact person at the community and he introduced me at the chief palace and later at a community meeting before I started my research.

#### *4.1.2 SMC Chairman*

The SMC chairman is the immediate past Assembly man for the electoral area which consist of a number of villages. He is in his late thirties and eldest son of one of the sub-chiefs in the community. He has close links with the district assembly because of his status as a former assembly man and also his informal networks during his tenure as assemblyman. He has education up to middle school and can read and write. He also communicates well in English. His position is an appointed one from the authorities at the district level. His ties are more with the political aspects of the assembly like the District Chief Executive. He also has good relations with the Agricultural Extension Service technical officer responsible for the area. He is one of the contact farmers and benefits from projects that come through the Ministry of Food and Agriculture.

#### *4.1.3 Local traders*

These actors are only seen through the lens of the other social actors because of the effect their relations have on the actions of the other actors. Local traders are usually women in the community. They buy foodstuffs in the community from farmers who have to sell and accumulate and take to the market in Savelugu or resell to other traders who come to the village. Most of them are affiliated to bigger traders in the big towns usually referred to as market queens. The market queens are the ones that retail in the market for urban consumers. They are also sometimes the source of funding for the local traders in the village. The local traders in the village have good relations with farmers; they buy the products when farmers want to sell, pay in advance when necessary and can also give soft loans to farmers when they need to finance certain activities on the farm. Local traders are in some kind of interdependency relations with both farmers and market queens in the big towns. When necessary they also do some processing. For example they will buy paddy rice and process it through parboiling and later milling in the district capital.

#### *4.1.4 The Caterer*

The caterer is a retired nurse who operates a private drug store. She has no training in catering. She tells me she got the job because of her knowledge of nutrition through her training and working as a nurse. Her husband is a member of the council of state and also a traditional chief and wielding power and influence for that position. She relates very well with the SMC chairman. This may be because the connection the SMC chairman has with the district assembly. She does neither lives in the community nor the district capital. The relationship she has with the programme is that of business. She takes money for the programme and ensures school children have food to eat. She purchases food and pays cooks as well as pay herself. The more she saves, the more she can pay herself.

#### *4.1.5 Farmers*

Farmers in the community are smallholders and exhibit more of peasant than entrepreneurial characteristics. Production activities are organised through a complex pattern of inter-household exchanges and forms of collective labour. Traditional forms of reciprocity, systems of mutual aid, and commitment to community organised projects play a major role in their lives. Market integration is minimal and production is more autonomous and historically guaranteed. However differences exist among farmers and the way they practice farming and pursue livelihood in general. I use four condensed case studies to demonstrate the variation among farmers:

Mohammed operates the only provision shop in the village. He is 33 and has primary education. Originally he is not a native of the village. He came to settle in the village because of his maternal aunt who is married there. He works with five other male members on the family farm. His evening plot is two and a half acres (approximately 1 hectare) which he crops with groundnuts. Labour comes mainly from himself. Occasionally he hires labour from profits of his provision shop and money he gets by engaging in *Sabua*<sup>6</sup>. After harvesting he keeps the groundnuts until when the prices are good usually near the next farming season when he sells them. In the mean time he operates his provision shop full time and occasionally he does some *Sabua*. Money from the sale of the groundnuts is used to purchase livestock the majority of which he keeps in his home village. Some of the money is used to improve upon the provision shop to make it more profitable. When the family food is not enough for the year, he sells some of the livestock to feel the gap. Mohammed also has a bank account with the Rural Bank in the district capital where he saves money from the sales of his shop.

Jabuni is 50 years old and the head of his household. He and his family came to the village in 1987 upon invitation by the brother who was then the chief of the village<sup>7</sup>. He has one son who works with him on the family farm. They also keep goats and guinea fowls in a semi-intensive system as part of a project from the Ministry of Food and Agriculture. They house and feed the animals unlike the general free range system in the village. They sell the goats to buy food during the lean season and also to pay for ploughing and buying fertilizer. Their maize farm in-field is 5 acres and around the community is one acre. They have one thousand mounds of yam which is approximately one acre. Hired labour supplements that of the family on the farm. When there is surplus they buy cattle and keep with the Fulani. Manure from the goats and guinea fowls is used to fertilized their farm around their compound while they purchase chemical fertilizer for the in-field farm.

Ibrahima owns the only tractor in the village. He inherited it from the father as the eldest son. According to Ibrahima the tractor was bought from cattle his father inherited from the grandfather. He is with 6 other brothers on the family farm. Ibrahima became the head of the

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<sup>6</sup> A popular activity for the youth which involves filling tipper trucks with river sand for a fee. It is normally done during the dry season when farming activities are at their minimum. The youth engage in it so the money they get from it can meet their daily expenses so their farm produce can be kept much longer.

<sup>7</sup> The paramount chief of Dagbon chooses who the chief should be and he does not necessarily have to come from the village. But when you get to be the chief you can then relocate there. In this case the chief was not originally from the village. The chief had passed away before I went to start my research.

household after the death of the father 3 years ago. There are 42 members of the household. These include the two widows of the father, the 7 male members working of the family farm, their wives and children. They cultivate 30 acres of maize and harvest over 100 bags each year. They never buy food for household consumption. Household members meet their social obligations from the harvest of their evening plots. Some of the maize is sold at the beginning of the raining season to buy fertilizer and herbicides. They use the tractor to plough for people in and outside the village for money, labour and share of harvest. It is a good source of income. The rest of the maize is sold just before the new harvest. At this time prices are highest and they also need to make room for the new harvest. The other members of the household have their evening plots ranging between 1 and 5 acres on which they cultivate a variety of crops including maize, groundnuts and rice. The family tractor ploughs for them.

Abukari is the head of his household. He cultivates maize, rice, beans, guinea corn, water melon, yam and cassava. According to him, he does not cultivate groundnuts because he does not have the luck for it; the yield is always low. The maize farm is 10 acres, 2 acres for yam, 3 for cassava, 2 for rice, 5 for guinea corn and 1 for water melon. There are 31 members in the household. He works on the family farm with two younger brothers and two sons. He owns two sets of bullocks which work on the family farm and are also hired out for money, labour and farm produce. He sometimes buys maize to supplement the maize from his farm. For him high prices of other food stuffs like rice and beans are fine but not maize. Years when he has surplus he buys cattle and keep with the Fulani. He also has sheep and goats which he keeps on free range.

#### **4.2 Arrangements for Food Procurement**

At the initial implementation of the programme at the district level, the District Implementation Committee (DIC) was put in place. This consisted of the DCE as the chair, DCD, Focal person, District Director of GHS, Traditional Authority, Opinion Leader, chair of district assembly social services sub-committee, and head of implementing school. The DIC had the role to oversee the administration of the programme at the district level. To facilitate the procurement process, a District Procurement Committee (DPC) was put in place to be in charge of the procurement of the food for the programme. This committee consisted of District Assembly focal person, traditional authority (happened to be store keeper of the District Assembly), representative from accounts office, school cook and head teacher. As

much as possible food was procured at the community level where the school cook and the head teacher who are members of the DPC were responsible and reported to the wider committee who in turn report to the DIC. Here the headmaster and cooks bought the food themselves from the local people through their personal contacts which most of the time was directly from local farmers. Money to pay for food came from the district assembly through the DIC. It is worth mentioning that sometimes monies for purchases delayed because of hold-ups at the district assembly or the secretariat of the GSFP which put the head teacher and the cook into some difficult position and they had to find money somewhere or buy on credit. If food was procured at the district level, the members of the committee at the assembly took charge and supplied the schools. There is better management of hold-ups of funds here because the assembly is more resourced.

For some reason there was a directive from the National Secretariat for the engagement of private caterers to supply and cook for the school children<sup>8</sup>. This directive came with it an ultimatum. If the district assembly did not go through this privatization by expiration of the ultimatum it risked not receiving funds for the programme. In compliance a retired nurse got the contract as the caterer who had the responsibility of procurement and supervising cooking of meals. From this point onwards the programme and local food procurement became a different story.

#### **4.3 Demand Function of the GSFP**

The mechanism of the GSFP programme is to procure locally produced food and so create the necessary demand that will push the demand curve upwards and thus initiate the corresponding response from farmers that will result in the shift of the supply curve to the right (see Ahmed and Sharma, 2004). But as I will show, the demand function does not 'function' and if it does, the current scale and mode of implementation of the programme cannot set the anticipated demand-supply mechanisms in motion. To start with, local purchases are not attractive to the sole supplier (caterer) since she has to make profit. She tells me she was instructed to buy from local farmers before the job commenced and so it is her wish that she will be able to buy from the farmers. But she has the following concerns:

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<sup>8</sup> The regional secretariat of the programme and district assembly could not explain this to me. They did not participate in the decision; they were only to obey a directive given to them from above.

- Money for procurement comes in small bits like 12, 15 or 20 days worth and sometimes delays. This makes it difficult to do procurement planning.
- Farmers don't farm in large quantities enough to be able to leave some for sale and so she cannot rely on them for regular supply.
- She has to make some profit and will buy where it is cheapest and most convenient; she prefer to buy from competitive markets in towns; things in communities are more costly especially if they deal with her – mentality that it is government and that she has all the money
- She cannot find vegetables and beans in community
- Current 40Gp per child per day is not enough
- There is no good store room that would allow her to buy and store
- Yams in community are small size and thus not economical

My interview with other stakeholders in the programme confirmed these concerns. For instance the District Assembly Focal Person on the programme notes that the caterer does not have a salary and so she has to minimize cost as much as possibly so she can make savings for herself. She also has to pay the salaries of the cooks all from the money she saves. It is therefore not surprising that she is more focused on profits rather than where the food is coming from. These concerns are comparable to what Fisher (2007) finds in a desk study of the GSFP. Fisher (2007:99) states the following concerns against local procurement:

- (i) Weak small-scale farmer capacity
- (ii) The procurement relies on middlemen (suppliers and caterers) these individuals or companies may buy the food from retailers according to price rather than origin;
- (iii) There are storage issues that impede a constant supply of local food;
- (iv) There is price volatility in the sale of local food linked to the annual agricultural cycle and farmers' cash needs.

These issues against the demand function of the GSFP are practical ones on the ground. The other side of it left unexplored by this research is the political and administrative aspects. For instance why the procurement was privatized to individual profit-making suppliers or caterers and how those caterers were selected.

The other argument I want to make is that the amount of food procured under the programme is very small. For instance in the Kpalun community food from the GSFP only feeds pupils for two days and the three days are covered from food from the WFP which is imported. Table 2.1 indicates the figures I got from the caterer in an interview about her monthly purchases. By these figures even if the school run 12 months a year assuming no holidays, only 24bags each of beans and maize and 36 bags of rice will be required per year. This is woefully inadequate to destabilize demand-supply equilibrium. A focus group discussion with teachers of the school brought out similar concerns. For the teachers the fact that the GSFP only feeds the children for two days out of the five school days in a week is a big blow to the idea of boosting local production through local purchases.

*Table 2.1 details of quantities of some foodstuffs procured for the programme per month.*

Food item	Unit of measurement	Quantity
Maize	Bags	2
Rice	Bags	3
Beans	Bags	2
Palm oil	Gallons	3
Cooking oil	Litres	40

*Source: interview with caterer (September 2008)*

#### **4.4 Supply Function of the GSFP**

The other side the equilibrium is the supply function. By this ‘local farmers are expected and encouraged to produce the required quantity and quality of products to feed the children’ Eenhoorn (2007:53). In doing so they are expected to invest more in their farms to produce more and get more income through selling to the programme and thus escape hunger and poverty. This expectation is based on the notion of markets as neutral entities independent of cultural repertoires and farmers as a homogeneous group. This is however not the case. Markets like farming are socially constructed and embedded in local cultural repertoires. For analytical purposes a look at the factors that drive the production decisions of farmers can help us make an argument on this function. For example the analysis by Ahmed and Sharma (2004) reveals that increased demand through local purchases will push prices up and then farmers will follow the increasing prices to increase production. But empirical evidence from

the field shows that price does not solely drive production decisions of farmers. For example maize is a staple food for most families and their response to higher prices of maize does not lead to increasing maize farms, but to keeping the maize they harvest for food so they don't have to buy it from the market at the higher prices. Answering a question on what he thinks of higher prices for agricultural produce, Naporoo (not real name) has this to say: "Higher prices for crops like groundnuts and soybeans are ok, but not maize because we ourselves buy the maize from the market". Thus higher prices for major staples can be counterproductive. And of course there is the issue of resources to invest in the input side of production. Farmers' investments in farms come from already acquired resources (historically guaranteed), so unless this resource base is increased through savings, it might be difficult to increase production based on higher prices of food products. There is also the issue of trust in the sustainability of the programme that farmers will want to get assurance. There have been a lot of government programmes that have come with so many nice promises and gone without delivering. This coupled with the fact that farmers knowledge about the programme is very limited especially regarding procurement could make the realization of the supply function of the programme difficult, if not impossible.

However, this is not to suggest that the programme can never work. On the contrary the argument is that the programme has a higher chance of success if it resonates with established practices of the local people. For instance the programme could make use of the established market relations in the community where local traders buy food stuff from farmers and accumulate for bigger traders in city centre. Here transactions are based on long standing trust that serves the needs of all parties involved and also effective in reducing transaction cost (Fafchamps, 2004). One of the bottlenecks of local procurement is the fact that farmers sales are based on cash needs which I describe as "piece meal". My argument is that this problem can be solved if procurement is contracted at least in part to these local traders in the communities who are already in trust relations with the local farmers. In fact it can even be suggested that it is because of these established trust relations that the caterer finds it costly to buy from farmers by a mechanism I will describe as "elimination by rough tactics"; pay for inconveniences that will be suffered in severing relationship with established customers. This is especially so when farmers do not trust the sustainability of the programme.

#### **4.5 Price and Market Security**

The fact that procurement under the GSFP is based on profit motives, is limited in the quantity that can be purchased and is faced with irregular release of funds for purchasing make it difficult to provide the necessary attractor prices and market security for local farmers. For instance, consider a statement like: “Ying shaara so yili sheli shaara” (translated as “buying expensive from home is better than buying expensive outside”) from a farmer in answer to the question of what he thinks about local procurement for the GSFP. Further probing revealed that if farmers buy things especially foodstuff, their priority is to buy from home because they are sure of good quality as well as good measure. So for local farmers quality goes with price and they believe in quality especially if you sell or buy at home since you will always live with the other party. Thus the school feeding programme will not survive in this social context with the current procurement based on profit motives of suppliers.

In terms of market security, procurement should be done as and when farmers want to sell their produce. The system of release of funds should allow suppliers to pay in advance for produce when farmers need money in emergencies. Given the fact that the sale of farm produce remains the major source of income make farmers want to have money of produce before they are ready for market in emergency situations like paying hospital fees and settling children’s school fees. For instance a case that is so vivid in my mind is when I visited Takoro (not real name) in his house one morning and he was shelling maize in the “zong” (analogous to western living room or hall). I sat with him and shelled some of the maize as we talked. Then I asked a question as one of my informal interviews: “So is it usually the case that you shell the maize at this time of the season?” Not to my surprise (proverbs are common in this locality) he answered with a proverb: “A yi ti nya bu’bagili daani, yel’ bagili m-be yigna” (translated literally as “when you see a pregnant goat in the market, it means there is a pregnant issue in the house”. Even though I know this proverb and have used it myself, I missed the meaning in this context because the meaning was not directly deducible from the immediate context. Further in the conversation he explained that he had already taken the money for the maize because the son’s wife (daughter in-law) was on admission at the Savelugu hospital and he took money from the local trader for the bills. Under normal situations maize is not the foodstuff sold at the time of the year, but this was so because it was the only foodstuff available at the time and the expenditure could not wait.

This story of Takoro buttresses my argument that unless procurement practices resonates with local issues and practices, its chances of succeeding with the local farmers and getting them to produce to feed the programme and does boost local production as set out in the programme document could be very limited. There is a deeper meaning attached to buying and selling foodstuff among peasants than just economic issues. These meanings are embedded in the local cultural repertoires which govern social practices of which farming is a part (see Van der Ploeg 2003 for a comprehensive discussion on peasants and cultural repertoires).

#### **4.6 Role of Knowledge and Transparency.**

I will argue in this section that bridging the knowledge gap between farmers and the GSFP could boost its chances of success. Farmers have little or no knowledge about the programme especially regarding procurement. Interviews with both the PTA and SMC chairpersons revealed that they do not know how much of which foodstuffs are procured in a month for the programme. The PTA chairman who happens to be one of the sub-chiefs in the community is very enthusiastic about the programme but his concern is the lack of relevant information that would allow him to get as involved as he would like. For example answering a question on what concerns he has about the programme, he said: “There are so many things that happen in the programme that I have no knowledge about”. He wished he would know things like the amount of money released per month to the caterer to purchase food. He also tells me that even though the head teacher measures food for cooks using information from the book, he has no idea on what criteria. He blames these knowledge gaps though on the fact that he has not been to school and can neither read nor write. For people to have confidence and the enthusiasm to participate in such issues information and knowledge about the various processes are paramount. It removes anxiety and unnecessary suspicion. Thus effective communication and sensitization about the programme is indispensable for its success.

Knowledge is linked with transparency. My time with the PTA and SMC chairpersons, teachers, cooks and caterer revealed different levels of knowledge about procurement of food for the programme. According to the project document, PTA and SMC chairpersons as well as the head teacher, as members of the SIC, are supposed to supervise the procurement as well cooking of meals but they can only do so if the necessary information is made available to them and the processes involved are transparent enough.

#### **4.7 Chapter Summary and Conclusion**

In this chapter I discussed the practical implementation of the Ghana School feeding Programme. I described the social actors involved in the implementation of the programme focusing on their life worlds and interest. This was then followed by a discussion of the initial arrangements put in place to ensure local food procurement in the study area. I then proceeded to discussing the demand and supply functions of the programme bringing out the roles of the buying habit of the caterer and the selling habit of farmers. Then I explored the roles of price and market security in the functioning of the programme. The last section of the chapter examined the role of knowledge and transparency in the participation of local farmers in the programme.

The main argument in this chapter is that the demand side of the Ghana School Feeding Programme is not enough in terms of quantity and the conditions of purchase to trigger the necessary response from farmers. In the supply side farmers selling behavior is piece meal and embedded in local cultural repertoires. Only when procurement mechanisms resonate with these embedded cultural repertoires will it get the necessary response from local farmers.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### 5.0 CONCLUSION

This concluding chapter explains the construction of the current outcome of the Ghana School Feeding Programme. It takes theoretical roots from interface analysis as described by Long (1989) based on the actor-oriented approach. First the interface situations in the implementation of the Ghana School Feeding Programme are identified and described. Then peasant agriculture is positioned in modern farming based on empirical data. This is followed by a summary of the research findings where the research questions for the study are answered. A separate section states the main conclusions from the study following from the findings. Some recommendations are suggested based on the conclusions for the improvement the programme. I reflect on the theoretical and methodological aspects of the study in the final section.

#### **5.1 The Interface Situations in the Ghana School Feeding Programme.**

This section discusses the interface situations in the implementation of the school feeding programme drawing from the assumptions of the project model and empirical evidence from the field. Certain deviations from the project model are identified and explained using available evidence about the actors involved, their interest and life worlds. Focus is on the implementation of the programme as regards the local procurement of food and how it was negotiated at such interfaces produce the current outcome of the programme where local produce is hardly used (SNV, 2007).

##### *5.1.1 Interface between Cultural Repertoires and Elements of the GSFP*

In the old days we cared for each other, and each of us was cared for in our times of need. We respected each other. If we arrived at someone's house, we were fed and sheltered. Although our host might have had nothing, they would give us everything. Because the Lord would provide the following day, or the Lord would not. We had nothing; we were dependent on his grace. All of us. Under such circumstances how could we not give everything? But it is all so different now. Sons and daughters have gone to the city to become nurses and teachers. They send back money to their families, some more, some less. Now some here build bigger houses, buy cars, buy generators and install TVs. Others have less money; many have none. Suddenly, people have, where before they did not have. And now there is selfishness. People hold on to what they have. There is pride and arrogance. We who have nothing are looked down

upon and scorned. We are no longer one. We no longer thank the Lord. We respect those who have, and what is this but disrespect for those who don't have? (Kaplan, 1996: pp.17-18)

I use the above quote to demonstrate the importance of what the people of Kpalun refer to as “being my brother’s keeper” and which I describe as social cohesion. It is an example of a cultural repertoire. Farming is done by peasants to keep the community socio-economically as close as possible to each other. Other cultural repertoires of interest to this discussion are related to investment in farms and risk management. Farmers prefer investment in farms to come from already acquired resources. This is usually from previous harvest and family labour. As much as possible the sale of livestock to invest in farms is avoided. This leads to farms without debts in what Van der Ploeg (2003) refers to as “free farms”. As such borrowing money to invest in farms is also avoided. In peasant farming, production decisions are not entirely individual processes; household, community and social relations play an important role. For example inter-household exchange of seed, labour, bullock services and other resources are decisive in production decisions. These are reflected in the dense collective labour activities in all aspects of the production process. The quality and quantity of labour at the household level play an important role as well.

The entrepreneurial elements of the Ghana School Feeding Programme assumes individual decision-making based on profit motives which are in conflict with the prevailing cultural repertoires of social cohesion and inter-household dependency relations in the production process. It also requires that farmers invest more in their farms through bank loans and sale of assets including livestock. Since these elements are in conflict with the cultural repertoires, farmers just continue doing what they used to do as if the programme did not exist. Implementers of the programme see this as a failure of farmers to respond to the opportunity the programme offers.

### *5.1.2 Interface between Gender Issues and Programme Target*

Women work on the family farm mainly during planting and harvesting. They also cook for their husbands and other people that work on the farm. However, they have their own farms on which they carry out all the husbandry practices by themselves or through hired labour. Children also help them out. Mostly they grow groundnuts intercropped with okro. Women also have the opportunity to accumulate wealth during harvesting because their labour is

rewarded by a portion of the harvest. For instance when women plant groundnuts, they divide it into four apparently equal parts and keep one. This only happens in male farms. In women farms the owner of the farm takes all the harvest. Women are also involved in picking sheanuts as well as processing shea butter. The income and assets of women are a safety net for the family to fall on in the lean season when the family stock runs out. Women also have the opportunity to plant vegetables on all family farms once it is done in a way that does not interfere with the growth of the main crop.

The Ghana School Feeding Programme envisages women to benefit more from the programme because they are those mostly involved in food crop production (GoG, 2006: 16). While it is true that women spend a lot of time working on the family farm, ownership of the farms and control of farm produce are still the preserve of the household head who normally is a man. Thus men are usually the ones who have foodstuff to sell and not women. As such it is not surprising that the involvement of women in the programme is limited to assisting in cooking and serving food.

### *5.1.3 Interface between Livelihood Pursuits and Programme Assumptions*

Livelihood pursuits among smallholder farmers involve diversification of agriculture as well as engagement in off-farm activities which reinforce their autonomy. Farming in general and specifically as practiced by the peasant where the natural environment is decisive in success is uncertain and risky. Farm entrepreneurs will try to decrease this risk by reducing dependence on the natural environment. For example introducing irrigation facilities will decrease dependence on rainfall. In advance situations crops are grown in green houses where temperature, nutrients and humidity are all measured, monitored and controlled. However, these are out of the reach of the peasant and perhaps would not be that appealing to him if it were within reach because it would have the tendency of enslaving him because of the cost that come with it. For peasants prefer working on their own farms than that of another person. To them a debt free farm actually is your farm and a debt ridden farm is that of another person's farm. So instead of trying to be independent of the external environment, they align their practices with it in what Van der Ploeg (2008:24) conceptualizes as 'co-production'. In co-production farming practices and living nature co-evolves. Consequently, diversification of agriculture and involvement in off-farm activities have become an integral part of peasant

livelihood. For example Abukari is involved in craftsmanship (produces artifacts for sale), *sabua*, hunting and fishing. He also cultivates cassava, yam, maize rice, beans and water melon. The programme model however assumes that the main source of income for smallholders is from farming and therefore farmers will specialize in the production of foodstuff utilized in the programme to improve their income. The income of farmers is not necessarily dependent on sale of farm produce and therefore decisions about what to farm and by how much is not entirely determined by food prices but also on the off-farm activities farmers are involved in and other cultural repertoires. In fact high food prices of staples like maize can have negative impact because farmers would keep it for their own consumption and would only sell when they are sure they have enough food themselves usually prior to new harvest.

#### *5.1.4 Interface between Programme Priorities and Individual Profit Motives*

The priority of the Ghana School Feeding Programme is to purchase food locally. The first on the priority list is community level purchases from local farmers. Where it is not possible to purchase at community level, next priority is district level, regional level and national level in that order. Imported food will only be used when it is not possible to procure food locally. However, the caterer who does the purchases is profit seeking and buys where it is cheapest and more convenient. Though she knows the priority of the programme is to purchase locally she does not do it. She pursues her own profit motives and purchases from big supplies in the district and regional capitals where she enjoys economies of scale. The focal person at the district assembly for the programme understands her perfectly for as he puts it: "If I were her I would do same". He does not approve of the privatization of the food procurement, but cannot help it because it is a directive from above. So even though he is supposed to see to it that she does the right thing he doesn't see the need to. He watches her and she does as suits her. Thus for the caterer and the district focal person, their interests and perceptions are relatively autonomous from the wider institutional frame of the programme that require them to purchase food locally.

#### *5.1.5 Interface between Local Traders and Food Procurement under Programme*

The relationship between farmers and local traders and the caterer played an important role in producing the current outcome of the programme. Why would local purchases be more

expensive when local traders buy locally and sell in the big towns and still make profit? The explanation is to be found in the relationship between local traders and the farmers. Local traders play an important role in the organizing practices of smallholder farmers. They buy their farm produce when they need money and sometimes, especially in emergency situations, farmers collect the money before they hand in the commodities. Farmers can also get 'soft' loans from these traders and sometimes even resources for farming during the farming season. What is more, these traders buy most times at ruling market prices usually in the nearest market centre (Savelugu in this case). Their profit depends on the measurements of the produce which are agreed between the traders and the farmers. Farmers are therefore satisfied with this system and do not feel in need of another market outlet unless such outlet would offer them better conditions including better prices. Such a system should be flexible enough so they are able to sell when they want to and get money when they want to. Thus the new market to be found in the procurement of the Ghana School Feeding Programme should compensate the current flexibility and convenience they enjoy dealing with the local traders by way of paying higher prices. The caterer however sees these higher price quotations as negative perceptions that she gets her money from the government. Whatever the reasons for the higher price at the community level for the caterer, it is an interface situation in which the outcome of the programme has been negotiated.

These interface situations encountered in the Kpalun community in the implementation of the Ghana School Feeding Programme explains the current non-response of smallholder farmers to the programme. The main argument is that the outcomes of external interventions are only partly determined by planners and implementers; it is always a bargained and negotiated process at the interface. Thus outcomes of planned interventions cannot be pre-determined and the only successful interventions are those that appreciate such bargained and negotiated outcomes and the social construction process through which such outcomes are realized.

## **5.2 Peasant Agriculture in Modern Farming**

### *5.2.1 Modern Farming in Context*

New patterns of consumption coupled with new technology have produced new demands and practices that have transformed significantly agriculture and the way it is practiced today. The rapid flow of information, technology, resources, people, images and commodities that characterize the world today has made agriculture and the way it is practiced a different field

than before. Trade liberalization and the accompanying opening up of peasant communities to new markets have resulted in different requirements regarding what can and should be produced. Improvement in technology and its increasing availability in places where hitherto it did not exist have had its contribution as well. Global images in films and television has created different desires than before. In this section I use the cases of maize, which is a staple crop in the study area, and water melon, a rather non-traditional crop, to paint a picture of modern agriculture bringing out the main issues entailed in it. This discussion is expected to throw more light on peasantry in today's agriculture and the way it is practiced.

Maize is perhaps the most important staple food crop in the Kpalun community and in fact the whole of northern Ghana. Its cultivation has gone through a lot of transformation as a result of changes in consumption patterns outside the community and the availability of technology in its cultivation. New patterns of demands have increased demand for maize which has resulted in shortages and subsequent increases in seasonal prices of the grain. The effect of this is that from a purely food crop, maize has become a national and global commodity. Hence increasing commoditization has become one of the characteristics of contemporary agriculture. The commoditization accompanied with continuous cultivation and other unhealthy practices like bush burning has lead to the impoverishment of the soils and technology has stepped in with chemical fertilizers to solve this.

Today the amount of fertilizer a farmer can afford to apply to his maize farm has become as decisive as the amount of family labour available to weed the farm in deciding farm sizes. It has become almost certain that a maize farm without fertilizer won't yield enough to compensate the labour and other cost invested. In some cases there is total crop failure without fertilizer. Incidence and intensity of weeds on maize farms have become a problem as a result of decreasing soil fertility and perhaps the increasing use of chemical fertilizers. Farm plots which hitherto were weeded once now have to be done twice or even thrice which puts a lot of burden on the family labour requirements. This has led to the introduction of herbicides the use of which on maize farms is increasingly assuming the proportions of that of chemical fertilizers. Thus today's agriculture is also characterized by the use of herbicides.

Dwindling rainfall patterns have become increasingly unreliable both in amount and distribution in the season. Technology ones again has a solution through weather forecasting and irrigation facilities. Agricultural extension workers as part of their work have to make

weather forecast information available to farmers to guide planting and harvesting times. Where it is possible farmers are advised to incorporate irrigation facilities into their farming to decrease dependence on the rains. Thus weather and climate information as well as efficient water use have also become defining elements in contemporary agriculture.

Crop breeding that has led to the development and introduction of improved varieties of maize has also contributed its quota to the practice of agriculture in contemporary times. Different varieties of maize have been developed by research stations and universities in response to the problems of low yields and other problems like pests and disease attack as well as weeds faced by farmers. These varieties range from natural selection through hybrids to the most extreme forms as seen in GMOs which hasn't arrived yet in Ghana. As such contemporary agriculture is also characterized by development of new and improved crop varieties through plant breeding activities.

Water melon is not a traditional crop in the study area and farmers only got into its cultivation because it could be cultivated at times when they did not do much work on their main farms. Besides, since it is not a crop that forms part of their main diet, they started cultivating it because there was market for it. Buyers would come from Tamale (the regional capital) to buy it immediately after harvesting. This stopped for sometime because farmers felt cheated because they did not get good prices and sometimes they did not get paid at all. Now there is a new wave of water melon cultivation because there is a company from Burkina Faso that has taken up water melon farming and farmers' interest in the crop has rekindled because the company is expected to provide market for their water melons. This brings us to yet again another defining characteristic of contemporary agriculture: it is future driven and influenced by movements in demand outside community which could even be international as in the case of the Burkinabe company.

### *5.2.2 Positioning Peasant Agriculture in Modern Farming*

This section locates the peasantry in today's agriculture with reference to the particular defining characteristic of striving for autonomy. The basic question that would be addressed here is "How do peasants strive for, achieve and maintain autonomy in contemporary agriculture as painted in the previous section?" Decreasing soil fertility as well as increasing uncertainty about rainfall patterns especially in northern Ghana has increased the hostility of the condition of the peasant. How is this situation being dealt with?

The more uncertain a particular situation is, the more important autonomy becomes and therefore vigorously sought for. In the Kpalun community this condition is dealt with in several ways. Those farmers who own the cattle the Fulani man herds have the opportunity to benefit from the dung of the cattle as organic fertilizer for their farms. The arrangement is for the Fulani herdsman to tether the cattle at different points on the farm during the off season so the droppings have time to fertilize the soil for the next farming season. Those who do not have this opportunity because they do not own any cattle depend on chemical fertilizer. What is interesting about this is that these fertilizers are bought and used on farms using resources already obtained. For example Jahinfo got his fertilizer through the sale of his fowls while Alhassan sold guinea fowls. Thus the fertilizer though mobilized in the market enters the production process as use values. Fertilizer is also mobilized through the non-commodity circuit. For example Gurundoo exchanged his turn of the rotational labour association he belongs to for two bags of fertilizer for his maize farm. There have also been instances where farmers have taken fertilizer from other farmers with the promise to pay with some of the produce after harvest. These forms of mobilization are not different from other external inputs that have become unavoidable in contemporary agriculture like herbicides, pesticides and the use of tractor and bullock services for tilling the soil.

Cooperation with each other has also been employed to address this issue of soil infertility. This has mainly been geared towards exploring new fertile soils. For example members of the community who keep small ruminants through free range system have agreed to restrain them in the farming season to make possible for them to cultivate the soils surrounding the community because those soils are relatively fertile and yield quite well with little or no fertilizer. Another opportunity being seized to address the increasing soil infertility is the search for newer fertile soils. For example, years ago the White Volta River served only as a source of drinking water and seasonal fishing. Today it has become a site for arable cropping and vegetable farming. Farmers in the Kpalun community take advantage of the fertile soil near the river to produce maize which is the main staple food in the area. For the past two years it did not really go well because the site got flooded earlier than anticipated and this year the strategy was to crop earlier so they could harvest early. This appeared to do the trick because the maize crops were matured before the flooding and were harvested and conveyed with canoes in the hit of the floods.

What about the apparent future driven nature of contemporary agriculture? How is this handled in the peasantry? My observation in this research is that priority in peasant agriculture is given to crops that actually form part of the food requirements of households. This observation is confirmed by earlier analysis of some sayings in the discussion of cultural repertoires that suggest that business in food will always flourish. Thus in the water melon case farmers will not farm it unless they are pretty sure about the market and trust the payment arrangements. This is because if the market fails their efforts will go waste because they can neither store it nor consume it by themselves given the volumes involved and the fact that it does not form part of their daily food.

In concluding this section I would like to stress that the central defining element of autonomy in the peasantry has persisted in contemporary agriculture. The preceding paragraphs served to illustrate this. By obtaining external inputs through the non-commodity circuit peasants enhance their autonomy. The same effect is achieved when peasants acquire external inputs through already earned resources and bring them to the production process as use values. Also patterns of cooperation that enlarge the resource base by bringing new fertile soils under cultivation also strengthen autonomy. Van der Ploeg (2008: 37) refers to the findings of Bock and Rooij (2000) that considerable number of arable farms in the Netherlands was the result of non-farming people investing in farms to become peasants and argues that that the peasantry is “moving from the countryside to big metropolises of the world” (Van der Ploeg, 2008:37). The reasons for such argument could be the increasing autonomy such non-farming peasants enjoy in terms of their food requirements as well as the nature of the resource flow in such production. However a fundamental question that remains is whether simple engagement in agriculture makes such non-farming urban dwellers real peasants as conceptualized in this research?

### **5.3 Summary of Research Findings**

Here I summarise the research findings in the light of the questions that guided the study.

#### *5.3.1 How do smallholder farmers mobilize resources for agricultural production?*

Smallholder farmers mobilize resources for production activities on their farms outside the markets. Though farm inputs like fertilizer and herbicides are bought from the market, the money for that is usually from already acquired resources usually from harvest of previous seasons. Inter-household dependency relations including seed and labour exchanges play an important role in the mobilization of resources for farming. Formal financial institutions like

banks and microfinance institutions play little or no role in mobilizing resources for farming. Thus resources for farming are guaranteed through history making the process independent of current circumstances that may be imposed by market dynamics.

### *5.3.2 What is the nature of the labour process among smallholder farmers?*

The labour process among smallholder farmers is craftsman-like allowing for flexibility and fluidity. This enables the use of different expertise and experience of household members on the farm. For example planting and harvesting of different crops require different expertise and experience which vary with gender, age and experience of household members. These varying expertise in the household are employed to match the requirements on the farm and on the external environment to ensure that not only production takes place on the farm but also reproduction which guarantees the sustainability of the farm. Such flexibility and fluidity in the labour process allows for expansion and contraction of farm sizes in response to conditions in the environment. Decisions are therefore not about getting the most yields this season, but getting the level of yield that keep the farm balanced between the past, present and the future.

### *5.3.3 How do smallholder farmers pattern relations with the outside world?*

The relationship between smallholder farmers and the outside world seen in markets, technology and government and other agencies is that of distantiation. Agricultural activities of smallholder farmers are only partly commoditized. Market integration is minimal. Inputs are mobilized outside markets and outputs are also distributed through non-commodity circuits and only partly through the commodity circuits. Inter-household exchanges play an important role in farm output distribution. Trust relations are important in smallholders' relations with outsiders. What is local and embedded in cultural repertoires are trusted and what is foreign and not embedded in the local cultural repertoires are distrusted. Thus in market relations, farmers prefer dealing with local traders with whom they also relate to in several other ways like tribe, family or religion. Crops that enable farmers to plant their own seed are preferred to those that do not allow the practice of such cultural repertoires. The combination of trust for the local and distrust for the foreign in the light of local cultural repertoires reinforces autonomy.

#### *5.3.4 How is food procured for the Ghana School Feeding Programme?*

Food for the Ghana School Feeding Programme is procured by private caterers who do not come from the communities where the programme is implemented. Food is purchased at ruling market prices and there is no price guarantees. Food is purchased based on profit motives and therefore profitability determines purchases and not the origin of the foodstuff. Thus big suppliers in the cities and imported products which are cheaper become more interesting for the caterer compared to local produce in the communities.

#### *5.3.5 How does the procurement of food under the school feeding programme reinforce or weaken the autonomy of smallholder farmers?*

Procurement under the Ghana School Feeding Programme creates a parallel market on the output side to an already existing distribution system found in local traders. This parallel market has not distinguished itself in terms of price and market security. It also lacks the trust of smallholder farmers because the person involved (caterer) is little known in the community and also viewed as government person. This has led to differential treatment of the school feeding market in terms of pricing by local farmers. The caterer, looking to make savings from the purchases, seeks to buy cheaper and therefore finds purchases at the village unprofitable. Rising food prices has led to farmers concentrating attention on staples and also abstaining from the sales of staple foods as much as possible so they don't have to buy it later when their own food stocks are short. The strategies that ensure autonomy like off-farm activities and diversification of agriculture as well as flexible labour process have become all the more important in the face of rising food prices. The input side has remained largely autonomous and historically guaranteed. The farm is a unit of both production and reproduction which ensures the perpetuity of the farming. More inputs like fertilizer and herbicides are employed on smallholder farms, but such inputs are acquired with already acquired assets or through inter-household exchanges. Thus the school feeding programme through the introduction of a parallel market that do not fit in the cultural repertoires of the

community has led to more autonomous practices on the part of peasants. Increasing prices of staple foods<sup>9</sup> have produced similar effects.

#### **5.4 Conclusions**

The following conclusions can be drawn from the findings of the research:

- The organizing practices of smallholder farmers reflect largely the peasant mode of farming. The farm unit is both a unit of production and reproduction. The labour process is craftsman-like and allows for flexibility and fluidity. Trust for things that are embedded in local cultural repertoires and distrust for those that are not embedded in local cultural repertoires govern relations with the external world including markets. These make the farming process autonomous and historically guaranteed. Thus the peasant mode of farming better fits the organizing practices of smallholder farmers than the entrepreneurial mode of farming. Hence smallholder farmers are largely peasants than entrepreneurs
- The Ghana School Feeding Programme weakens the autonomy of smallholder farmers through its attempts at integrating farmers into the school feeding market. Integration into the school feeding market means farmers will now produce what the market buys and also farm sizes will be determined by the demands of the market. It also means entering into other dependency relations in the input side through loans from banks and other financial institutions. These dependency relations will weaken the autonomous and historically guaranteed nature of peasant agriculture. The future then determines what is to be produced and by how much. Such dependency relations do not resonate with the cultural repertoires of smallholder farmers and therefore stand to reduce their autonomy.
- The findings of this research reflect the general characteristics of intervention projects and programmes based on modernization assumptions; they generally do not resonate with local environments. Local dynamics are seen as hindrance to success and need to be changed.

#### **5.5 Recommendations**

Following from the conclusions, these recommendations are suggested for the improvement of the Ghana School Feeding Programme:

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<sup>9</sup> Though the current increases in food prices is due more to global processes, it is the idea of the Ghana School Feeding Programme to have higher food prices so farmers will be motivated to produce more.

- Efforts should be made at involving actors at the community level in the procurement of food for the programme. Specifically local traders at communities should play key role in food purchases because they are involved in trust relationships with farmers.
- Efforts at enhancing smallholder agriculture should give adequate attention to reinforcing autonomy. Such efforts could take advantage of dependency relations embedded in cultural repertoires that farmers engage in to reinforce autonomy. For example inter-household exchanges and forms of cooperation that broaden the resource base.
- In general, the design of intervention projects and programmes should begin with what make the clock tick in the local environment. It is only when interventions are designed and implemented to resonate with local environments that they are likely to succeed.

### **5.6 Theoretical and Methodological Reflections**

The purpose of this last section is to reflect critically on the theoretical and the methodological basis of the study and implications for the findings presented as well as future research. At the level of theory, definitions of the key concepts namely peasantry and entrepreneurship remain not so clear cut because in practice people are not just in one class or another. There is a grey area of in-between situations that make such analytical categories problematic in practice. This gives rise to methodological difficulties concerning the operationalization of the concepts and subsequent measurements.

On peasantry and the definition of the peasant, the traditional conceptualization of the peasant as being backward and occupying the margins of modern societies and being a hindrance to change are all descriptions of perception about the peasant without actually pinning down the key defining factors of the peasantry except for the fact that peasants are engaged in agriculture. Van der Ploeg's (2008) in the new peasantries attempts to address this by first defining the peasant condition and flowing from it the peasant mode of farming. But even then, the question remains who is the peasant? The poor farmer in a remote village in the north of Ghana who is faced with a hostile environment or the rich Dutch business man who has backyard that produces most of his food just for the feel of it? The peasant in the developing world might be facing a hostile environment of nature and socio-economic difficulties while the western peasant the hostile environment may be the unhealthy<sup>10</sup> food in

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<sup>10</sup> Unhealthy is used loosely to describe personal perceptions of people who prefer food from their backyard gardens to those from the supermarket.

the supermarket. One defining factor I understood and made use of in the research is the search for autonomy although it is pursued differently under different circumstances. For this research the conceptualization of the peasantry has been smallholder farmers in the rural areas who operate in hostile environment and continuously strive for autonomy by engaging in several sources of livelihood and farming is just one of them. This conceptualization of the peasant guided data collection and analysis.

As with the peasantry, the difficulty with the concept of entrepreneurship is defining unambiguously who the entrepreneurial farmer is. Until now the focus has been setting the peasant farmer against the entrepreneurial farmer, one being the opposite of the other. Most often entrepreneurial farming becomes synonymous with scale enlargement. Eenhoorn (2007) in his public lecture on food security and entrepreneurship outlined the key issues in entrepreneurship but did not explicitly define entrepreneurial farming as a concept. To him the problem with smallholder farmers is that they do not have an entrepreneurial mind set and so the current lack of response to the school feeding market. Insights from Van der Ploeg(2008) and from this research show that peasant activities are embedded in cultural repertoires which is where the school feeding missed the 'mark'; it is not embedded in local cultural repertoires that reinforce autonomy.

The methodological approach adopted in this study allows for both detailed analysis and wider applicability of the findings to similar encounters between external interventions and locally developed and defended cultural repertoires. Detailed interviews from several encounters with respondents and participant observations provided detailed information which is not easily obtainable from one time encounters with respondents using standardized questionnaire. The facts that theory guided both data collection and analysis and the use of triangulation through multiple sources of information make the findings of the study have general implications. For as Bernard (1995:47) argues "Many theories are developed to explain a purely local phenomenon and turns out to have wider applicability".

Future research should study similar phenomena in other areas so as to contribute empirical evidence in order to improve the theoretical propositions in this field. Future research should also explore the dynamics of the cultural repertoires within which agricultural practices of smallholder farmers are embedded.

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## APPENDIX A: DATA COLLECTION DETAILS

### Data Collection Outline.

Category	Key groups	Objects of data collection	Methodology	Number
Beneficiaries	Farming household	Household head	Semi-structured interview	8
		(senior) housewife	Semi-structured interview	8
		Eldest male member	Semi-structured interview	8
		Other male member	Unstructured interview	9
		Other female member	Unstructured interview	13
	Caterer		Semi – Structured interview	1
	School teachers	Head teacher	Semi – Structured interview	1
Implementors/collaborators	District Assembly	Focal person on school feeding	Semi – Structured interview	1
	Ministry of Food and Agriculture	District director	Semi – structured interview	1
		Extension Officer	Semi – Structured interview	1
		Technical Officer	Semi – Structured interview	1
	Ministry of Education	District Director	Semi-structured	1
		Education focal person of feeding programme	Semi – Structured interview	1
	School Feeding Secretariat	Northern Regional Coordinator	Semi-structured interview	1
	SNV	Focal person on School feeding	Semi-structured interview	1

### Summary

Households involved: 8

Interviews: 56

Focus group discussions: 5

Farms visited: 4

Secondary sources: Project document – Ghana School Feeding Programme, district profile.

## APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW GUIDE AND OBSERVATION CHECKLIST FOR FARMERS

### Interview guide

#### *Farming practices*

- Socio-demographic characteristics of respondents
  - Age
  - Sex
  - Education
  - Position in family eg. Household head.
- Sources of livelihood
- The farm
  - Access to and control over land
  - Land size
  - Sources of labour
  - Family labour and its role on farm
  - Gender issues on the farm (division of work among men and women)
  - Farming system used and why
    - Mono cropping
    - Mixed cropping
    - Mixed farming
    - Crop rotation
  - Source of seed
  - Crops grown and why
  - Types and sources of external input
  - The role the market
    - External input
    - Demand for produce
- Sale of produce – how, time, place, circumstances (how, when, why, under what conditions)
  - Capital
    - Sources
    - Credit
- Food sufficiency
  - Gap between own produce and food needs year round
  - In case of shortage, what strategies are employed?

#### *School feeding Programme*

- What farmers know about it
- What it means to them
- Do they know its objectives?
- Does it influence what they do and how?
- Do they have some concerns about the programme
- What do they wish be changed or done in the programme for the intended objectives(boost local production through market access) to be achieved

## **Observation check list**

### *Farming practices*

- Language
  - Could suggest values, norms, aspirations, abilities, interest, goals and believes to further explore through interviews.
- How certain operations are carried out on the farm – further on believes and values
- Food: sources
- Social functions
- Social relations among community members
  - Who is relating with who and how?

### *School feeding*

- Who are involved in the food procurement?
- Where and from whom
- Examine document about purchasing
- Kind of food purchased and cooked in school