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The Benin Kingdom was a sovereign state in pre-colonial West Africa. Sovereign in the sense that the Kingdom conducted and coordinated its internal and external affairs with its well structured political, social-cultural and economic institutions. One remarkable aspect of the Benin culture was the Igue festival. The festival was unique in the sense that it was a period when the Oba embarks on spiritual cleansing and prayers to departed ancestors for continued protection and growth of the land. The period of the festival was uncompromising and was spiritually adhered to. It was during this period that the British attempted to visit the Oba. This attempted visit to the land was declined by the Oba. An imposition of the visit by the British Crown resulted in the ambushed and killing of British officers. This incident marked the road map to the British invasion of the Kingdom in 1897. This study presents the sovereign nature of the Benin Kingdom, its social-cultural and economic uniqueness rooted in the belief and respect of deities. The paper further argues that the event of 1897 was a clear cut violation of the sovereignty, culture and territorial rights of the Benin Kingdom under a crooked agreement called the Gallwey Treaty of 1892. The Gallwey Treaty was a treaty entered into between the sovereigns of Benin and Britain for trade relations.

Key words: Igue festival, British invasion, violation, culture and sovereignty

INTRODUCTION

Of all the West African societies, the Kingdom of Benin is the one most mentioned in contemporary European literature. Since the end of the 15th century, a great deal of material about Benin has been supplied by sailors, and traders, returning to Europe (Dmitri et al., 1999). This information about the kingdom of Benin brought the Kingdom to European limelight for the eventual commencement of trade and commerce with the people at the coast of West Africa. The desire for trade and commerce by the European led to the signing of treaties with the indigenous people and the subsequent invasion and violation of the people’s territorial sovereignty and culture in a bid to actualizing their economic quest. This paper is aimed at discussing the British invasion of Benin in 1897 as a violation of the people’s culture and territorial sovereignty from the view of the yearly traditional festival known as the Igue festival. The period of the Igue festival in Benin, is a period when the Oba and the people of Benin embarked on spiritual cleansing of the kingdom by offering varied sacrifice to the ancestors. It is also a well established custom that during the period when the festival is held, strangers or aliens are not allowed to visit the Oba. It was on these circumstances and various others which this paper will discuss that the British delegates attempted to visit the Oba and where ambushed and killed as against the
Oba’s instructions. This incident eventually set the pace for British military expedition of 1897 under the cover of what is called a lopsided Treaty (Gallwey Treaty of 1892). The question is does the violation of a treaty that was not well communicated to the Oba, or a treaty that contained secrecy and deceit geared toward stealing the people’s freedom warrant such violation of the people’s culture and territorial sovereignty during the Igue festival? The aim of this article is to explore British expedition against the Benin under the cover of a crooked treaty and to establish the fact that the invasion was a clear violation of the people’s culture and territorial sovereignty. For a clear conceptual mode of analysis, this paper will start by looking at the location and peoples of Benin Kingdom to have a grass root understanding of the people’s location and the people’s political and economic activities. The paper will also examine the Benin contact with the European, Portuguese and the British, the Gallway Treaty and the eventual invasion of the Kingdom by the British in 1897. Benin kingdom is located South-west on Nigeria map and it is on the high tropical region of the rainforests. This makes the people to be very good agriculturalists even up till today. The Kingdom is remarkable for its size and it is well developed political system. The Oba also known as the King is the custodian of political, economic and social activities of the people. The Kingdom has had various great kings according to historical testimonies. Several centuries ago, at the time when Benin was called “Igodomingodo”, the geographical area now known as Benin, was the hub of a conglomeration of little towns that developed or spread into most of the areas of modern state. Benin Kingdom is strategically located, economically and culturally endowed. Benin kingdom did not begin as a kingdom but grew from a small numbers of villages with the aid of territorial expansion and conquest as a result of its military strength. According to O.B. Osadolor, from the mid-fifteenth century, up to 1897, one of the determinants of the foreign policy of Benin was a proper assessment of its resources and particularly of its military strength and potential (Akenzua and Alonge, 1979, p.7). At the height of its power in the 17th century, the Benin Empire had stretched from Lagos to the Niger and from the north to the coast. The vastness of the Benin Empire and its political structure was described by Lorenzo Pinto, a Portuguese who was on a visit to deliver a letter to the Oba from the Roman Catholic Priest, asserted thus:

Great Benin, where the king resides, is larger than LISBON; all the streets run straight and as far as the eye can see. The houses are large, especially that of the King which is richly decorated and has fine columns. The city is wealthy and industrious. It is so well governed that theft is unknown, and the people live in such security that they have no doors in their houses (Ibid).

Van Nyendael, a Dutchman also gives account of the inhabitants of Benin to be generally good-natured and very civil as well as generous in their treatment of strangers… (Osadolor, 2001). The kingdom developed a centralized system of government which revolves round the Oba. The Oba was the head and supreme military command in chief of the Benin kingdom. Apart from the political system which the Oba assumed paramount, he was also the custodian of traditions and customs of the people. This explained the fact that any decisions reached by the Oba have grave impact on the people. It appears from tradition that Benin has had kings and some forms of centralized government since earliest times (Benin City: The Edo State Capital, Annual Newspaper Publication, 2001. p. 57).

The economic activities of the people at the start of the century largely depended on coastal trade of which slaves was the paramount commodity at the period. With the abolition of the slave trade, legitimate trade became the paramount important commodity. Agricultural activities are the major economic activities of the Benin people. Yam, cassava, cocoyam, etc., are the basic crops and it is mainly cultivated by the men, although women usually assist in weeding and planting, and the whole labour supply is mobilized for the harvest (Davison and Buah, 1972). Trade in these commodities created an avenue for trade relations between its neighbours and the Europeans. Ryder’s work Benin and the European, dealt extensively on Benin trade with the European countries and, in the process, the local trade between Benin and her neighbors (Stride and Ifeka, 1971, p.306).

The Benin kingdom developed an advanced artistic culture especially in its renowned artifacts of Bronze and Ivory. Execution Group from Benin asserted that the kingdom of Benin, located in Mid-western Nigeria, flourished from the fifteenth through the nineteenth centuries, and was renowned for the excellence of its bronze casting (Owuumjeogwu, 2007, p197). Another remarkable cultural aspect of the Benin people was the Igue festival. It takes place during the last two weeks of every year at the palace of the Oba, the custodian of the Benin culture and traditions. The festival always attracts thousands of people from the city. Those who watch it are taken back some hundreds of years into Benin history. Oral history supports the theory that the festival was first celebrated during the reign of Oba (King) Ewuare (1440) (A.F.C. Ryder, 1969, p.71). One significant aspect of the festival is that visitors are not allowed to visit the Oba and all routes leading to the kingdom are closed to foreigners. The cultural excellence of the Benins could rightly be traced during Igwe festival than any other festival in Benin kingdom (Hutchinson, 1997, p.87).

The kingdom was politically, socio-culturally and economically organized, that the early European visitors have to testify of the kingdom well governed structure and institutions. During this period, the concept of state
has become paramount of the Benin kingdom, sovereign state as such. The kingdom was sovereign in the sense that during the fifteenth to the late eighteenth centuries, it had absolutely maintained internal and external sovereignty. Internal sovereignty connotes the ability and capability for a state to conduct its internal affairs without the interference of the external. The external sovereignty of the kingdom was its conduct of relations with other states in the international relations. The Kingdom under Oba Esigie sent a representative, the Chief of Ughoton (Olokun Prince) as an Ambassador to the king of Portugal. Looking at what sovereignty connotes, Benin kingdom was a sovereign state. The kingdom was ruled by the Oba, territorially defined, inhabited by the people and maintained a formidable military apparatus. All these were the features of the Benn kingdom before the British invasion.

Benin contact with the European

Before the European economic and territorial quest that was formally given recognition in the Berlin conference of 1884, the kingdom of Benin has had contact and diplomatic relations with Portugal. Benin as it appears in documents of the seventeenth century was a wealthy and centralized kingdom. The natural reflection of centralized wealth was its magnificent capital city, one whose archeology has only begun to be explored (Ojehomon and Ayeni, 1979, p.3). The Portuguese who the Benins have had early trade and diplomatic contacts with compared the city with Lisbon, the Dutch with Amsterdam or Antwerp, the Italian with Florence, and Spaniards with Madrid (Obadigie, 1979).

The Portuguese preceded all the other European countries in West Africa; they maintained trade and commercial relations with some states in Africa before the Scramble for Africa began in 1885. Historical evidence have shown that the Portuguese agent, Afonso d’ Aveiro visited Benin kingdom in 1485 during the reign of Oba Ozoula, and established commercial and diplomatic relations between both countries. Aveiro returned to Lisbon with the Chief of Ughoton, who acted as the Obas’s Ambassador (Connah, 1972) which eventually led to the establishment of a trading factory by the Chief of Ughoton. Subsequent interactions between Portugal and Benin kingdom continued even up to the reign of Oba Esigie who later was converted to a Christian by the missionaries.

Besides, before the Benin contact with the British, the kingdom has had mutual and reciprocal relations with Portugal. They both acknowledged and respected each other sovereignty. Portugal put into consideration and respected the territorial sovereignty, customs and traditions of the people of Benin by requesting at every interval and seeking the consent of the Oba before any trade or diplomatic relations were carried out between both countries. For example, d’ Aviero did not force the Christian religion on the Oba, but begged or advice the Oba. But in the case of the British activities in the Benin kingdom, the sovereignty, customs and traditions of the people were violated under the guise of a “cooked” treaty for self economic interests.

This article raises and answers some critical questions that will reveal the inordinate ambitions of the British to dominate and colonize the kingdom of Benin for self interests under a crooked treaty of 1892. The questions are what necessitated the British interests in Africa? At what point did the British come in contact with the kingdom? What was the driving force of British invasion of Benin? Answers to these questions will reveal the injustice done to the kingdom by the British Government in 1897, which manifested in the outright violation of the people’s culture and territorial sovereignty.

The British interest in Africa

After the abolition of slave trade in 1807, the introduction of legitimate trade and the emerging industrialization in Europe, there arouse the need for the European countries to quest for outlets and territories for the purchase of legitimate products for the benefits of the mother land. The period marked another milestone in the history of both the African countries and of the Europeans. The struggle for trade and colonies became a serious desire among the European countries most especially Britain and France. This period necessitated British interests in Africa. Although British interest in Africa and the kingdom of Benin was not a bad presence, its disrespect for the culture, traditions and territorial sovereignty of the people was a major problem which eventually caused social and political crises in African after their departure.

In 1874, states in West Africa were annexed by the British, creating her first major colony in West Africa. Further down the coast in the Niger Delta region, a Consul for the Bights of Benin and Biafra interfered frequently in the affairs of the palm-oil exporting states in the interests of both Britain commerce and the suppression of the slave trade, but there was no attempt to acquire a territorial base from which he could operate (A.P.F: SOCG, 1598). Britain inordinate desire to secure full control of the trades in West Africa most especially in the Niger Delta region brought her in contact with the Benin kingdom. Few recorded statements had indicated that the Oba of Benin at the period, Oba Ovonramwen, had sought to avoid conflict with the British by first refusing to enter into any formal relations with them. However, relations had become strained in the preceding decades as the British established permanent trading stations and consulates along the coast and sought to
At this point, it was obvious that the motivating factor behind British interference in the internal affairs of African states was trade and territorial aggrandizement which eventually led to the invasion of Benin kingdom by the British under a treaty. Treaty is an agreement entered into by parties to their understanding. The conceptual question is does the Oba and British officials had the same knowledge or understanding of the Gallwey Treaty? Certainly not, the British had comprehensive understanding of the Treaty more than the Oba. The treaty was cooked to tie the hands of the Oba and the people. It was full of deceit for self interests and above all a crooked treaty to the detriment of the kingdom. The treaty lacked proper communication to the understanding of the Oba and its officials. When the Oba realized the deceptive nature of the treaty, he declines the obligation.

As aforementioned, a treaty is an agreement entered into by parties to their understanding. Another fundamental question is does the signing of a treaty that was not well communicated to the Oba, a treaty full of deceit and secrecy amounted to the outright invasion and violation of a people’s customs, tradition and territorial sovereignty? Is there any part of the treaty that states that in the event of breach invasion becomes an instrument of state policy? Certainly not! The fundamental truth about the treaty is that it was cooked to attain perceived goals by the British crown. This finally played itself out after the killings of British trade and political officials led by Philips who attempted to visit the Oba during the Igue festival.

**The Gallwey Treaty 1892: An Arm Twisting Treaty**

The Gallwey Treaty of 1892 was the height of Britain desire to secure trade outlet in West Africa and subsequent colonization of the Benin River and the interior. By 1840, the Benin River had become a large scale centre of palm oil trade. As the desire for trade and territories intensified, the British Government was more interested in protecting the trade and commercial interests of her citizens and companies by entering into various treaties with African kings. In 1849, John Beecroft, an arch advocate of British imperialism, was appointed the first British Consul of the Bights of Benin and Biafra. Located in the hinterland, Benin had been relatively unaffected by the increasing pressure brought about by British gun Diplomacy in the coastal region during the Mid-century (Crowder, 1968, p.45).

The report about the Benin kingdom by early European traders in the 19th century who painted an horrible picture about the kingdom as uncivilized and barbaric and subsequent reports about the oil rich and economically endowed region of the Niger Delta, aroused Gallwey’s visit to Benin to enter into a treaty that would formally established Britain control and influence in the Benin kingdom. Gallway’s unending desire negotiated a ground visit to the Oba of Benin, Oba Ovonramwen. On 21 March, 1892, he left for Benin and arrived in the city on 23 March, 1892. He could not have an audience with the Oba until 26 March that same year (Ibid).

On the 26 March, 1892, Gallway presented to the Oba a treaty which stole the freedom and sovereignty of the Benin people. He maneuvered the Oba and his chiefs into agreeing to terms of a treaty with the British government. In 1892, the British government made a treaty with the Oba at Benin City, which was for the opening of free trade of the European and the granting of welfares and facilities to his subjects (Otoide, 2005, p.526). The treaty was in nine parts. Article one to the last article contained an acts of secrecy and British inordinate desire to manipulate and subject the Benin kingdom to the Imperial Majesty. The treaty and all that it stood for marked the beginning of the end of the independence of Benin not only on account of its theoretical claims, which bordered on the fictitious, but also gave the British the pretext, if not the legal basis, for the subsequent invasion of Benin. The Gallwey Treaty was arm twisting because of its deceptiveness and its lop-sided nature to drive home the British government’s ambitions to control Benin kingdom.

A treaty is said to be binding when both parties understand in a clear terms the content of the treaty. The fact that the Oba signed what is referred to as an arm twisting agreement that was imposed on him by the British government does not automatically give to the British the right to invasion and violation of the people’s culture and territorial sovereignty at the peak of Igue festival, a period of spiritual cleansing of the land and a period when the Oba goes into spiritual consultation with the ancestors. There is no part in the Gallwey treaty that states that in any event of default, invasion or military campaign becomes an instrument of policy.

During the Igue festival, foreigners are not allowed into kingdom to see the Oba. It was during this period that a political and trade mission headed by Acting Consul General Philips and other European officers was sent to Benin kingdom by the British government to induce the Oba to implement the terms of the Gallwey treaty of 1892. At their arrival, the Oba was observing the ceremony called Igue, during which he must not be seen by strangers (Ryder, 1969, p.274). They demanded to see the Oba against all odds. It was clear that the driving force to see the Oba, against the customs and traditions of the people was the “cooked treaty” forced on the Oba. The Oba granted to receive the delegates and sent some chiefs to lead them to Benin City. The chiefs defied the Oba’s order ambushed and killed the European delegates in 1897, owing to the fear of uncertainty of the British mission. The Oba was furious and regarded the
actions of the chiefs uncalled for. The killings necessitated British military against the kingdom, but this move was unjustifiable because the Oba was not offered opportunity to tender explanation or apology to the British Government.

**British invasion of Benin: A violation of the peoples’ culture and territorial sovereignty**

It is true to say here that the British invasion of Benin in 1897 found credence in the killings of the British political and economic mission headed by General Phillips, by the Benin chiefs. But the British have before the incident, nursed an inordinate desire and ambition to occupy the Benin kingdom which was contained in the Gallwey treaty of 1892. The incident was an opportunity for the British to actualize their perceived objectives in the kingdom.

On January 12, 1897, Real-Admiral Harry Rawson, heading the squadron at the Cape of Good Hope in modern South Africa, was appointed to lead an expedition to invade Benin kingdom, destroy and capture the Oba. The operation to invade kingdom was named British Expedition of 1897. On February 9 1897, British began the invasion of Benin kingdom. Towns and villages were sacked and burnt down; the invasion force was about 1200 British Marines, sailors and Niger Coast Protectorate Forces, and composed of three columns: the ‘Sapoba, Gwato and Main’ Columns (Egharevba, 1968).

After days of fierce fighting, the kingdom was finally captured by British who began looting the monuments and artworks in the Benin palace and set the whole city ablaze. Religious artifacts, Benin visual history, mnemonics and artworks were taken to England. It can also be seen from this perspective that the carting away of Benin artifacts and artworks violate the culture and sovereignty of the Benin kingdom.

**Conclusion**

The British invasion of Benin in 1897 was a total violation of the people’s culture and territorial sovereignty because the British showed no respect for the traditions and customs of the people at the peak of the Igue festival. Oba Ovonramwen never rejected the visitor; he refused at that moment and at that period because of the traditional festival. The British violated the culture and sovereignty of the people by trying to justify the invasion of Benin kingdom from two perspectives: the killings of British trade missionaries and Gallwey treaty signed between the Oba and the British government in 1892.

British military campaign against the Benin kingdom and the eventual deportation of Oba Ovonramwen to exile in Calabar, without first sending a message to the Oba to explain or tender an apology for the killings amounted to a clear violation of the people’s custom and territorial sovereignty. The Gallwey Treaty which the British government was compelling the Oba to enforce was not only deceitful but lopsided in favour of the British Government to the detriment of the Benin kingdom. What befall the kingdom in 1897 was clearly not because the Oba refused to keep his own part and responsibility of the treaty. Rather, it was because the treaty was lopsided to advance the interests of the Imperial Majesty at the detriment of the sovereignty of the Benin kingdom.

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Full Length Research Paper

Poultry industry in the Wa Municipality of the Upper West Region of Ghana: Prospects and challenges

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The poultry industry is known to be a major contributor to Ghana's economy through employment creation and the enhancement of nutrition and food security. In spite of these contributions, the poultry industry is faced with a number of problems that necessitate solution. The study was conducted in the Wa Municipality of the Upper West Region of Ghana, with the prospects and challenges of the local poultry industry as its main objective. Ten poultry farmers were engaged as research participants using both structured and semi-structured interviews. Interactions with the poultry farmers in the municipality revealed that, poultry and its products provide some acceptable form of protein to humans to combat malnutrition, create employment and also give income to these farmers. Marketing of eggs does not present any problem at all with cash flow to farmers during egg collection. There is also abundant labor and land for poultry farming. The study showed that apart from the poultry farms, farmers also engage in crop cultivation as well as livestock rearing like goats, sheep, pigs, cattle, domestic fowls and ducks. All the farmers provided a well-ventilated house for housing their poultry birds (intensive system). The main management practices carried out by the farmers are; the provision of feed, security, water, regular replacement of litters and vaccination against diseases. Problems encountered by the farmers include inadequate capital, expensive feed and equipment, incidence of diseases and poor weather conditions. Other constraints of the industry in the municipality include; expensive vaccine, expensive veterinary services, management of sick birds, low patronage of live birds due to few restaurants and hotels in the municipality. The study concludes that, government should implement more stringent measures so as to protect the local poultry industry from dying and also support poultry farmers through subsidies.

Key words: Poultry industry, prospects and challenges, Wa Municipality.

INTRODUCTION

Poultry and its products are of considerable significance to both humans and animals. They are the major source of food, income, employment as well as socio-cultural values (Naazie and Canacoo, 2007). During the past decade, poultry meat production recorded an increase of 43% on the average in developing regions, while in developed regions it was only 28.4 % (Daghir, 1995). The profitability of the poultry industry in the developed countries is linked to cheap and abundant feed ingredients. Thus commercial feeding programs that are designed to manipulate feed resources with the view of reducing feed cost would result in concomitant increase in profit, thereby making meat more affordable for low income consumers (Lilburn, 1988). Economic significance of poultry varies considerably from meat and eggs to income or foreign exchange (Jordan and Pattison, 1996). So much enthusiasm has been generated in the production and consumption of poultry meat and egg that has led to increase in demand for poultry meat and its products (Colecraft et al., 2007). It has a short generation interval.
compared to other livestock (Obi and Sonaiya, 1995). Income from poultry is spread throughout the year (Gillespie, 1983). Poultry manure is becoming more important with the increase in poultry production under the deep litter system (Sinnadurai, 1992). Even though residue from deep litter system contains only about 20% poultry manure; this nevertheless forms a useful soil additive particularly in heavy soil (William et al., 1991). Karbo and Bruce (2000) reported that poultry provides ready cash for investment. Poultry provides additional income to the general resources of the poor farmers especially women (Gueye, 2005). Meat and eggs from poultry serve as ready source of food for most households. Poultry meat and eggs provide a preferred form of animal protein for most people (Aboe et al., 2006). Poultry products which are cheaper and more acceptable source of animal protein have decreased the purchase of red meat which is more costly and beyond the purchasing power of the average citizens (Appiah, 1993). Thus poultry production can be one of the surest ways of addressing the problem of protein malnutrition which happens to be one of the most destructive disease affecting children (Aboe et al., 2006). Poultry does not only serve as food security item, but also provides ready cash for investment for all age groups (Karbo and Bruce, 2000). In most rural households, poultry is a quick and reliable source of income for meeting household needs. For example poultry serves as savings readily available to buy food stuffs for humans, to purchase feeds and even to pay taxes (Idi, 1994). A report by Assoku (2000) indicates that out of the estimated livestock population in Ghana in 1974-84, poultry has the highest number but the lowest annual growth of 3.8 percent. This situation was due to numerous problems affecting the expansion and profitability of the poultry industry. Increase in price of drugs in Ghana is due to removal of subsidies (Appiah, 1993) and lack of skilled manpower for middle management position (Daghir, 1995). In 2002, the share of local poultry in the total consumption of poultry in Ghana had reduced to just about 10 percent (SEND-Ghana, 2008). It is estimated that, today, the share of domestic poultry industry in the total amount of poultry consumed in Ghana is as low as 5 percent (SEND-Ghana, 2008). The source of the drastic decline in the local industry share on the market for poultry is traced to the trade liberalization policy which allows the unlimited importation of highly subsidized poultry products from Europe and elsewhere into the Ghanaian market (SEND-Ghana, 2008). Ghana imported 26,000 tons of chicken mostly from European Union in 2002. The figure almost doubled to 40,000 tons two years later in 2004. It is estimated that over 400,000 small-scale farmers have been forced to close their enterprises because they cannot compete with the heavily subsidized imports from Europe and elsewhere (SEND-Ghana, 2008). The Population and Housing Census estimated the number of birds in Ghana to be 14,000,000 (GSS 2010). An earlier census conducted seven years earlier in 1996 put the number of bird at 14,600,000. Clearly, the poultry industry is gradually but surely grinding to a halt if the trade liberalization policy is not reversed (SEND-Ghana, 2008). To them the decline in output in the poultry industry has had negative rippling effects on maize farmers, soy beans farmers and on the sectors that have linkages with the poultry sector. High temperatures coupled with high humidity which impose stress on the bird leading to reduced performance (Raece and Lott, 1982) and disease occurrence (Coccidiosis, Newcastle, Gumboro, Fowl fox etc.) which may be caused by poor sanitation (Turkson, 2003) have negative effects on the industry. The decline in Ghana’s poultry industry is due to the imports of poultry products and downturn of the Ghanaian economy in the 1980’s which affected the availability of feed ingredients and even worsened situation after the decade (Aning, 2006). The decline in commercial production in most regions of developing countries over the period 2001-2005 is as a result of frequent Gumboro disease outbreaks (Otsyina et al., 2005). On poultry meat and egg supply in Ghana, there has been an increase in imports from a peak of 12.26(1000 tones) and 0.10 (1000 tones) respectively to 48.0 (1000 tones) and 0.14 (1000 tones) from 2001 to 2004 (FAO, 2005). The price of day old chicks increased steeply in 2001 to 2005 from 75 to 122%. Similarly, the prices of all categories of poultry feed rose from 96.4 to 106.7%, the increases in feed cost generally reflected in the market price of maize (Adei and Asante, 2012). Ghana now accounts for as much as 30 percent of all poultry products imported into the West African Sub-region from European Union (EU) (Awuni, 2002). One other major constraint of poultry production in the tropical areas is the unavailability of adequate supply of grains (example maize) and protein sources (example fish meal) necessary for the formation of feed (Daghir, 1995). Feed alone accounts for 60-65% of poultry production cost (Koney, 1993), while Akinwuni et al. (1979) reported feed cost to be about 80 percent as variable cost in broiler production. The current rate of bank interest on loan is still too high for the small-scale producer though the micro-economic indicators are promising (Karbo and Avomyo, 2006). The dumping of cheap poultry products on the market from trade liberalization is a source of worry to local producers as well as health concerns on the consumer population (Karbo and Avomyo, 2006).

Study area

Wa Municipality is located at the southern part of the Upper West Region of Ghana. It is bordered to the north by Nadowli District and to the East by Wa West, to the West by Wa East district and to the south by Wa East and West districts. It is located between latitude 1°40N to 2°45S and longitude 9°32W to 10°20W. It covers a total land area of approximately 234.74m² (Wa Municipal
Data were gathered through primary and secondary sources of data collection. Primary data employed a completion of questionnaires (structured and semi-structured interviews). Simple random sampling was also used as a sampling method for egg sellers and consumers. Purposive sampling techniques were as well employed in the selection of poultry farmers and key informants from the Ministry of Food and Agriculture and in the local poultry industry. A total of 10 farms were visited in the study area and 50 questionnaires were administered for both egg and meat sellers and consumers. The questionnaires helped to know the range of prospects, the problems/challenges, the type of birds, suggested solutions and the extent to which these products help to develop the people from a collective perspective of consumers, farmers and experts. Secondary data were also gathered from existing facts and figures, the Ministry of Food and Agriculture, Regional Office about the prospects and challenges that the local poultry industry experiences. They were used to validate data collected from the farmers and other research participants to triangulate the primary data. The research made use of focus group discussions held with poultry farmers, sellers and consumers in small groups ranging between 6-12 people with the interest of obtaining the information needed for this research work. Key informant interviews were also employed to gather data from people who were knowledgeable on specific issues such as rearing and selling poultry birds and its products. Among some of the key informants were the President and the Secretary of the Local Poultry Farmers Association in the Wa Municipality, Agriculture and Veterinary Officers and some officials from the Ministry of Food and Agriculture. Data collected from the focus groups were triangulated with the data from the key informants. Researcher’s observation was done to validate information from the respondents. Participant and non-participant observations were employed in the study to collect data on the prospects and challenges of the local poultry industry. Questionnaires were also designed and administered to collect data from the respondents on their sector. Both open-ended and closed-ended questionnaires were administered to the research participants. Descriptive statistics was also employed in the analysis and presentation of the data gathered.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Alternative economic activities of poultry farmers

From Table 1, it was noted that most of the respondents were engaged in other economic activities aside poultry production. It was revealed that 20 percent were solely engaged in poultry production, 30% in crop farming and 50% in other economic activities. In line with Sinnadurai (1992) and Awuni (2002) organic manure is becoming more important with the increases in poultry production under the deep litter system, and poultry is known to be good producers of organic manure, which enhances crop production. This is in view of the fact that 30% of the farmers in the crop production interviewed admitted that, they experienced high crop yields due to the application of the organic manure from the poultry industry. Sometimes, other farmers come for the litter to spread on their farms to enrich the nutrients level and aid soil formation. The involvement of other farmers in other professions implies that they are likely to finance their farms in terms of feed, drugs and medications from the income they obtain. In addition, they also supplement their pay through

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<th>Others</th>
<th>No of respondents</th>
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<tr>
<td>Poultry only</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Agriculture (crop production)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional employment</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. Some other job engagements.

DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

The municipality is positioned in the savannah height between 160 and 300m above sea level. The municipality is drained by two main seasonal streams: the single ‘Bakpong’ and its tributaries to the south and the ‘Billi’ and its tributaries to the north; since the streams are seasonal, water is always scarce in dry season. This hinders agricultural development, industrial activities and calls for the provision of dams and dugouts. The municipality lies in the guinea savannah grassland. The common trees are: Shea trees, Dawadawa, Kapok, Nim tree, Baobab, Cashew and Mango. The vegetation is however hampered by human activities such as: charcoal burning, constructions, farming practices etc. The municipality also has two marked seasons: the wet and the dry season. The wet season occurs between May and September, recording mean annual rainfall between 80 to 140mm. The pattern generally encourages run-off rather than soil moisture retention thereby causing drought which affects crops growth and yield. Wa-Municipality has a total population of 145, 065 according to the 2010 Population and Housing Census (GSS 2010). About 95% of the people in the study area belong to mainly one lineage, the Mole-Dagbani. The different ethnic groups in the study area include the Wala, Sissala, Dagaaba, and some other minor groups, from southern parts of Ghana. Economic activities of the Municipality are dominated by agriculture (70 to 80 percent of the population) followed by petty trading and industry. Other key sectors include: transport, tourism, and non-formal sector activities. About 43% of the total population are into cereal and crop farming, producing crops such as cereals, grains, yams, groundnut, and beans etc as staples crops. Soybeans, groundnuts and Barbara beans are produced as cash crops. The major animals reared in the Municipality include cattle, goats, sheep, fowls, ducks, turkeys and pigs (in non-Muslim suburbs). And about 37% of the population are livestock farmers. The farmers also use mainly traditional methods, like the use of hoe and cutlass with low animal traction. Farm sizes are generally small due to inadequate access to land, credit and uncertainty of already market distortions. The animals are also left on free range with attendant losses due to thieves and diseases. Farming activities are worse off in the Municipality due to the poor linkage between the agriculture and the industrial sectors.
Employment issues

On employment, most of the poultry farmers interviewed were observed to say that they have hire labors laborers on their poultry farms while others together with their family spend part of their daily schedules on the farms without a hired labor. A few other farmers interviewed said that they are having permanent laborers on their farms. To make up for the inadequate data on the permanent labor employed, we quote the interviewees extensively in this aspect. The following quotations are sample views of the management of some visited farms about the employment trend: A farmer had this to say during a focus group discussion:

“We are very busy during festive periods. At this time there is high demand for live birds. We therefore employ the services of more labor to meet the needs of our customers. Production levels therefore reduces after these festive periods and we turn to concentrate on layers for production of eggs as this ensures permanent cash flow to us, particularly during hamattan when the weather is cold. Many people take tea and so the demand for egg is high. This is why we rely more on hired labor. But for both the hired and permanent labor, they are hoping not to be poor because it is attractive. They get meat, eggs and money when engaged” (Believe Action Farm Manager).

“The low and fall in unemployment is due to the fluctuations in the demand for meat and eggs. You will make loss if you pay them without demand” (Dangal Farm Manager).

The views expressed by the farm managers capture the trend on employment in the poultry industry in the study area. SEND-Ghana (2008) in their annual report commented that the commercial poultry farms employ and pay workers based on the demand for poultry products and their margin of profit in northern Ghana. Most workers in the sector have lost their jobs due mainly to low production and demand.

the income they obtained from the poultry.

Is also worth noting that, poultry farming is a major source of income and employment since all 100 percent poultry farmers agreed that poultry is more lucrative than the other economic activities they were involved in.

### Egg and meat producers

#### Demographic characteristics of egg and meat producers

The egg and meat producers as used in this survey, refers to farmers who rear conventional poultry birds used for commercial production of meat or eggs. The work piece also reveals that male constitute 100 percent of eggs and meat producers with females taking 70 percent of distributions of these products and consumption in the municipality. The research revealed that 100% of eggs and meat producers have at least secondary education while 84% of egg and meat sellers and consumers have at least basic primary education. From the survey, neither of the producers had only basic education nor was in the non-formal category. The observation therefore indicates that all the producers belong to a high literacy group. Responses from the research participants indicate high literate poultry producers compared to poultry sellers who are mostly illiterates.

#### Daily egg production

The percentage proportion of eggs producers in the study area is shown in Table 2. It shows that 50% of egg producers in the Municipality produce less than or up to 50 crates of eggs daily, 40% produces 51 to 100 crates daily, and 10% produces 101 to 500 daily.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Range of eggs (No of crates)</th>
<th>Egg producers (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>≤50</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51-100</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>101-500</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Effects of season of egg laying and glut

Table 3 shows egg producers and the season they experience increased egg production. 80 percent of the producers reported that their birds perform well during the rainy season. 10% indicated that their birds perform well during early dry season. While, 10% attributed performance to good poultry feeding. Majority of the egg producers therefore consider the rainy season as the most favorable period for egg laying. This is due to high feed intake, which invariably results in increased egg production. They again admitted that this period is their glut period as the highest egg yields is experienced. They attributed the glut to a slight fall in demand for eggs particularly the period June to August where herrings,
All of the poultry producers commented that capital and feeding were their major problems or challenges in the poultry industry. This is evident in the ranking in Table 4. From the above, it could be observed that diseases, weather conditions and availability of water were of an intermediate problem to the farmers. Whilst land and labor were considered the least of problems or challenges to them. It was largely observed that inadequate capital and feed tend to hinder the expansion and full capacity utilization for both meat and eggs production in study area.

Table 5 shows how the poultry farmers obtain money to finance their daily poultry activities ventures. 80% of the poultry producers finance their enterprise with their personal capital. 20% finance their ventures by obtaining family and friends support. None of the farmers admitted being financed by the banks or any sort of microfinance institution. This they attributed to inadequate collateral assets on their part and high interest rates between 30-45% charged by commercial banks and private microfinance institutions like SENAPIBA which they consider unfavorable. And also, the farmers bemoaned about the procedures involved in accessing loan, of which they considered very cumbersome. They were however ready to access loans from the banks only if the procedure and conditions of repayments are favorable, they commented. 10% of the farmers interviewed, however, indicated their unwillingness to take up a loan from the commercial banks due to the high interest rates. Indeed, most of the farmers focus participants commented over the cost of feeding and drugs as greater contributory factors hindering the sector’s poultry industry’s performance in the Region. The observation is in line with the saying that, the current rate of interest on bank loans which is high for small scale producers as observed by though, the microeconomic indicators are promising (Karbo and Avomyo, 2006).

Research participants agreed that government should set in to reduce the cost of vaccines to deal with diseases in the poultry sector. Lack of capital was also a major factor as farmers are unable to pay transportation cost of the day-old chicks from Kumasi and even to expand their farming activities production. These above observation findings agree with the sayings of Appiah (1993) that increase in prices of drugs poultry inputs in Ghana is due to removal of government subsidies. The high cost of poultry feed was partly attributed to the market prices of cost inadequate production of maize and soy beans which raises market prices. In contrast, Aning (2006) was of the view that the decline in Ghana’s poultry industry is due to the imports of poultry products and downturn of the Ghanaian economy which affected the availability of feed ingredient and even worsened the situation after the decade.

Diseases

With regards to diseases, Coccidiosis and Gumboro were...
Table 6. Problems associated with feeding of birds.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feeding problems</th>
<th>Egg producers (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Expensive feed</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inadequate feeding</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bad feed formulation</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

of major concern to the poultry farmers in the Municipality as commented by most of the key informants. Newcastle, Fowl Pox were also mentioned by a few farmers interviewed as a threat to their birds. Indeed, 100% of the poultry producers attributed the high incidence of Coccidiosis to poor cultural practices. Participants also commented that genetic inheritance, longevity of cocks and poor hygienic conditions are also known to increase threat to their birds. Farmers participants commented that they seek veterinary services for their birds. This helps them to exercise considerable control over most of the diseases. It was reported that bird flu had not been recorded in the Municipality over the years though some consumers got scared of it; education of the consumers was adopted to do away with the fear of bird flu and bird related diseases.

Feeding

The problem of feeding and the corresponding number of farmers who responded is shown in Table 6. From the table, virtually all the problems associated with feeding of birds were considered a major problem for them. Interestingly, 50% of the respondents considered birds feeding in Wa as very expensive, particularly with fish, soy beans and wheat. Inadequacy in supply to feed birds (30%) and bad feed formulation (20%). Due to the high cost of feed and the difficulty in measuring the right quantities for birds, 80% of producers buy their feeds from the south; only 20% reported that they prepare the feed themselves. Invariably, inadequate feeding definitely results in birds producing small-sized eggs and reduced quantity of eggs. The role of chicken feed in total cost and charges of the poultry industry in Ghana has been researched by Koney (1993) that, feed alone accounts for 60-65% of poultry production cost indicating the potential for local industries to emerge in this sector.

Water

Access to water for birds was considered as an intermediary problem. This is due to the availability of water in the Municipality. It becomes a problem if the farm is located at the outskirt of the study area without immediate capital to construct a borehole for the supply of water. The cost of buying water from water tankers is costly; hence the use of auto mated drinker which makes the work of the laborers simpler.

Weather

Prevailing weather condition in the study area was also another issue observed by research participants to be a hindrance poultry production. Most often, particularly in the dry season, temperatures in the area range between 40°C-43°C that affect poultry productivity as birds cannot thrive well in those high temperatures.

Labor

Availability of labor and land were not considered much as a problem as commented by most of the key informants interviewed. Producers focus group regarded labor as a minor problem because they indicated that there are lots of people without jobs in the study area. Research participants were of the view that getting people to work in the poultry farm is not a heavy task although they do not have the needed technical know-how as far as handling of birds maybe concerned. However, these laborers turn to acquire the skills gradually as they stay on the job.

Land

Land holding was also considered by research participants and farmers focus group, as an issue in study area. This is because land for the poultry industry is restricted by the local authorities; therefore the intention of expanding and creating more farms becomes very difficult. Despite the poor weather conditions in the study area as part of northern Ghana, Poultry farmers interviewed had employed several measures such as planting or leaving already grown trees around the vicinity of poultry farms just to reduce adverse heat.

Meat production and marketing

Researchers’ observation revealed that out of 10 poultry farms visited, only one farm at that time had approximately 1000 broiler birds. Reason for the farmers’ low interest in keeping broiler birds was attributed to low demand for the live birds which are sold at a lower price, according to key informants interviewed for GHc15.00 and that of the old layer for GHc8.00. Farmers focus participants revealed that even though the consumers prefer live birds to others, the price is relatively high compared to the imported chicken parts to the. Participants also attributed to the low demand of live birds to the inadequate restaurants and other food vendors in the
Table 7. Estimated market margins.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value chain actor</th>
<th>Scenario</th>
<th>Market margin (GHC)</th>
<th>Difference</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Farmer (Producers)</td>
<td>Farm gate production cost</td>
<td>15-12</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>15-10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>15-8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retailer (Mobile)</td>
<td>Retailer price-farm gate</td>
<td>20-15</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>20-12</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>20-10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Processor (Khebab)</td>
<td>Retail price-farm gate</td>
<td>25-20</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>25-15</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>25-10</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>10.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

study area. As commented by most of the key informants interviewed, sales of live birds is at peak during special period in the calendar and other festive occasion. Hence production of broilers, according to participants, is timed to meet such occasions.

Most of the poultry consumers interviewed admitted that they prefer the live birds produced in the Municipality even though they are more expensive compared to the prices at other Municipalities such as Bolgatanga and Bawku in the Upper East Region of Ghana. A consumer had this to say:

“We do not prefer the imported poultry to the domestic ones, but the issue is not what we prefer but what we can afford”. “I like to consume the imported poultry products because I am used to it and it is cheaper for me”. “We buy it because of the lower prices, its attractiveness, well packaged and we are assured of regular supply”.

The reason for low production of live birds by local producers has been reported by SEND-Ghana that the source of the drastic decline in the local industry share in the market for poultry is traced to trade liberalization policy which allows for the unlimited importation of highly subsidized poultry products from Europe and elsewhere into the Ghanaian market.

The availability of cheap/subsidized poultry products from the European Union puts local producers at a disadvantage to compete in the Ghanaian market.

The availability of cheap/subsidized imported poultry threatens Ghana’s food security because the food may become unexpectedly unavailable. Therefore, it is important to explore the possibility of expanding the local poultry production, participants explained.

It was observed that almost all of the poultry farms visited operated far below their capacity. This is in line with Obayelu (2006) who related the sales of live birds to imported birds and concluded that poultry farmers in sub-Saharan African produced under capacity.

Marketing integration for efficiency

Research participants revealed from the survey that there was no market integration of the broiler birds. Business with other enterprises, for example selling of drinks makes it more viable. Farmers in the broiler and cockerel birds’ value chain do not have information on the profitability of the industry to other stakeholders in the chain.

Deciding on market margin

Most of the poultry producers interviewed were of the view that they got nothing from the sale of the birds and felt their profit came from only the eggs. This may be partly true for the low input. The data presented in Table 7 support the fact that the gain in the market margin currently favors the producer. However in terms of business turnover, the retailer and the processor are usually better off with the retailer earning per day GHC 7.66 on each bird sold and the processor earning GHC10.00 per day for each bird sold or processed, respectively from several suppliers.

Egg storage, breakage and marketing

Information gathered from the Ministry of Food and Agriculture revealed that most of the retailers store their eggs in well ventilated rooms. The temperature in the room is usually around room temperature, which is determined by the season. Almost all the farmers’ focus group participants (90%) mentioned that, the dry season
In an interaction with the Animal Science Department of the Ministry of Food and Agriculture Wa, it was revealed that government during the year 2007/2008 gave out some vaccines to farmers on subsidies. However, only little consideration was given to the poultry sector within the municipality. He attributed it to inadequate funds from the central government. Again, it was revealed that there is no Veterinary College and Animal Research Institute for caring for birds and training of people in the study area. This was also attributed to lack of funds. According to Alhassan (1994), the funding of agriculture research in Ghana is woefully inadequate. Alhassan (1994, 2001) says that despite the fact that the poultry sector is the most developed and commonest among the domestic animal production industry in the country, there is no policy for revamping the industry on the village chicken and specifically on guinea fowls. Livestock policy until 1965 concentrated on animal disease control. It was in the 1990s under the Medium Term Agricultural Development Plan (MTADP, 1991-2000) that 5% of government budget for Agriculture was earmarked for the poultry industry.

Record keeping

According to the research participants and other secondary data sources, all poultry farmers within the Municipality had at least Secondary School Education; there was no single farm with proper record keeping. For this reason, farms visited during interviews and observation could not tell the exact number of birds that had died at what dates and the probable causes. Most farms visited could not tell the cost difference between the prepared feed and already mixed feed from other sources in Kumasi. Most of the farmers were just of the view that the cost of preparing it was high, hence, they did rather buy the already mixed feed. Indeed proper records would have kept them on track to know which option to take at what time. Visits to the farms revealed that most of the poultry farmers could not tell the average number of eggs laid during the laying period.

Advantages of the poultry industry

Research participants gave different opinions of the advantages of poultry keeping. The most mentioned included the following:

1. Poultry produce manure for increase crop yield which will be used to feed them (farmers).
2. Poultry provides the required protein content as a substitute to red meat.
3. Poultry do not destroy agricultural land through overgrazing as in the case of cattle.
4. Poultry will not go to destroy somebody’s farm.
5. Poultry produce with a short interval, unlike cattle

**Table 8. Problems with egg handling and marketing.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Egg problem</th>
<th>Egg production (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spoilage</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breakage</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low sale</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unable to meet demand</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low egg price</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(February-July) was the period when they experience high egg spoilage. The spoilage was thus attributed to the non-availability of cold store facilities to the egg producers. Against this background, it is necessary that proper storage facilities be provided to preserve eggs which would enhance the table egg industry in the municipality. Apart from these concerns, it was generally admitted by farmers and egg sellers’ participants within the municipality that there is good market for eggs in the study area and that during egg collection, there is cash flow and their pockets are usually attractive.

Majority of the producers interviewed said they are unable to meet demands in the Municipality particularly during the wet seasons. This usually leads to the loss of wholesalers and retailers as indicated in Table 8.

Egg breakages, low sales and low egg price were considered minor problems in the Municipality. Delays in picking eggs as well as poor handling of eggs during transportation, according to participants, were the major factors considered for egg breakages. This is in line with Nuel (1980) who related good quality eggs with proper handling.

All egg producers interviewed indicated that they had no problems with the marketing of their eggs. The only requirement was awareness creation of its availability. Indeed, they admitted demand is usually high with importation from other localities such as Kumasi, Techiman and Sunyani as supplement.

**Sources of day-old chicks**

Information gathered from the Ministry of Food and Agriculture revealed the unavailability of hatchery in the study area hence day-old chicks are usually obtained from Sunyani, Techiman and Kumasi, especially from Asamoah, Yamoh and Akate farms. Almost all the farmers interviewed said the cost of transporting day-old chicks from those sources is high and the risk of losing most of them. Sometimes, the problems even get worsened when the transporting vehicle developed fault.

**Resource allocation and infrastructural development in the poultry industry**

In an interaction with the Animal Science Department of...
which takes longer period to multiply.

It was also noted that commercial poultry production takes place largely in and around the municipality where the markets exist. The municipality is rapidly urbanizing with its population soaring up partly due to migration and high birth rate. As a result of this development, it is expected that poultry meat and egg demand, especially the latter will continue to increase with an increasing rate especially in the near future. Increased peri-urban poultry production has been identified as a means to meeting the anticipated increased demands and also creating wealth (SEND-Ghana, 2008). It is important to note however, that meat (both livestock and poultry) contributes only 40 percent of the national animal protein supply, with the rest coming from fish (FASDEP, 2002). In the light of rapidly depleting fish stocks in Ghana’s territorial waters, and the undeveloped aquaculture industry, there is a great need for expanded poultry production, not only for nutritional security, but also for job creation, especially in the rural areas of the municipality and the country at large.

Major findings

1. Inability on the part of poultry farmers to access credit from financial institutions has led to a difficulty in expanding their farm size. It was revealed that poultry farmers in the municipality depended on personal finances and funds from relatives to finance their farm ventures. None of the farmers interviewed ever went for loan from the banks because of the high interest rates they charge.

2. Women are mostly not involved in poultry farming in the municipality. This is due to the fact that startup capital is often difficult to obtain, unlike other economic and non-risky ventures where loans are often available (for example trading and crop cultivation).

3. Difficulty in obtaining day-old chicks and chicken feed has led to the collapse of many poultry farms in the region in recent past. There has not been any case of bird flu outbreak in the municipality and the region at large.

4. The work piece highlighted lack of commitment from the government. It was clear from the findings that the major concern of the farmers was the lukewarm attitude of government towards the industry. Over the past decade, there has not been any deliberate government policy to revamp the industry. Local farmers are left to openly compete with the heavily subsidized imported chicken products from Europe and elsewhere.

Conclusion

The study had shown that local poultry farmers in the study area face numerous challenges such as inadequate capital, expensive feed, disease infestation, inadequate market for their products (meat and eggs) and bad weather conditions. Poultry farmers rely on the hatcheries from other sources for day-old chicks, since there are no hatcheries in the study area. High rate of egg spoilage and breakages also affect egg sellers particularly during hot seasons and packages for transportation.

The high demand for eggs in the Municipality gives an indication that there are a lot of prospects for both egg producers and sellers; therefore, the need for egg producers to take advantages of vaccination programmes to avoid diseases such as Coccidiosis, Infectious Bursal Disease, Newcastle and Fowl Pox Infestations. Marketing of eggs does not pose any problem except during the dry season when farmers need to adopt measures to help in proper egg storage. Poultry farming in the Wa municipality can therefore be seen as a venture, which meets the goals and aspirations of the government of Ghana in urging many Ghanaians to take up the challenge of establishing their own private businesses. The birds are kept wholly indoors, on deep litter systems. There are often complaints from these operators about the quality of poultry feed and day-old chicks obtained from suppliers. Their operations are very susceptible to price changes in feed ingredients as they are unable to stock large quantities of feed. Despite these challenges, the poultry industry has a lot of prospects for the future and hence adequate measures must be put in place to harness these prospects/potentials of the industry by the farmers themselves and the local authorities. The poultry industry must be given the necessary attentions from the Ministry of Food and Agriculture as it has the potential of reducing protein deficiency within the Municipality and the country at large. Suffice to say that the work piece generally agrees with literature on the prospects and challenges of the poultry industry especially, with the assertion of Karbo and Bruce (2000), that poultry does not only serve as food security item, but also provides ready cash for investment for all age groups. And also on the challenges, confirms the findings of SEND-Ghana (2008), that the source of the drastic decline in the local industry share on the market for poultry is traced to the trade liberalization policy which allows the unlimited importation of highly subsidized poultry products from Europe and elsewhere into the Ghanaian market. In the light of the above development, the research work in general terms, has achieved its overall objective of examining the benefits and challenges that confront the local poultry industry in the Wa municipality.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the research findings the following are recommended to the expansion of the poultry industry in the study area:
1. There is the need to create and expand already existing facilities to train more veterinary technical officers, so as to bring about cost effective ways of boosting the poultry industry.
2. Provision of hatcheries in the study area to take care of the difficulties poultry farmers faced in the acquisition of day-old chicks from other sources.
3. Formation of a poultry farmers association would help address most of the challenges faced by poultry farmers in the study area.
4. There is also the need to increase the budgetary allocation to the agricultural sector and to regulate the importation of animal produce into the country.
5. Maize, soy beans, fish and wheat farmers must be given the necessary attention, since their productivity levels have a direct relation with the poultry industry.
6. Subsidies should be made available for poultry equipment and drugs.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Special thanks and appreciation to students of the University for Development Studies, who helped in data collection and analysis of the research findings. I am most grateful to their invaluable contributions; without them this paper would not have been produced.

REFERENCES

UPCOMING CONFERENCES

4th Asian Conference on Ethics, Religion and Philosophy, Osaka, Japan, 27 Mar 2014

6th International Conference on Computer Supported Education, Barcelona, Spain, 2 Apr 2014
February 2014

International Conference on Behavioral and Educational Psychology, Barcelona, Spain, 27 Feb 2014

International Conference on Education and Educational Technology, Psychology, Barcelona, Spain, 27 Feb 2014

International Conference on Innovation and Management, Barcelona, Spain, 27 Feb 2014

International Conference on Digital Signal Processing, Barcelona, Spain, 27 Feb 2014

International Conference on Education and Psychological Sciences, Barcelona, Spain, 22 Feb 2014

March 2014

International Conference on Social, Education and Sports (ICSES 2014), Tianjin, China

2nd Belgrade International Tourism Conference (BITCO 2014), Belgrade, Serbia

Internations Sutdies Association 55th Annual Convention, Toronto, Canada

Marketing Management Association's 2014 Spring Conference, Chicago, USA

International Conference on Business Tourism and Applied Sciences at The University of London, London, UK