Traditional Institutions and Local Governance: An Empirical Study of the Brikama Area Council of the Gambia

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Abstract
The study assessed how effective traditional institutions have been in local governance in The Gambia. This was with particular reference to the Brikama Area Council. Both primary and secondary data were used for this study. The primary data were collected using questionnaire and interview guide. For this study, local government council members, executive members of the Ward Development Committees (WDCs), the Seyfolu (district heads), and Alkalolu (village heads) were the target respondents. Questionnaire was administered on the local government council members and selected executive members of the WDCs while interviews were conducted with Seyfolu and selected Alkalolu. The data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistical methods.The findings of study revealed that traditional institutions have adequate knowledge about their roles and responsibilities as assigned by the 2002 Local Government Act. Findings also showed that traditional institutions have to an extent been involved in local government administration. Based on the cumulative responses from the local government council members, WDC executive members, Seyfolu, and Alkalolu it could be confirmed that the effectiveness of traditional institutions in local government administration has been limited by a number of challenges. These include the absence of lucid legislative arrangement for their inclusion in the local government administration, absence of legal provisions for inclusion of the institutions in local government and their relationship, their limited capacity to plan and monitor projects, absence of mutual accountability between the institutions and local government, their exclusion from monitoring projects and programmes undertaken by local government, alienation of the institutions from active participation, among others.
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1.0 Introduction

The unique position occupied by the traditional institutions in the local communities predates the colonial era. Local communities were then run through traditional institutions like the Kings (also known as "Mansa" or "Bur") and other traditional leaders at the local levels and whose primary roles included the maintenance of peace within the community, defence against external aggression and performance of religious rites. Others include formulation of policies, setting up of priorities, and generation of revenues to meet the needs of their citizens. Traditional authorities and institutions were instituted, rulers installed, recognized, and obeyed and the entire governance process following norms and principles of the customary law. They provided a system of administration that ensured law and order and a stable system. They were the custodians of their people's norms, culture, and practices as well as the symbols of people's voice and authority in the process of governing. Their priority then was to see that people lived together peacefully and harmoniously in their communities and societies. Traditional leaders were presiding over cases of disputes involving land ownership and distribution, marriage, inheritance, divorce, and administering justice following the principles of customary law. However, traditional rulers and officials drew their legitimacy from the support of the people who expected them to function according to popular will.

In the advent of colonialism, the British administration instituted a system of indirect rule as a convenient strategy to govern their colony through the traditional institutions. Their role as intermediaries between the central government and the local people created by the colonialists continued to be relevant in the local administrative system of the modern Gambia. The 1997 Constitution recognized the traditional institutions as the symbols of traditional laws and customs with the overriding responsibility on matters affecting land ownership and distribution, issues involving family dispute such as marriage, divorce, and inheritance, communal disputes including a broad range of adjudicatory authority except for murder cases (e.g. presiding over District Tribunals or courts).

Administratively, The Gambia is divided into seven administrative regions of which two regions (Kanifing and Banjul) are headed each by a Mayor elected by the adult citizens of the region. The other five regions (West Coast, Lower River, Central River, Upper River, and North Bank) are headed by a Regional Governor each and who is an appointee of the President. There are eight local government areas created from the regions. They are; Banjul City Council (Banjul), Kanifing Municipal Council, Brikama Area Council (West Coast), Mansakonko Area Council (Lower River), Janjanbereh and Kuntaur Area Councils (Both in Central River), Basse Area Council

(Upper River), and Kerewan Area Council (North Bank). The local government areas are headed by a Chairperson except for Banjul City Council and Kanifing Municipal Council headed by a Mayor each and who is elected by universal adult suffrage of all eligible voters resident in the area.

These five regions are further subdivided into 43 districts headed by Chiefs (Seyfolu). The Chiefs (Seyfolu) operate within the existing customary laws and the position is generally hereditary. However, the 1997 Constitution and the 2002 Local Government Act brought about changes to this and allows the President to appoint Chiefs in administrative regions in consultation with the Secretary of State responsible for Local Government. Within the districts are communities or villages which are headed by Alkalolu (village heads) whose appointments are made by Secretary of State responsible for Local Government in consultation with the Divisional Commissioner and District Seyfo or Chairperson of the Kanifing Municipal Council as the case may be and in doing this the Secretary of State shall take into account the traditional lines of inheritance (Part 6 of the 1997 Constitution; Sections 133 and 142 Local Government Act, 2002).

The Alkalolu (Village Heads) and Chiefs/Seyfolu (District Traditional Heads) make up what is known as the District Authority for each District (the Seyfo of the District as Chairperson) and represent the traditional authorities in the governance process. The role of the Seyfolu has been purely traditional and has been in existence since British rule as representatives of the British government in the protectorate. The Seyfolu are also responsible for the promotion of peace and good order in their districts. Given the fact that their roles are traditional, they are also responsible for the promotion and protection of customs and the wellbeing of their people. In addition to that, they play significant roles in resolving conflicts arising from land disputes, marriages, and communities. In 2007, a National Council of Seyfolu (District Heads) was established through the National Assembly. The Council consists of a Paramount Seyfolu as the Chairperson and all the Seyfolu in the country. The Council is responsible for settling disputes affecting Seyfolu in The Gambia; and dealing with matters relating to the administration of justice and social development, cultural and traditional issues. Furthermore, the Local Government Act of 2002 provides that: the Alkalo shall promote good order, peace, and stability in his or her village, promote the general economic development of his or her village, safeguard the customs and traditions of his or her village, and shall perform other tasks assigned by the Council or District authority (Local Government Act, 2002).

The Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) constitutionally divides districts into wards. Each of these wards has a ward development committee (WDC) while each community has a village development committee (VDC). The WDC constitutes representatives from each VDC. Development plans are normally developed by the various VDCs which are passed to the Councilor through the WDC. These are normally the development agenda forwarded to the Council by the Councilor for further discussion and action on prioritized areas. All development activities are discussed at the council.

From the foregoing, it is evident that The Gambia runs a two-tier system; central and local government. Part IV of the 2002 Local Government Act is clear on the powers, functions and responsibilities of the local government. Studies have revealed that the performance of the tier has remained unimpressive. The unimpressive performance has been traced to many factors ranging from the overweening intrusion by the upper tier of government which erodes the autonomy and capacity of the local government, unclear definition of the area of jurisdiction of local governments as different from central government, poor tax revenue drive and mobilization, frequent change of councilors, poor transparency and accountability system, irregular subvention from central government, to its failure to attract population support and participation of the local citizenry via the traditional institutions. Studies have also revealed that the major impediment to better performance of the local government can be traced to the incapability to arouse and sustain popular support and as a result, it has been unable to harness and mobilize local resources for its activities, among others. Further studies have shown that improving local governance does not require any drastic reforms but with a pointer to the need to integrate some of the principles of the traditional structures into the formal structure of local government to arouse sustained popular involvement mobilize sundry resources and execute diverse development projects (Enemuo, 1990; Olowu, Ayo & Akande, 1991). In the view of Enemuo and Tomori (2000), a population may not significantly determine the viability of a local government as it is possible for smaller ones to mobilize more independent resources than local governments with a much larger population and even mobilize human and material resources to build and maintain a wide array of infrastructure and social amenities, which is all about communal commitment achievable by giving recognition to informal values and structures like the traditional institutions. Thus, the state of affairs of the local government in The Gambia prompted us to seek to know the relationship existing between the local government and traditional institutions, how effectively the latter have been involved in local government administration as well as the associated challenges. It is believed that the Gambian state is a colonial legacy that does not give much recognition to traditional values and institutions but rather relying on the system developed and run by the formal state structures. With this, the local government is believed to have been designed such that the traditional and civic society values and institutions are alienated from the Gambian state structures.

With specific reference to the Brikama Area Council of The Gambia, the study therefore intends to answer the following basic research questions:

i.   What are the primary roles and responsibilities of traditional institutions in local government administration in The Gambia?

ii.   To what extent have traditional institutions been involved in local government administration in The Gambia?

iii. Are traditional institutions effectively performing their responsibilities in local government administration?

iv.   What are the challenges facing the effective participation of traditional institutions in local government administration?

2.0 Conceptual Clarifications

2.1 Governance

Governance basically covers all what the governing bodies must pay attention to in the course of operation. It is made up of the political and institutional processes through which decisions are taken and implemented. It involves decisions, negotiations, and different power relations between stakeholders to determine who gets what, when, and how. It also relates to the process of interaction and decision making among the actors involved in a collective problem that lead to the creation, enforcement, or reproduction of social norms and institutions. The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) (1997, 2005) defined governance as the exercise of political, economic, and administrative authority at all levels in the management of the affairs of a country; a basic principle considered as a crucial requirement for onward pursuit of development, especially in developing countries. It is said to be comprising the mechanisms, processes, and institutions, through which citizens and groups articulate their interests, exercise their legal rights, meet their obligations, and mediate their differences".

To Olowu & Erero (1997), governance is all about the rule-ruler-ruled relationship, and in this context identified three dimensions as inclusive of functionalism, structuralism, and normativism. According to them, functionally, governance deals with rule-making, legitimization, and enforcement; structurally governance comprises of the ruler of the state, the ruled or the society and, the rule of law; while normatively, this relationship highlights the values associated with good governance that includes transparency, organizational effectiveness, accountability, predictability, legitimacy, popular participation and the plurality of policy choices, thus governance is seen as the relationship between the state and society institutions.

However, to Fitzgerald, McLennan & Munslow (1997), governance is a process of listening and working with public resources and responding to the needs, aspirations, and the expectation of individual citizens, interest groups, and the society as a whole. It is deduced from the above definition that governance must be a bottom-up decision making and participation process that is undertaken at all levels of the organization, be it governmental or non-governmental.

From the foregoing, governance embraces all methods that societies use to distribute power, manage all the affairs of the people in general and manage resources and problems in particular, it may however be characterized as good or bad (Senghore and Ozor, 2013). In the opinion of Adesopo (2011), in determining whether governance is good or bad, it entails looking at how power is exercised and how vital decisions are taken in the course of governance, particularly, decision-making interaction between public institutions, civil societies, and private sector. The United Nations Development Programme (1997) and some other scholars identified the main principles of good governance as the democratization of economic, socio-cultural, and political spheres of society to make citizens the prime beneficiary of development; accountability and transparency of elected public officials in the disposition of public resources; protection of the fundamental human rights of the people governed by the rule of law; decentralization of power, and participation in decision making at all levels of society; and guaranteed empowerment of the less privileged. Conclusively, Adedeji (1997) asserts that good governance is essential for creating an enabling environment for sustainable development as it builds an effective relationship between people and the government and makes the government respond to popular demands and therefore putting the government in a good position to mobilize the people to participate effectively in the implementation of government programs.

2.2 Local Governance

Governance at the local level plays a crucial role in ensuring the effective provision of public services to the vast rural population. Shah (2006) defined local governance as the concept of formulation and execution of collective action at the local level. According to him, it encompasses the direct and indirect roles of formal institutions of local government structures, as well as the roles of informal norms, networks, community organizations, and neighborhood associations in pursuing collective actions by defining the framework of citizen-citizen and citizen-states interactions, collective decision making, and local public service delivery. Local governance therefore includes the diverse objectives of vibrant, living, working, and environmentally preserved self-governing communities that preserve the life and liberty of residents, creating space for democratic participation and civic dialogue, supporting market-led and environmentally sustainable local development, and facilitate outcomes that enrich the quality of life of the residents. Good governance is particularly important at the local level and

improving local governance is a vital tool to guarantee peace, boost economic development, maximize administrative efficiency, and ensure social inclusion and environmental sustainability.

Crawford (1999), cited in Ndreu (2016), expressed it that local governance happens when people live in a community and have sufficiently close interaction and work together to solve their problems. Local governance, according to him, has two basic elements that distinguish it and they are; management of public services and representation of citizens which were described as distinct element of local government as well as indication of the effectiveness of such a government. Shah (2006) further opined that local governance is based on principles that include public participation, responsiveness, efficiency, and effectiveness, openness and transparency, rule of law, innovation and acceptance of change, competence and capacity, and long term orientation, sound financial management, human right, and cultural diversity, consensus orientation, equity, resource prudence, and ecological soundness and prominent principles of local governance.

2.3 Local Government
Local government is the lowest tier of government which is subordinate to the central government and it is the closest to citizens and the community and is therefore seen as an efficient agent for providing local services. It is the governing body charged with the responsibility of managing public affairs at the local level. It has a statutory mandate or power to perform certain legislative, administrative, and judicial functions to complement the efforts of the Central government in the provision of some assigned services within their areas of authority.

As Ogunna (1996) put it, local government is a political authority, purposely created by the state government under the law by which local communities within a definite area are organized to manage their affairs within the limit of the law under which the authority is created. In the same vein, Fajobi (2010) viewed local government "as a unit of government to maintain law and order based on a range of social amenities and to encourage cooperation and participation of people at the grassroots to improve their living conditions". Also, Shah (2006) defined it as specific institutions or entities created by national constitutions or by executive order to deliver a range of services to a relatively small geographically delineated area. In the words of Alam & Nickson (2006), local government plays an extremely important role as an agent of social change and development, as it represents the interests of a particular locality at the micro-level, leading to a broader concept of welfare and happiness of its people. According to Ezeani (2004), local governments are created to assist the central/federal or state governments in the provision of series of services within their areas of authority. In explaining further, because of its closeness to an area, local government can provide certain services far more effectively and efficiently than the central or federal government.

2.4 Local Government Administration
Local government administration is how public officials decide what to do and get it done. The administration process refers to how public officials translate community needs into community objectives; develop strategies and programs to achieve those objectives with available resources, implement the programs, producing desired results with budgeted resources; and evaluate results, adjusting as necessary. An effective local government administration process consists of three major phases: planning, implementation, and evaluation. These phases are interrelated and overlapping, but each is sufficiently distinct to warrant separate analysis. The whole idea behind local government administration is to satisfy the economic, social and environmental needs within an area and community officially carved out as a local government.

2.5 Traditional Institutions
Traditional institutions are an enduring part of our heritage playing critical roles as the custodian of culture and traditions. Expectedly, traditional institutions are closely linked with the grassroots and so understand the problems of the people intimately and thereby making them to be veritable tools in the search for peace, order, and stability in our society. Traditional institutions refer to institutions or powers that are received and handed down or over from generation to generation and that see to the day-to-day running of communities, especially rural communities where the majority of people live and play significant roles in economic activities involving the use of environmental resources. The essence of the institutions is to preserve the customs and traditions of the people and to manage conflicts arising among or between members of the community by the instrumentality of laws and customs of the people.

These traditional institutions performed these roles even before the advent of the colonial masters. They were known to be distinct in their roles in social integration, cohesion, social solidarity, unity and stability in the society. These are in addition to their roles in ensuring checks and balances to the general administration and governance of the people. On the whole, traditional institutions preserve the customs and traditions of the people in their localities and to make decisions on issues related to the political movement of the people in all societies across the nation. According to Nweke (2012), traditional institutions are the custodians of their people's norms and cultures and they are charged with legislative, executive, and judicial functions in respect of which they make laws, execute them, and interpret and apply fundamental laws, customs, and traditions of the people for the smooth running of

their communities. This is with particular reference to the fact that conflicts are managed and resolved based on the customs and traditions of the people. Kendie & Guri (2004), cited in Edu-Afful (2010), also expressed it that traditional authorities form the leadership structures within the community, and their functional role ensured compliance with rules, norms, and beliefs on the part of the populace. In discussing the duality of authority at the local level, Mukyala-Makiika (1998) also states that they partly comprise those who derive their right to govern from inheritance and tradition and perceive people to be part of a cultural unit with collective rights. They are traditional rulers in the local government system who can mobilize support for local-level development projects and capacity to encourage participation at the grassroots level. However, traditional institutions are known for their roles in managing conflicts arising between or among the public in their various communities using laws and customs of society.

2.6 Theoretical Framework
2.6.1 The Dependency Theory
Dependency Theory emerged in the 1960s and 1970s as a follow-up to the modernization theory in search of the reasons for widespread poverty and poor development in the developing countries (Adesopo, 2020). The two early dependency theorists were Francois Perroux and Kurt Rothschild and followed by scholars like Walden Bello, Enzo Faletto, Herb Ado, Keith Griffin, Paul Israel Singer and some others whose main focus then was in Latin America.

The Dependency Theory generally condemns "dependent development" with the argument that less developed countries (LDCs) will continue to remain economically stagnant if steps are not taken to be independent and reduce their connections to the West as well as the world market economy. It is further argued that the poverty level of the LDCs is not as a result of the disintegration of these countries in the world system but rather because they are integrated into the larger system. Their integration has been designed such that the removal of the influence and control of the developed countries has been made difficult principally because they live on the LDCs (the so called periphery) for their natural resources and cheap human resources to grow economically (Adesopo, 2020). By way of explanation, dependency theory attempts to explain the present underdevelopment state of many nations in the world by examining the patterns of interactions among nations and by arguing that inequality among nations is an intrinsic part of those interactions. The proponents of this theory have argued that the issues that border on the failure of Africa as a continent can only be explained within the context of the bourgeois hangover of colonialism and imperialism. According to Emeh (2013), the underdevelopment of the third world is caused by some common traits that include distorted and highly dependent economies devoted to producing primary products for the developed world and created a ready market for their finished goods; traditional, rural social structures; high population growth; and a widespread of poverty regardless of which, according to Woldu (2000), cited in Emeh (2013), the ruling elites of most third countries are outrageously rich. There is a strong contention by the dependency theorists that Africa has continued to be dominated economically as well as politically by external forces of power which, according to Matunhu (2011), is most noticeable in areas of economic, political, and cultural dependence of the African continent upon America and Europe. In his submission, Rodney (1972) has argued that the political independence of Africa from colonialism did not alter the dependency arrangement rather it deepened it. He said the end of colonialism has not prevented the imperialists from dominating Africa; and Africa is deprived of their political and economical decision-making powers by Europe and lacks sustained investment funds that sink them deeper and deeper into non-development. African traditional institutions in this regard were part of the institutions destroyed by imperialism and colonialism. There is no doubt, therefore, that dependency theory in this respect becomes suitable in explaining that imperialism, colonialism, and neocolonialism led to the destruction of existing traditional institutions in Africa which facilitated the failure of the institutions in executing their traditional responsibilities.

2.6.2 The African Renaissance Theory
The African Renaissance is a social movement formed in pursuance of the issue of injustice, inequality, and sustainability from a collective or communal approach. The major target is how to redeem Africa's past identity and values and to chart a new course to its greatness. This theory complements the dependency theory as it offers explanation of the way out of the problem posed by neocolonialism in Africa as held by dependency theorists. According to Matunhu (2011), African Renaissance theory is about reclaiming the African identity and African values and it also advocates for local solutions, pluralism, community-based solutions, and reliance on local resources. He also asserted that the theory is founded on African values and norms which are the very building blocks of African life. He contended that the model rejects the mainstream growth (modernity) and dependency paradigms because they exacerbate poverty and fail to appeal to the African value system. According to him, removing Africa from the apron of poverty and underdevelopment must be informed and embroiled in the African values. He further argued that "Africans had their way of dealing with crime, deviance, and conflict but in the name of modernizing Africa, they lost their identity and development path". Korten (1990) also contributed to this theory by stating that 'transformation' for the future depends on achieving the transformation of institutions,

technology, values, and behavior consistent with ecological and social realities in Africa.

This study is anchored on both the Dependency theory and the African Renaissance theory as a joint theoretical framework. The two theories explain both the failure in the role of traditional institutions and the need for revitalization and restoration of African values to bring back local or community-based approaches to local administration. Dependency Theory in the context of this study explains the issues surrounding Africa's integration and incorporation into larger/global system and which weakens the traditional institutions of governance in living up to their traditional responsibilities while African renaissance theory highlights the need for Africa to think of local solutions based on the collective communal approach in managing her affairs.

3.0 Methodology
3.1 Area of Study
The area of the study covers the Brikama Area Council located in Brikama Local Government Area. As per the 2013 population census, the Brikama local government area has a total population of 688,744 which constitutes 37.1 percent of the total Gambian population. However, Brikama LGA is divided into nine districts, namely, Foni Bintang-Karenai, which has a total population of 17,119; Foni Bondali, with a population of 7,578; Foni Berefet, with a population of 14,523; Foni Jarrol, with a population of 6,883; Foni Kansala, with a population of 14,125; Kombo Central, with a population of 140,029; Kombo East, with a population of 42,330; Kombo North, with a population of 339,377; and Kombo South, which has a population of 106,780. Each district is headed by a Seyfolu (district head) (GBoS, 2013).

Figure 1: Districts in Brikama Local Government Area
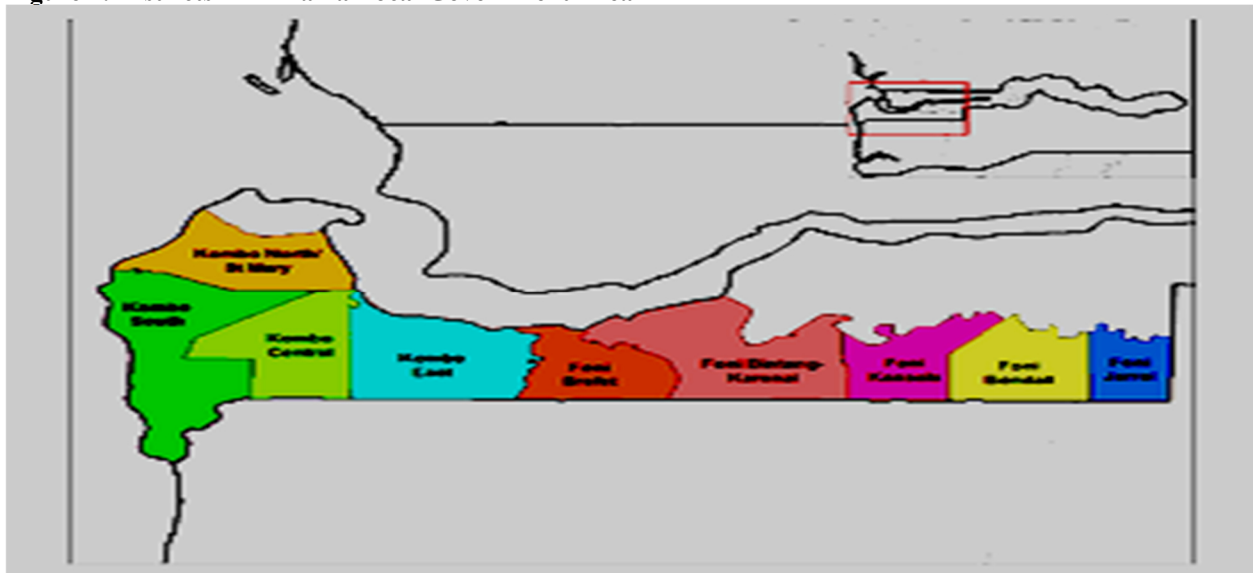
Source: Wikipedia

3.2 Population of the Study
The population of the study consisted of the local government council members, made up of the chairperson and the elected and appointed council (representing the government side) who were 38 in number; 28 Ward Development Committees (WDCs) in Brikama Area Council, which executive members were 224 in number (at 8 executive members each); 9 district heads (Seyfolu) and 260 village heads (Alkalolu). Overall, the total population for the study was 531.

3.3 Sampling Techniques and Sample Size
Different sampling techniques were used for this study for the selection of respondents from the entire population. For instance, the entire local government council members, totaling 38, and the existing 9 district heads (Seyfolu) were sampled for the study. As per the WDCs, there were 224 executive members at eight (8) members in each of the 28 WDCs; the three (3) key positions purposely sampled for the study were the Chairman, Secretary, and Treasurer, making a sample size of 84. They were selected because of the critical nature of their offices which put them in a good position to provide information that would be useful to the study. Lastly, to sample respondents among village heads (Alkalolu), stratified sampling technique was used for the classification of the Alkalolu in Brikama Area Council based on the existing districts and the pattern given is as follows: Kombo North (31), Kombo Central(26), Kombo South(32), Kombo East (32), Foni Berefet (13), Foni Bintang (41), Foni Kansala (42), Foni Bondali (26), and Foni Jarrol(17), totaling 260 villages and Alkalolu. From this total, three (3) villages

/Alkalolu were sampled from each of these districts based on convenience sampling technique, making a total of 27 villages /Alkalolu. The sampled villages were Wellingara, Sinchu- Baliya, Sinchu-Alhaji; Bafuloto, Kassa-Kunda, Kembujeh; Farato, Jambajelly, Nema-Fula- Kunda; Sohm, Pirang Faraba-Kairaba; Somita, Bulock, Besse; Bajagarr, Batabut-Kantora, Sibanor; Bwiam, Sangajor, Kanfenda; Bondali- Jola, Bondali- Tenda, Kanwally; and Kalagi, Jarrol, and Jorrem Bunda Kunda. Overall, the sample size stood at 158 as summarized in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Table showing population distribution and sample size

S/N	Respondents	Population	Sample Size
1	Chairperson and elected and appointed councilors	38	38
2	WDCs (28 in number with 8 executive members each)	224	84
3	District Heads (Seyfolu)	9	9
4	Village Heads (Alkalolu)	260	27
	TOTAL	**531**	**158**

Source: Fieldwork (2020)

3.4 Types and Sources of Data Collection

The data required for the study were collected from both primary and secondary sources. Primary data were collected using questionnaire and interviews. The questionnaire instrument was administered to the local government council members and executive members of the WDCs.

Besides the questionnaire, in-depth interviews were conducted with Seyfolu (district heads) and Alkalolu (village heads) on the issues under study to complement the data generated via questionnaire. In addition to the primary data, the researchers also sourced secondary data from sources like academic journals, online materials, government publications, and some others.

4.0 Data Presentation, Analysis and Discussions

4.1 Socio-Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

The socio-demographic data were the first information gathered on the respondents. This section covers the class of respondents, gender, age, marital status, and the highest level of education of the respondents to provide background information on the composition of the respondents.

4.1.1 Distribution of Respondents by class

In this study, 122 copies of questionnaire were administered out of which 38 copies were administered to council members and 84 copies administered to ward development committee executive members.

The study shows that all the 38 copies of questionnaire administered to the council members were retrieved which represent 40.4% of the total retrieval. Out of the 84 copies of questionnaire administered to the ward development Committee executive members, 56 copies (representing 59.6% of the total retrieval) were retrieved. This translates to the retrieval rate of 77.05%. This is illustrated in table 2 below.

Table 2: Distribution of Respondents by Class

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
COUNCILMEMBERS	38	40.4	40.4	40.4
WDC MEMBERS	56	59.6	59.6	100.0
Total	94	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Work (2020)

This level of response was due to the period the study was carried out. It was the period of lockdown resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic which made questionnaire administration a herculean task because it was not easy meeting the council members and WDC members in the office. The researchers were able to surmount this problem by being persistent and determined to conclude the study within the timeframe.

4.1.2 Distribution of Respondents by Gender

In this study, there was a provision on the questionnaire where information about the gender of the respondents was sought. The information collected on the gender distribution of respondents showed that out of the 38 council members, only 8 (21 percent) are female. In the case of the ward development committee (WDC) members, 15 (25 percent) of the respondents are female while the remaining 42 (75 percent) of the respondents are male. In a nutshell, the total number of female who participated in this study was 23 (24.5 percent) and the total number of male participants was 71 (75.5 percent). The gender disparity is an indication that there are more male council members than female as well as more male WDC members than females in Brikama Area Council. This is presented in table 3.

Table 3: Distribution of respondents by Gender

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Male	71	75.5	75.5	75.5
Female	23	24.5	24.5	100.0
Total	94	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Work (2020)

4.1.3 Distribution of Respondents by Age

The analysis of data on the age revealed that 8 respondents, (representing 8.5 percent) were in the age range 15-30 years, and 79 (respondents representing 84 percent) were in the age range 31-55. Respondents in the age range 56-70 were 7.4 percent, while there was no respondent at the age range of 70 and above. It is noted that the majority of the respondents were within the age range of 31-55 which is an indication that most of the Brikama Area Council members and their Ward Development Committee executive members are in their youthful age. These are presented in table 4.

Table 4: Distribution of Respondents by Age

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
15-30	8	8.5	8.5	8.5
31-55	79	84.0	84.0	92.6
56-70	7	7.4	7.4	100.0
Total	94	100.0	100.0	

Source: Fieldwork (2020)

4.1.4 Distribution of Respondents by Marital Status

Table 5 below shows the data collected on the marital status of participants in this study and it reveals that 77 respondents (81.9 percent) are married, 12 and 2 are single and divorced, representing 12.8 percent and 2.1 percent respectively. The remaining 3 (3.2 percent) are widows/widowers. This is an indication that most of the Brikama Area Council members and their Ward Development Committee executive members are in matrimonial relationships.

Table 5: Distribution of Respondents by Marital Status

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Single	12	12.8	12.8	12.8
Married	77	81.9	81.9	94.7
Divorced	2	2.1	2.1	96.8
Widow/Widower	3	3.2	3.2	100.0
Total	94	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Work (2020)

4.1.5 Distribution of Respondents by Level of Education

The analysis showed that most of the respondents had formal education and their highest level of education varies widely. Specifically, 48 respondents (51.1 percent) attained HND/Diploma, 16 respondents (17.0 percent) attained BSc/BA, and 1 respondent (1.1 percent) attained MSc/MA. None of the respondents attained a Ph.D. while 29 respondents (30.9 percent) attained other levels of education. The others include WASSCE, GCE, and secondary fourth. These are presented in the table 6.

Table 6: Distribution of Respondents by Level of Education

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative %
HND/Diploma	48	51.1	51.1	51.1
BSc/BA	16	17.0	17.0	68.1
MSc/MA	1	1.1	1.1	69.1
Others (Specify)	29	30.9	30.9	100.0
Total	94	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Work (2020)

4.2 Data Presentation on Research Issues and Discussions

4.2.1 Identifying the primary roles and responsibilities of traditional institutions in local government administration in the Gambia?

The 2002 Local Government Act of the Republic of The Gambia granted some specific roles and functions to the traditional institutions represented by the District Authority that is made up of the   District Seyfo (as Chairman) and the Alkalo. According to section 137 of the Act, it is the Seyfo's roles and responsibilities to:

(a)   promote good order and stability in his or her District;
(b)   preside over the District Tribunal and hear and determine matters over which they have   jurisdiction according to law;
(c)   promote the general well-being of the District;
(d)   safeguard the traditions, customs, and culture of the District and promote the well-being of its people;
(e)   keep a register of every village in the District; and
(f)   perform such other duties as may be assigned to him or her by the Council or the Commissioner.
Section 139 of the Act states that the District Authority shall continue to have assigned powers and be responsible for:
(a)   preventing or suppressing of riots or affrays, and the maintenance of the peace, whether by the employment of necessary force or any other means reasonable and fitting in such circumstances as may arise;
(b)   preventing and detecting crime, the arrest and detention of offenders, and all other   such duties as are usually performed by a civil Police Force;
(c)   assisting the Council in collecting revenue;
(d)   enforcing all statutes and bye-laws, regulations and the lawful policies of a Council within the District;
(e)   protecting the environment and taking preventive measures against bush fires;
(f)   promoting culture and other social activities; and
(g)   performing such other functions as may be assigned to it by the Council.
The Seyfo acting alone may exercise any of the powers of the District Authority to ensure implementation of government policies and programmes within the district.
In the same vein, section 146 of the Act also granted powers to the Alkalo to:
(a)   promote good order, peace, and stability in his or her village;
(b)   promote the general economic development of his or her village;
(c)   safeguard the traditions, customs, and culture of his or her village and promote the well being of its people;
(d) carry out such functions and powers as may be assigned to it by the Council or District Authority;
(e)   exercise all powers vested in village Headmen by any other law;
(f)   enforce all laws of the National Assembly;
(g)   enforce all regulations and By-laws of the Council;
(h)   promote environmental health and sanitation;
(i)   protect and preserve the environment of his or her village; and
(j) promote sports, culture, and other social activities. (Local Government Act, 2002).
The interviews conducted with the Seyfolu and 27 Alkalolu revealed that they all had enough knowledge of what their roles and responsibilities are.

4.2.2 Extent to which traditional institutions have been involved in local government administration in Brikama Area Council

Table 7 below shows the respondents' views on the extent traditional institutions have been involved in local government administration in The Gambia.

A total of 45 respondents (48%) responded that traditional institutions are to a large extent and an extent active participants in the decision-making process of the Council. The respondents that were of the view that traditional institutions are to no extent and never active participants in the decision-making process of the council were 40 (43%) while the remaining 9 (9%) were indifferent. This was evident as most of the traditional leaders interviewed asserted that they are not being involved in any activity of the council and also that they have a representative in the council who never gave them any feedback from the council, therefore they are not involved. A related study conducted by Munkaila & Agbley (2018), found out that traditional leaders are marginalized in the local level development in the Tamale Metropolis of the republic of Ghana and they have not been effectively involved in the local government system, except during local elections.

The responses on the extent to which traditional institutions are consulted concerning social service delivery in promoting the well-being of the people indicated 46 (49%) responded that they were consulted to an extent and large extent while 41 (43%) were of the view that they were to no extent and never consulted. The remaining 7 (7%) were indifferent. The interviewees also affirmed that officials have not attached importance to visiting and engaging communities in their development plans as well as social service delivery decisions. In other words, community needs are determined by the official structures of the local government. Some of the traditional rulers even expressed it that they are only involved when land spaces are needed for projects.

In response to the extent to which traditional institutions are involved in the mobilization and collection of revenue for the local government, the majority (83) of the respondents (89%) expressed it that they were to an extent and large extent involved, 4 (4%) were of the view that they are to no extent and never involved while the remaining 7(7%) were indifferent. In the same vein, all the Alkalolu who were interviewed attested to that. They said this is the area they are mostly involved in the affairs of the council. In helping the local government mobilize and collect revenue, they always remind their communities to pay their compound rates and also direct them to the

place where they can make the payment since the Brikama Area Council has created offices in most districts to ease mobilization and collection of revenue. In addition to this, some of the Alkalolu do help by accepting payments from compound heads for the Council for onward transmission to the Council officials in charge of their district and who in turn issue receipts for distribution to the individuals afterwards.

In response to the extent to which tradition institutions have a free hand to enforce the statutes, by-laws, regulations, and the lawful policies of the council within their jurisdiction, 27 respondents (29%) responded that they have to a large extent and an extent, 34 (35%) responded that they have to no extent and never, while 33 (35 %) were indifferent. This shows that traditional institutions do not have free hand to involve in the enforcement.

The findings on the extent to which traditional institutions are active in protecting and promoting environmental health and sanitation, 42 respondents (44.7%) affirmed that they are active to a large extent and an extent, 26 respondents (27.7%) said to no extent and never, while the remaining 26 respondents (27.7%) were indifferent. In this regard, some of the Alkalolu affirmed that they do organise cleaning exercises through their village development committees to make sure that environmental health and sanitation are promoted and enforced for the good health and safety of the residents.

The majority (68) of the respondents (72%) expressed it that traditional institutions were to a large extent and an extent active in preventing and detecting crime and related assignments as performed by a civil police force. On the same issue, 12 respondents (13%) responded that they were to no extent and never active, while the remaining 14 respondents (15%) were indifferent. Almost all the traditional leaders who participated in this study mentioned this as one of their roles and responsibilities as enshrined in the 2002 Local Government Act. They were further asked how they have been performing this role and the response was that at the village level, any aggrieved person would lay his or her complaint to the Alkalo (village head) and who later engages his Council of Elders to investigate the matter. The two parties involved are later invited for settlement. If the parties involved do not come to a compromise, such a case is referred to the District Head (Chief) who also engages his Council of Elders, who are in most cases Clan (Kabilo) heads. The parties involved are again engaged in a dialogue and if the conflict is settled it ends there but the case is then transferred to the Tribunal Court if it cannot be resolved. The judgment of the Chief is the final stage. In a related study conducted by Edu-Afful (2010), it was concluded that traditional authorities play several roles at the local level which include settling disputes and managing conflicts and that they are still relevant in local government administration in the Kemenda Traditional Area of Ghana.

The information gathered on the extent to which traditional institutions are active in safeguarding and promoting traditions, customs, culture, and other social activities like sports, the majority (79) of the respondents (84%) affirmed it was to a large extent and an extent, 8 respondents (9%) said they were to no extent and never active, while the remaining 7 (7%) were indifferent to the statement. The interviewees also confirmed this position.

The findings about the extent to which traditional institutions are active in promoting the general economic development of the area, 43 of the respondents (45.7%) were of the view that they were to a large extent and an extent active, 25 of the respondents (26.6%) viewed that they are to no extent and never active, while the remaining 26 respondents (26.6%) were indifferent. Also, the responses from the interview conducted showed that some traditional leaders are active in the economic development of their people. This can be seen, for instance, in their roles in lobbying for agricultural inputs from donor projects to help boost the yield of the agricultural produce of the people in their areas.

The findings revealed that 85 respondents (90%) affirmed that traditional institutions are actively involved in promoting good order, peace, and stability in the area, 7 respondents (8%) viewed that they are to no extent and never active, while 2 respondents (2%) were indifferent to the assertion.

To complement this, the traditional leaders interviewed were able to affirm unequivocally that they were active in this respect.

To further elicit information on the level of involvement of traditional institutions in natural resource management, 52 respondents (55%) responded that they are to a large extent and an extent involved, 27 respondents (29%) were indifferent and the remaining 15 respondents were of the view that they are to no extent and never involved. Some of the traditional leaders interviewed also confirmed being active in the management of natural resources in their areas. This was evident in the Faraba Banta sand mining conflict where three people lost their lives lately. As the current Alkalo interviewed put it,

"The former Alkalo was removed because the Commission of Enquiry set up
to investigate the case recommended for the Alkalo to be changed".

On the question of how traditional institutions are involved in land acquisition for development projects, majority (84) of the respondents (89%) affirmed that they were to a large extent and an extent involved, only 2 respondents (2%) attested that they are to no extent and never involved, while the remaining 8 respondents (9%) remained indifferent. This was confirmed by the Alkalolu interviewed that land acquisition for development projects cannot be possible without their involvement. In a related study conducted by Munkaila & Agbley (2018), it was revealed that the rights and duties connected to land allocation are among the traditional functions of the traditional authorities within the Tamale Metropolis of Ghana.

In response to the traditional institutions' level of involvement in budget preparation and implementation at the local government level, especially concerning social service provision and community development projects, the majority (63) of the respondents (67%) were of the view that they were to no extent and never involved, 23 (24.5%) responded that they were to a large extent and an extent while the remaining 8 (8.5%) were indifferent. The traditional leaders interviewed confirmed that they are hardly involved and it was added that they have one representative on the Council who hardly gives them information from the Council.

However, 76 of the respondents (81%) believed that traditional institutions are to a large extent and an extent active in protecting and preserving the environment especially taking preventive measures against bush burning, 8 respondents (8.5%) are of the view that they are to no extent and never active, while 10 respondents (10.6%) were indifferent.

With regards to traditional institutions being active in safeguarding public facilities provided by the government for the wellbeing of the residents, 73 (77.7%) responded that they are to a large extent and an extent active, 7 respondents (7.5%) also responded that they are to no extent and never active, while 14 respondents (14.9%) were indifferent. This was also confirmed by some of the traditional leaders interviewed as one of their responsibilities assigned to them by the 2002 Local Government Act. It was expressed that there is nothing extraordinary in this responsibility as the facilities are provided for the residents to have a good living.

Finally, the overall mean score by respondents on the intervening variables indicated that 59 (62%) were of the view that traditional institutions have to a large extent and an extent been involved in local government administration in The Gambia while 21 (23%) viewed that they have to no extent and never been involved. These are presented in table 7 below.

Table 7: Respondents' views on the extent traditional institutions have been involved in local government administration in Brikama Area Council.										
Description	**Large Extent**		**An Extent**		**Indifferent**		**To no Extent**		**Never**	
	freq	%	freq	%	freq	%	freq	%	Freq	%
Traditional Institutions are active participants in the decision-making processes of the council.	10	10.6	35	37.2	9	9.6	24	26.5	16	17
Traditional Institutions are consulted concerning social service delivery in promoting the well-being of the people.	18	19.1	28	29.8	7	7.4	34	36.2	7	7.4
Traditional Institutions are involved in the mobilization and collection of revenue for the local government.	23	24.5	60	63.8	7	7.4	2	2.1	2	2.1
Tradition Institutions have a free hand to enforce the statutes, by-laws, regulations, and the lawful policies of the council within their jurisdiction.	8	8.5	19	20.2	33	35	22	23.4	12	12.8
Traditional Institutions are active in protecting and promoting environmental health and sanitation.	12	12.8	30	31.9	26	27.7	23	24.5	3	3.2
Traditional Institutions are active in preventing and detecting crime and related assignments as are performed by a civil police force.	25	26.6	43	45.7	14	14.9	10	10.6	2	2.1
Traditional Institutions are active in safeguarding and promoting traditions, customs, culture, and other social activities like sports.	41	43.6	38	40.4	7	7.4	3	3.2	5	5.3
Traditional Institutions are active in promoting the general economic development of the area.	11	11.7	32	34	26	27.7	23	24.5	2	2.1
Traditional Institutions are actively involved in promoting good order, peace, and stability in the area.	58	61.7	27	28.7	2	2.1	1	1.1	6	6.4

Table 7: Respondents' views on the extent traditional institutions have been involved in local government administration in Brikama Area Council.

Description	Large Extent		An Extent		Indifferent		To no Extent		Never	
	freq	%	freq	%	freq	%	freq	%	Freq	%
Traditional Institutions are involved in natural resource management.	18	19.1	34	36.2	27	28.7	13	13.8	2	2.1
Traditional Institutions are involved in land acquisition for development projects.	28	29.8	56	59.6	8	8.5	2	2.1		
Traditional Institutions are actively involved in Budget Preparation and Implementation at the local government level, especially for social service provision and community development projects.	9	9.6	14	14.9	8	8.5	34	36.2	29	30.9
Traditional Institutions are active in protecting and preserving the environment especially taking preventive measures against bush burning.	20	21.3	56	59.6	10	10.6	5	5.3	3	3.2
Traditional Institutions are active in safeguarding public facilities provided by the government for the wellbeing of the residents.	15	16	58	61.7	14	14.9	4	4.3	3	3.2
Mean Score	21	22	38	40	15	15	14.	15	7	8

Source: Field Work (2020)

4.2.3: The effectiveness of traditional institutions in local government administration in the study area

The analysis of the data collected through questionnaire showed that 48 respondents (51%) were of the view that traditional institutions were very effective and effective in the organization of communal financial resources for the local government, 26 respondents (28%) said they were defective and very defective, while the remaining 20 respondents (21%) were undecided and therefore could not comment.

A total of 46 respondents (49%) expressed it that traditional institutions are defective and very defective in their contribution towards effective and efficient basic social service delivery to the communities, 37 respondents (39%) believed that they were effective and very effective, while the rest (11) of the respondents (12%) were unable to decide on the above subject.

The study revealed that majority (81) of the respondents (86%) believed that traditional institutions are effective and very effective in facilitating access to land for local government to undertake developmental projects and programmes, only 3 respondents (3%) believed they were defective and very defective and the remaining 10 respondents (11%) were undecided. This was confirmed during the interviews as the Alkalolu attested to the fact that they are very effective in facilitating access to land for local government to undertake developmental projects and programmes.

The data gathered on the effectiveness of traditional institutions working closely with local government to harness the potentials for revenue mobilization and collection showed, 61 respondents (65%) concurred that they were effective and very effective, 19(20%) confirmed they were defective and very defective, and the remaining 14 (15%) were undecided. Anyway, some of the Alkalolu interviewed complained that they do not know the number of compounds and facilities in their villages that are paying rates or taxes to the council and by extension don't know what accrues from the villagers to the Council yearly.

Again, on traditional institutions' roles as mediators and arbitrators in dispute resolution and crime management so they don't escalate into (ethnic) conflict, majority (83) of the respondents (88%) were of the view that they were effective and very effective, only 2 respondents (2%) said they were defective and very defective and the remaining 9 (10%) were undecided.

The study further revealed that 83 respondents (88%) responded that traditional institutions' were effective and very effective in the sustenance of customs and culture, 5 respondents (5%) said they were defective and very defective, while 6 (6%) were undecided. This was also affirmed by the traditional leaders interviewed without mincing words.

The information gathered from respondents on the effectiveness of traditional institutions in giving inputs in the planning of developmental projects through the Village Development Committees (VDCs) indicated that 60

respondents (64%) viewed that they were effective and very effective, 25 respondents (27%) expressed it that they were defective and very defective while the remaining 9 respondents (10%) were not able to decide on the statement. Although not all the villages have an active VDC but most of them have strong and active ones. Most of the Alkalolu interviewed by the researcher said they have been very active in the affairs of their VDCs.

In response to the effectiveness of traditional institutions role in ensuring effective use of resources at the local government level, 41 respondents (44%) were of the view that they have been defective and very defective, 22 respondents (23%) viewed that they have been effective and very effective, and the remaining 31 respondents, who represent 33%, were undecided on the matter. This cannot be unconnected with the fact that traditional rulers are not consulted at budget formulation and planning stages and therefore not able to ensure effective use of local government resources. This was also expressed by some traditional rulers during the interview.

Regarding traditional institutions working with local government structure to ensure sustainable peace and order for a stable democracy, 56 respondents (60%) were of the view that they were effective and very effective, 19 respondents (20%) viewed that they were defective and very defective and 19 respondents (20%) could not decide with regards to the above statement. The findings from the interview conducted substantiated the opinion of the respondents. The traditional leaders interviewed said that since the maintenance of peace and order is one of their core responsibilities, they always advise their communities to make sure peace and tranquility prevail in all their activities.

The majority (51) of the respondents (54%) believed that traditional institutions were defective and very defective in advising the political class at the local government level in different areas such as economic policy, security, equal distribution of social service, custom, and culture, etc, 26 respondents (28%) also believed that they were effective and very effective, while the remaining 17(18%) were undecided. Most of the traditional leaders interviewed said that they are not mostly allowed to offer advice since they are represented by only one person on the Council who hardly give them feedback and no opportunity for interference especially in the nomination process for elective positions.

Again, 55 respondents (59%) asserted that traditional institutions were defective and very defective in using social authorities to accomplish firm democracy, especially in nominating people for elective positions, 29 respondents (31%) opined that they were effective and very effective and the remaining 10 (11%) were undecided.

The findings from the study revealed that 34 respondents (36%) were of viewed that traditional institutions were effective and very effective in the management of natural resources, 28 respondents (30%) viewed that they were defective and very defective, while 32 respondents (34%) could not decide on the level of traditional institutions effectiveness on the management of the natural resource.

Also, the majority (50) of the respondents (53%) affirmed that traditional institutions were defective and very defective in their powers to arrest without warrant any person believed to have committed an offense against the provision of local government Act or Order, Bye-laws or regulations made under it. A total of 16 of the respondents (17%) were of the view that they were effective and very effective while the remaining 28 respondents (30%) were undecided. Most of the Seyfolu interviewed affirmed that they always engage the Council of Elders first and the offender is tried in the District Tribunal if need be and whatever judgment is handed done is effectively carried out.

The findings from the study further revealed that 40 respondents (43%) believed that traditional institutions' roles in community planning were defective and very defective, 39 respondents (42%) were with the view that they were effective and very effective and 15 respondents (16%) were undecided on the issue.

However, 32 respondents (34%) were with the view that traditional institutions' roles in protecting and promoting environmental health and sanitation were effective and very effective, 26 respondents (28%) believed that they were defective and very defective and 36 respondents (38%) remained undecided.

Finally, the overall mean score of the intervening variables indicated 47 respondents (50%) were of the view that traditional institutions were effective and very effective in local government administration in the study area and 31 respondents (33%) believed that traditional institutions were defective and very defective in local government administration in the area of study. These are presented in table 8.

Table 8: Respondents' views on the intervening variables on the effectiveness of traditional institutions in local government administration in the study area

Description	Very Effective		Effective		Undecided		Defective		Very Defective	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Organization of communal financial resources for the local government.	9	9.6	39	41.5	20	21.3	22	23.4	4	4.3
Traditional institutions' contribution toward an effective and efficient delivery of basic social services for the communities.	14	14.9	23	24.5	11	11.7	43	45.7	3	3.2
Facilitating access to land for the local government to undertake developmental projects and programmes.	25	26.5	56	59.6	10	10.6	2	2.1	1	1.1
Working closely with local government to harness the area's potentials for revenue mobilization and collection.	6	6.4	55	58.5	14	14.9	15	16	4	4.3
Roles as mediators and arbitrators in dispute resolution and crime management so that they don't escalate into (ethnic) conflict.	45	47.9	38	40.4	9	9.6	-	-	2	2.1
Traditional institutions' roles in the sustenance of customs and culture.	57	60.6	26	27.7	6	6.4	5	5.3	-	-
Traditional institutional giving inputs in the planning of developmental projects through the village development committees (VDCs)	11	11.7	49	52.1	9	9.6	19	20.2	6	6.4
Traditional institutions' role in ensuring effective use of resources at the local government level	2	2.1	20	21.3	31	33	32	34	9	9.6
Working with the local government structure to ensure sustainable peace and order for a stable democracy.	19	20.2	37	39.4	19	20.2	17	18.1	2	2.1
Advising the political class at the Local Government level in different areas such as economic policy, security, equal distribution of social services, custom and culture, etc.	14	14.9	12	12.8	17	18.1	40	42.6	11	11.7
Using social authorities to accomplish firm democracy, especially in nominating people for elective positions.	2	2.1	27	28.7	10	10.6	38	40.4	17	18.1
Management of natural resources	4	4.3	30	31.9	32	34	26	27.7	2	2.1
Traditional institutions' power to arrest without warrant any person believed to have committed an offense against the provisions of Local Government Act or Order, Bye-laws or regulations made under it.	1	1.1	15	16	28	29.8	29	30.9	21	22.3
Traditional institutions' roles in community planning	8	8.5	31	33	15	16	39	41.5	1	1.1
Traditional institutions' roles in protecting and promoting environmental health and sanitation	8	8.5	24	25.5	36	38.3	25	26.6	1	1.1
Mean Score	**15**	**16**	**32**	**34**	**18**	**17**	**25**	**27**	**6**	**6**

Source: Field Work 2020

4.2.4: The challenges facing the effective participation of traditional institutions in local government administration in the study area.

The findings on the absence of lucid legislative arrangements for traditional institutions' inclusion in the local government administration except for consultation showed that 78 of the respondents (83%) agreed and strongly agreed that it was a challenge while 10 respondents (11%) disagreed and strongly disagreed to the statement. The remaining 6 (6%) were undecided as to whether the absence of lucid legislative arrangement for traditional institutions' inclusion in the local government administration except for consultation was a challenge. On the

absence of legal provisions for inclusion of traditional institutions in LG administration and their relationship, 76 of the respondents (81%) agreed and strongly agreed to the statement while 13 (14%) disagreed and strongly disagreed. The remaining 5 (5%) were undecided.

The data gathered on whether the limited capacity of traditional institutions to plan and monitor projects as a challenge showed that the majority (59) of the respondents (63%) agreed and strongly agreed while 15 (16%) disagreed and strongly disagreed. The remaining 20 respondents (21%) could not agree or disagree with the statement that traditional institutions have limited capacity to plan and monitor projects. Although, the researcher found out that most of the traditional leaders, especially Seyfolu have gone through formal education, and worked in different institutions, capacity to plan and monitor projects can only be done physically and meanwhile this role requires some technicalities that may entail capacity building for traditional leaders to be able to do this effectively.

Again, findings on whether the absence of mutual accountability between traditional institutions and local government is a challenge showed that 74 (78.7%) of the respondents agreed and strongly agreed, 10 (10.6%) respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed while the remaining respondents (10.6%) were undecided. This is evident as some of the Alkalolu complained that they do not preview the number of compounds and facilities that pay their yearly dues to the council. Apart from this, there is no legal framework that can allow the citizens, through their representative to enforce accountability

The data collected on whether the partnership between traditional institutions and local government structure is being affected by the chieftaincy crisis indicated 36 respondents (38%) agreed and strongly agreed while 28 (30%) disagreed and strongly disagreed with the statement and the remaining 30 respondents (32%) were undecided.

 The study revealed that the majority (79) (84%) of the respondents agreed and strongly agreed while 11 respondents (12%) disagreed and strongly disagreed that traditional institutions are excluded from monitoring projects and programmes undertaken by the local government. The remaining 4 respondents (4%) decided not to comment on the issue.

The study further revealed that the majority (70) of the respondents (74%) agreed and strongly agreed while 13 respondents (14%) disagreed and strongly disagreed that traditional institutions are being alienated from active involvement. The remaining 11 respondents (12%) could not decide. The interviewees confirmed this situation but they could not explain why the situation persists. It is their belief that the traditional institutions are supposed to be the intermediary between the formal structure of the local government and the grassroots for better administration.

The majority (66) of the respondents (70%) agreed and strongly agreed that traditional institutions are not structured into the governing process as key stakeholders in ways that will allow political officeholders to benefit from the traditional experience of the chiefs. A total of 17 (18%) respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed while 11 (12%) respondents were undecided. During this study, the researchers visited the Council and witnessed three consecutive Council meetings and it was observed that the representatives of the traditional institutions were not present. The implication of this is that the traditional institutions can not be said to be key stakeholders in local government administration. On whether the struggle for headship among traditional leaders was a challenge, a total number of 44 respondents (47%) agreed and strongly agreed, 26 (28%) disagreed and strongly disagreed and 24 (26%) were undecided.

However, the study further revealed that 78 respondents (83%) agreed and strongly agreed that politicization of the institutions by corrupt politicians is also a challenge facing effective participation of traditional institutions in local government administration, 7 of them (8 %) disagreed and strongly disagreed with the statement and 9 (10%) were not able to decide.

Besides, the majority (82) of the respondents (87%) agreed and strongly agreed that political interference, especially the domineering influence of central government in the appointment of chiefs which limits the freedom of the chiefs and the institutions is a challenge facing effective participation, 7 respondents (8%) disagreed and strongly disagreed to the subject matter while 5 (5%) could not comment on the statement, therefore were undecided.

Finally, the overall mean score of the intervening variables indicated the majority (68) of the respondents (71.7%) agreed and strongly agreed that challenges are facing effective participation of traditional institutions in local government administration in the Brikama Area Council while 14 (15%) disagreed and strongly disagreed to the statement. The remaining 12 (13%) were undecided. This shows that there were challenges hindering the effective participation of traditional institutions in local government administration in The Gambia. These are presented in table 9.

Table 9: Respondents' views on the challenges facing the effective participation of traditional institutions in local government administration in the study area.

Description	Strongly Agree		Agree		Undecided		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Absence of lucid legislative arrangements for traditional institutions' inclusion in the Local Government administration except for consultation	48	51.1	30	31.9	6	6.4	5	5.3	5	5.3
Absence of legal provisions for the inclusion of traditional institutions in LG administration and their relationship.	41	43.6	35	37.2	5	5.3	9	9.6	4	4.3
The limited capacity of traditional institutions to plan and monitor projects	17	18.1	42	44.7	20	21	9	9.6	6	6.4
Absence of mutual accountability between traditional institutions and local government.	42	44.7	32	34	10	11	7	7.4	3	3.2
The partnership between traditional institutions and local government structure being affected by the chieftaincy crisis.	12	12.8	24	25.5	30	32	20	21	8	8.5
Exclusive of traditional institutions from monitoring projects and programmes undertaken by local government	30	31.9	49	52.1	4	4.3	7	7.4	4	4.3
Alienation of traditional institutions from active involvement	27	28.7	43	45.7	11	12	11	12	2	2.1
They are not structured into the governing process as key stakeholders in ways that will allow political officeholders to benefit from the traditional experience of the chiefs	32	34	34	36.2	11	12	14	15	3	3.2
Struggle for headship among traditional leaders	23	24.5	21	22.3	24	26	20	21	6	6.4
The politicization of the institutions by corrupt politicians	47	50	31	33	9	9.6	6	6.4	1	1.1
Political interference, especially the domineering influence of central government in the appointment of the chiefs which limits the freedom of the chiefs and the institutions.	64	68.1	18	19.1	5	5.3	4	4.3	3	3.2
Mean Score	**34.82**	**37**	**32.6**	**34.7**	**12.27**	**13.1**	**10.2**	**10.8**	**4.09**	**4.364**

Source: Field Work 2020

5.0 Summary and Concluding Remarks

The ultimate objective of the study was to assess how effective traditional institutions have been in local government administration in the Brikama Area Council of The Gambia. The specific objectives of the study were to identify the primary roles and responsibilities of traditional institution in local government administration in The Gambia; determine the extent to which traditional institutions have been involved in local government administration in Brikama Area Council; assess the effectiveness of traditional institutions in local government administration in the study; and investigate the challenges facing the effective participation of traditional institutions in local government administration in the study area.

The findings revealed that traditional leaders (Seyfolu and Alkalolu) are very much familiar with the roles and responsibilities assigned to them in the 2002 Local Government Act. The findings also clearly showed that traditional institutions are to an extent involved in local government administration and by extension have been effective in local government administration in the Brikama Area Council, as the majority of the respondents (62% on the average) were of the view that traditional institutions are to an extent and large extent involved in local government administration and only 50% of them believed that traditional institutions are averagely effective and very effective in local government administration. This also indicated that there is a significant relationship between traditional institutions' involvement and their effectiveness in local government administration. Although some of the Seyfolu and Alkalolu interviewed had a counter opinion by arguing that they are not involved in major decisions where experience would have been brought to bear. Finally, findings showed a number of challenges facing the effective participation of traditional institutions in local government administration. These challenges include the absence of lucid legislative arrangements for traditional institutions inclusion in the local government administration, absence of legal provisions for inclusion of traditional institutions in local government administration and their relationship, limited capacity of traditional institutions to plan and monitor projects, absence of mutual accountability between traditional institutions and local government, exclusion of traditional institutions from monitoring projects and programmes undertaken by local government, alienation of traditional institutions from active involvement, not structuring traditional institutions into the governing process as key stakeholders, politicisation of traditional institutions by corrupt politicians, and political interference of central government in the appointment of chiefs which limits the freedom of chiefs and the institutions, among others.

Based on the findings of the study, a number of recommendations are offered. First, policymakers should provide lucid legislative arrangements for the inclusion of traditional institutions in the local government administration of The Gambia. Also, there should be legal provisions for inclusion of traditional institutions in local government administration and their relationship. This will help the traditional institutions and the local government council to know the expected nature and pattern of relationship and collaboration for improved local government administration that will enhance the welfare of the residents of the grassroots.

Next, traditional institutions should be fully involved in all the affairs of the area council, including the decision-making process; planning, implementation, and monitoring of projects and programmes in their area of jurisdiction to enhance the legitimacy of those projects and programmes to the grass root as a way of integrating the traditional institutions into formal governance system to enhance development. Participating in the decision-making process will help them identify those decisions, and be alive with what the needs of the grassroots are. In addition, all the Seyfolu should be among the governing council of the area council so that their respective districts will be properly represented.

For probity and accountability, traditional institutions should know the number of compounds and facilities in their areas that are paying rates and taxes to the council. They should be armed with a list of compounds and facilities in their districts and villages for effective monitoring and enforcement. Also, traditional institutions must be exposed to capacity building opportunities to enable them perform their roles and responsibilities effectively and efficiently.

Finally, government must stop interfering in the appointment of chiefs which limits the freedom of the chiefs and the institution. The appointment should be based on heredity for the chiefs to be accepted by all and sundry and not only by people who support the ruling government. This will help in guarantying the legitimacy of the traditional leaders. Closely related to this is the politicization of the traditional institutions and it is suggested that they must be well insulated from politics and the rulers themselves must stay clear of politics and see themselves as father of all and sundry.

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