

# **Understanding the Effects of Commodification of Land on the Indigenes' Land Tenure Security in Peri-Urban Ghana.**

**Jonathan Zinzi AYITEY, Mustapha OKYERE, and Frank GYAMFI YEBOAH, Ghana**

**Keywords:** Peri-urban, Security of tenure, Traditional Authorities, Indigenes.

## **Summary**

The debate on urbanization and peri-urbanization in the global South remains unsettled. In Ghana, urbanization has been on an upward trajectory since 1960, with the current urbanization levels estimated at 58% of the country's population. The most conspicuous consequence of this phenomenon is the commodification of lands within the peri-urban regions. This paper examines and synthesizes empirical studies on urbanization in Ghana to identify how it influences land commodification and the consequent impact on the tenure security of peri-urban indigenes. Findings indicate that urbanization has enhanced land commodification at the peripheries of cities in Ghana due to the increasing demand for land by influential businessmen, state officials, and other urban dwellers. This process has been emboldened by the decision of some customary authorities to define and redefine customary land relations of peri-urban indigenes leading to indigene's loss of land. The paper recommends an enhanced collaboration between the State and customary land authorities in strengthening and establishing Customary Lands Secretariats (CLS) to coordinate and monitor allocations to provide equity and secure tenure for all.

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

A principal characteristic of cities in Ghana is the persistent increase in the rate of population growth which is often the outcome of rural-urban migration and natural population increase (Cobbinah & Amoako, 2012). While many reasons have been cited for this trajectory, the urban bias theory is noted to provide the best characterization of the urbanization trend in Ghana. As noted by Islam (2009), industrialization, concentration of commercial activities, higher demand for skilled and unskilled labor, and the availability of better infrastructure in urban areas are the major drivers of urbanization. Urbanization in the global north moves in tandem with socioeconomic development, thus providing prosperity for urban and rural dwellers (Obeng-Odoom, 2021). Urban theorists have examined the urbanization-economic nexus in the global South, especially Africa, with diverse and contradictory results. While some have maintained that, urbanization in Africa is generally abnormal and thus associated with negative outcomes, others such as Obeng-Odoom (2021) challenge this position, although with inadequate evidence by suggesting that there is a strong positive relationship between urbanization and economic growth in Ghana. In their analysis of the implications of urbanization for Ghana's urban governance, Cobbinah & Erdiaw-Kwasie (2018) also provide an extensive overview of the opportunities and challenges associated with urbanization in Ghana. They argue that the Ghanaian urbanization trend has facilitated some positive transformation through small-scale manufacturing for the diffusion of innovation and provided hubs for improved health and well-being and effective social integration. On the other hand, they maintain that the current trend of urbanization in Ghana poses a significant hurdle for urban planning and structural development and deepens unemployment and underemployment.

One natural consequence of urbanization worldwide is the development of the land market and commodification of land owing to the increasing demand for urban lands (Owusu, 2008; Ubink, 2008). In the conventional wisdom of neo-classical economics, promoting trade in the market (including the land market) should create opportunities, promote socio-economic growth, and reduce impoverishment (Amanor & Ubink, 2008). However, the extent to which this neo-classical economic theory plays out in the Ghanaian urban land market has been a subject of debate in recent times. A critical feature of the Ghanaian urban land market is the increasing gravitation towards peri-urban lands, attributed to the availability of infrastructure, speculative purchases, their strategic location, global territorial nature, and relatively low values of these lands (Amoateng et al., 2013; Appiah et al., 2014). Peri-urban lands, therefore, continue to experience push-and-pull tendencies from adjoining cities and rural enclaves (Appiah et al., 2014). This trend has tremendous implications for the

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land rights of peri-urban indigenes. Consistent with the evolutionary theory of land rights, the growing demand for peri-urban lands has implications for the commodification and individualization of lands that are communally owned, mostly with usufructuary tendencies. According to Owusu (2008), as population pressures on land escalate and a critical urbanization process grows more robust, the indigenous community's control of land is impacted. Because of this, customary institutions are expected to evolve to regulate this process while safeguarding the interest of land rights holders, including the indigenes who usually occupy the peri-urban enclaves for agricultural pursuits. As Kuusaana & Eledi (2015) rightly asked, where do the farmers go as cities grow? While the current study does not attempt to make a case for or against urbanization in Ghana, it seeks to contribute to the debate by synthesizing the impact of land commodification on the land rights of peri-urban indigenes. This provides a baseline for implementing effective policies to control the process. The rest of the paper is arranged as follows; First, the concept of land tenure section discusses the prevailing tenurial arrangements in Ghana with emphasis on the customary land tenure system. The methodology section explains the methods adopted in conducting this research. A discussion of the results follows this. In doing so, the results were categorized under four main thematic areas; The trend of urbanization in Ghana, Commodification of land, dispossession of indigenes and the implication of land commodification for food security. Policy recommendations to regulate the land commodification process and strengthen customary land administration in the peri-urban areas are discussed in the subsequent section. The conclusion section then concludes the study.

### **The Concept of Land Tenure in Ghana**

One of the mostly adopted definitions of land tenure security is the one provided by Migot-Adholla and Bruce (1994). According to Migot-Adholla and Bruce, tenure security is the “perceived right by the possessor of a land parcel to manage and use the parcel, dispose of its products, and engage in transactions, including temporary or permanent transfers, without hindrance or interference from any person or corporate entity on a continuous basis (Migot-Adholla and Bruce, 1994). With land being a livelihood resource and critical to Ghanaians' spiritual and economic well-being (Bugri & Yuonayel, 2015), it is recognized that secure land tenure is a necessary ingredient in eradicating poverty in Ghana since it underpins socioeconomic development and promotes social inclusion. As espoused by Hernando De Soto, in his so-called “Mystery of Capital: why capitalism triumphs in the west and fails everywhere else,” secure land tenure and property rights present great investment demand motive, as it provides a significant incentive for increased investment in land by enhancing the confidence of various categories of land rights holders to invest (De Soto, 2000). Consistent with this, Bugri (2008) and Aha & Ayitey (2017) have noted that farmers with insecure land rights are less likely to undertake investments that takes several years to pay off due to the risk of losing land and their investments.

An important concept of tenure security is “land tenure.” The United Nations Economic Commission for Africa defines tenure as the relationships between individuals and groups of individuals concerning their rights, restrictions, and obligations for control and use of resources. (ECA, 2004). Land tenure in Ghana is predominantly customary. Thus, the rules of

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engagement within this context is often defined by the prevailing customs and institutions within the customary setting. Customary lands comprising lands owned and controlled by stools, skin, and families constitute about 80% of the total land mass in Ghana (Kumbun-naa, 2006). In all indigenous social administrations, customary lands are communally held in trust for the ethnic group, clan, or family and are administered by Chiefs, Family Heads, and Tendamba (Fiadzigbey, 2006; Korah et al., 2020). Under the communal ownership arrangement, the allodial interest is the highest proprietary interest in the customary scheme of land ( Ubink & Amanor, 2008.).

In most cases, the allodial interest is held by the leader of the land-owning group, which is usually the Chief, Tendamba, or Family Head. Kumbun-naa (2006) posited that the native State, comprising the centralized State and other acephalous societies that make up Ghana today, was very viable in Land administration before the colonizers came. Bruce et al. (2006) note that the Chiefs, Family Heads, and Tendamba can manage these customary lands because of their culturally rooted legitimacy and accessibility to the people they lead. The traditional authorities, by custom, are, therefore, fiduciaries over the lands they manage.

This fiduciary role of the traditional authorities in managing customary lands is reinforced by Article 267(1) of the 1992 constitution of Ghana, which stipulates that “all stool lands in Ghana shall vest in the appropriate stool on behalf of and in trust for the subjects of the stool in accordance with customary law and usage.” Additionally, Article 36(8) of the constitution further states that “The State shall recognize that ownership and possession of land carry a social obligation to serve the larger community and, in particular, the State shall recognize that the managers of public, stool, skin, and family lands are fiduciaries charged with the obligation to discharge their functions for the benefit respectively of the people of Ghana, of the stool, skin, or family concerned and are accountable as fiduciaries in this regard( The Constitution of The Republic of Ghana,1992). These customary lands cover most of the rural lands and some of the urban lands(Kumbun-naa, 2006). Customary lands are therefore managed with the principle that land belongs to a broader group of persons and that all people in the community must be considered in sharing the land and all accrued resources from its management(Gyapong, 2009). The customary land administration system has therefore thrived over the years based on the belief that lands belong to a vast family of which many are dead, few are living, and countless hosts yet unborn (Ollennu, 1962; Larbi et al., 2003; Mends; 2006 cited in Gyapong, 2009). Under this communal ownership, indigenes or members of the land-owning community have inherent rights to occupy and use part of the land that has not to be occupied by another indigene for any purpose, such as agriculture which is the primary source of livelihood for both rural and peri-urban dwellers.

## 2. METHODOLOGY

The study conducted a review of the impact of land commodification on the land rights of peri-urban indigenes within the context of increasing urbanization in Ghana. The study dwel on the development theory, governance theory and social change. As a work in progress, we made good use of literature on empirical works on urbanization and urban land tenure. The literature work was supported with a limited initial exchanges with purposefully selected key

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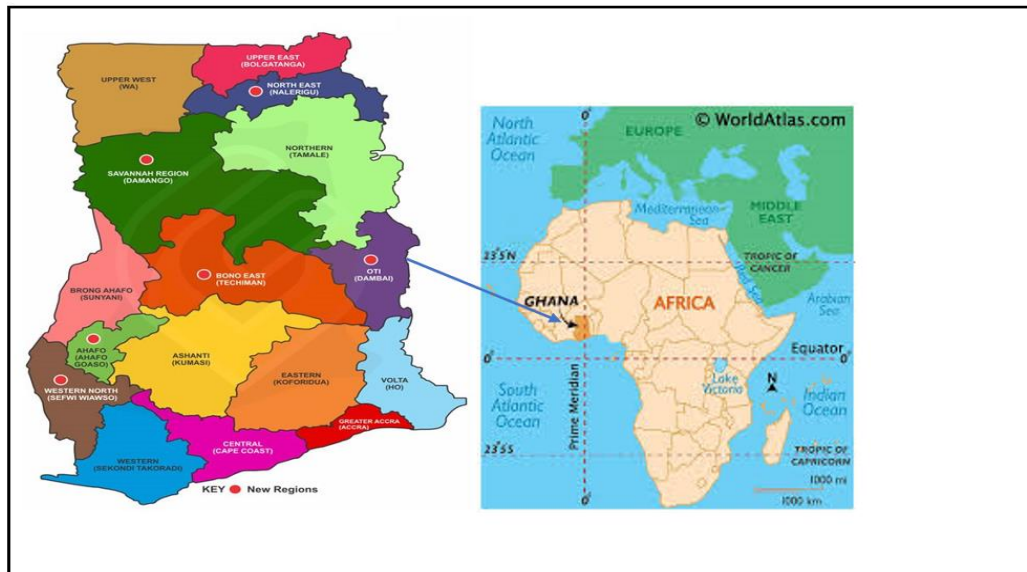
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indigene in peri-urban areas of Accra (Dunfa and Amrahia) in the Greater Accra Region and Kumasi (Kubease and Boankra) in the Ashanti Region. The literature included in the study was specifically limited to empirical studies published on urbanization and urban land tenure between 2010 and 2023. This was generally because 2010 was the year Ghana's urban population began to exceed the rural population (Anarfi et al., 2020). As reported in the 2010 Population and Housing Census, more than half (50.9 percent) of the total population in Ghana lived in urban areas, with the remaining 48% constituting rural dwellers (Ghana Statistical Service, 2012). Since population movement is a fundamental driver of change in urban land tenure, the researchers deemed it necessary to limit their attention to peer-reviewed articles published within this period (2010-2023). Literature was then retrieved from scientific databases such as Elsevier, Google Scholar, Research Gate and other recognized database and critically appraised for inclusion. The inclusion of multiple database was necessary to enhance the coverage of included studies (Wuni & Shen, 2020). The search comprised phrases and keywords such as urbanization in Ghana, land commodification, peri-urban and land tenure. A total of 47 published articles relevant to the subject under discussion were retrieved and reviewed for the entire study. However, the number of papers included in the analysis of the thematic subject areas constituted 62% of the included articles. The retrieved data was synthesized and analyzed through the content analysis technique, which allowed for identifying relevant themes and analyzing identified impacts. As noted by Turay and Dinye (2021), the import of every data analysis technique whether it is situated within the positivist or constructivist paradigm is to synthesize and elicit meaning from the gathered data for appropriate inferences to be made.

### **Profile of Study Area**

According to the most recent census, Ghana is a sub-Saharan African with a population of about 30.8 million people, making it the most populous country in West Africa after Nigeria (Ghana Statistical Service (GSS), 2021). It is located on latitude 7.9465° N and longitude 1.0232° W. Ghana shares borders with Ivory Coast in the West, Togo in the East, Burkina Faso to the North, and the Gulf of Guinea and the Atlantic Ocean to the South. Currently, approximately 58% of the country's population resides in the cities. It has Accra as its capital and the most populous city. Other cities with high populations include Kumasi, Takoradi, Tamale, and Cape Coast. Based on the 2015 labor force report of Ghana, approximately 10% of the labor force in the urban areas is engaged in Agriculture, while a more significant percentage is in managerial, professional, and clerical support work (Ghana Statistical Service, 2016). While the number of agriculture labor force in the urban centers is insignificant in comparison with the rural counterpart (60%), the tenure securities of this workforce are crucial if food security is to be achieved. With the levels of urbanization on the ascendancy, it begs the question of how the land rights of the agricultural labor force, mainly within the peri-urban regions, will be impacted. This is examined in the subsequent sections. Figure 1 is the map of Ghana, showing the major cities.

**Figure 1: Map of Ghana showing the major cities.**



### 3. DISCUSSION OF RESULT

#### **The Trend of Urbanization in Ghana**

While the criteria for an area to be classified as “urban” differ among countries, the official definition of urban has been agreed at 5000 people since the genesis of official census in Ghana (Obeng-Odoom, 2021). In giving a historical overview of the trend of Ghana’s urban population, the 2010 Population and Housing Census indicates that the urban population of Ghana as of 1960 was 23.1% which grew to 28.9% in 1970 (Ghana Statistical Service (GSS), 2013). For the years 1984, 2000, and 2010, the urban populations were identified to constitute 32.0%, 43.8%, and 50.9%, respectively, surpassing that of the rural population for the first time in 2010. The census further projected the urban population of Ghana to be approximately 17.5 million people by 2025. However, a recent report by the Ghana Statistical Service revealed that the projected population of 17.5 million people in 2025 had already been exceeded in 2021(Ghana Statistical Service (GSS), 2021). In terms of population distribution between the urban and rural areas, 58% of the total population in Ghana live in urban areas, especially in cities within the southern part of Ghana such as Accra, Kumasi, Takoradi, Cape Coast among others (Anarfi et al., 2020; Ghana Statistical Service (GSS), 2021). Consistent with this statistic, Adade (2020) noted that Ghana is one of the countries with the fastest urban growth rate in the world. Following this pattern, it is projected that Ghana’s urban population would to rise to 26.7 million by 2050(Ghana Statistical Service,2013). The consistent levels of urbanization in Ghana have diverse implications

including the land market and land rights for peri-urban indigenes. Table 2 presents an overview of Ghana’s urbanization levels since 1960.

**Table 2: Ghana’s Urban and Rural Population from 1960 -2021**

Year	Population (‘000)		Urbanization Levels (%)	
	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural
1960	1,553,894	5,172,921	23.1	76.90
1970	2,473,641	6,085,672	28.9	71.10
1984	3,934,746	8,361,335	32.0	68.00
2000	8,283,491	10,628,588	43.8	56.20
2010	12,545,228	12,113,594	50.9	49.10
2021	17,859,713	12,932,895	58	42

Source: 2010 Population and Housing Census, National Analytical Report, Ghana Statistical Service (GSS), 2021)

### **The Commodification of Peri-Urban Lands**

In the customary scheme of things, land is not saleable and thus cannot be traded on the market for money. However, consistent urbanization with a corresponding demand for land has played a significant role in changing this customary narrative. Because of this, Kuusaana & Eledi (2015) have noted that in examining urbanization, it is essential to consider land tenure situation and conceptualize land as a commodity due to the increasing demand for land primarily by outsiders. A critical component of the capitalist process is the contribution of outsiders in driving change (Milne, 2013). Within the Ghanaian peri-urban context, the commodification of land has been a product of the demand for land by influential businessmen, expatriates, and state officials for residential, commercial, recreational, and administrative pursuits (Ablo & Bertelsen, 2022; Ansah & Chigbu, 2020; Appiah et al., 2014; Wily, 2011). As indicated by the West African Regional Assessment document (2011), land issues in the West Africa region are characterized by growing commodification of rights and increased competition between various users of land in both rural and peri-urban areas and are rooted in the social, economic, and political realities of the region. The growing commodification of land often culminates to redefine land ownership and tenure by customary authorities and in contesting land rights. At the heart of the contestations lie the issues of the authority to allocate rights to customary land and the entitlements to the proceeds from such allocations (Gyapong, 2021; Ossome, 2014). Peri-urban areas, therefore, witness most of these contestations and severe struggles between indigenous farmers on the one hand and chiefs, family heads, and tendamba on the other hand over who has the legitimacy to grant lands to outsiders.

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## **Dispossession of Indigenes**

The commodification of peri-urban lands in Ghana has been responsible for the displacement of peri-urban indigenes. A recent study by Abdulai et al. (2021) in Wa demonstrates an overwhelming (91%) loss of access to peri-urban lands, especially by women, due to rapid urbanization and land commodification. This was described as a sharp decline in the number of women who had access (65%) to land over a decade ago. Similarly, Kuusaana & Eledi (2015) found that land commodification in the Tamale township has resulted in increased land individualization and a shift from usufructuary holdings to leasehold, thereby dispossessing a greater proportion of the peri-urban population. These outcomes, therefore, indicate that peri-urbanization and its corresponding commodification of land is not only typical of cities in Southern Ghana but also a nationwide phenomenon. Access to land through the customary arrangement is therefore on the downward trajectory (Oduro & Adamtey, 2018; Yaro et al., 2017), with most customary rights being lost to large-scale investors within the peri-urban regions. Meanwhile, access to land and the continuous occupation by peri-urban indigenes have been widely possible by exercising their inherent rights to appropriate and use those lands.

Contrary to the long-held belief that customary lands provide a social safeguard to customary land rights holders, land commodification in urbanization has seriously challenged this belief. With the increasing land commodification, indigenes' land tenure securities are no longer guaranteed. As Naab et al. (2013) have noted, a predominant characteristic of the urbanization trends is the continuous commodification of peri-urban lands with a corresponding displacement of indigenes, making them tenants on their land. In their assessment of land tenure security in various countries, Wanyonyi et al. (2015) observed that land tenure security had been a severe challenge in Ghana over the past few decades. This increased tenure insecurity was attributed to the nationwide lack of transparency and accountability in customary land management. Wanyonyi et al. (2015) further note that tenure insecurity has severe implications for the country's socioeconomic growth since many Ghanaians depend on land as their primary source of livelihood. The commodification of urban land rights emerges alongside the scarcity of land. This situation stimulates an atmosphere of competition between migrants and indigenes over scarce land resources, often resulting in the dispossession of the latter as traditional leaders and family heads sell off land they hold in custody for their land-owning group. The growing rate of competition for peri-urban lands has primarily been responsible for the tenure insecurity and landlessness of the indigenes since access to land is usually hinged on one's ability to pay. Meanwhile, the right of continuous, unchallenged occupation and use of agricultural land is said to be the most critical measure of security of tenure. Since most of the peri-urban indigenes derive their livelihoods directly from this land, their displacement goes to entrench the impoverishment of these groups. This happenings within the peri-urban land market contradict the long standing neo-classical economic theory where the development of the market should serve as a vehicle for socio-economic development and poverty eradication.

## **The Implication of Land Commodification for Food Security**

In terms of land use, one obvious ramification of land commodification is the conversion of agricultural lands to residential, commercial, and recreational uses. Amoateng et al. (2013) observed that the dynamic nature of the peri-urban areas has accounted for the difficulties in

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outlining the land use pattern of these areas. Peri-urban areas experience continuous and alarming levels of physical development due to urban population growth (Abu et al., 2022). Expansion of the city affects the peri-urban areas by altering the natural resource bases and converting land to new uses (Kuusaana & Eledi, 2015), changing labor patterns, concentrating on urban waste pollution, and diminishing natural resource-based livelihoods (Abdulai et al., 2022; Afriyie et al., 2014; J. T. Bugri & Yuonayel, 2015; Dapilah et al., 2018). As cities expand, the peri-urban areas become urban, and the rural regions become peri-urban. Bugri & Yuonayel (2015) note that the nature of the peri-urban interface is one of continuous change leading to various livelihood and natural resource challenges specific to the peri-urban interface. In the peri-urban enclaves of Ghana, many dwellers belonging to land-owning groups have mainly depended on agriculture as their source of livelihood. However, more farmlands in the peri-urban areas are usually displaced due to the larger size consumed by sprawling suburbs (Cobbinah & Amoako, 2012). The demand-driven nature of land prices in peri-urban areas is responsible for landowners' continuous conversion of agricultural lands, and other land uses to meet peri-urban land demand and to benefit from the booming land market (Kuusaana & Eledi (2015). However, this trend continues to threaten agricultural investments on peri-urban lands, culminating in food insecurity.

#### **4. WAYS OF ENHANCING TENURE SECURITY OF INDIGENES ON PERI-URBAN LANDS**

The review of empirical works on the subject collaborated with preliminary exchange with some indigenes in peri-urban areas of Accra and Kumasi, the following are established. Ghana's population is steeply becoming urbanized with majority (58%) of the population living in settlements that have more than 5000 people. With the increase in population with a corresponding demand for land has played a significant role in changing customary narrative of 'land is not for sale' to land been like any other commodity in the market-commoditization. Within the Ghanaian peri-urban context, the commodification of land is as a result of demand for land by influential businessmen, expatriates, and state officials for residential, commercial, recreational, and administrative pursuits. The commodification of peri-urban lands in Ghana has led to the displacement of some peri-urban indigenes making them landless. Finally, the obvious ramification of land commodification has led to conversion of agricultural lands to residential, commercial, and recreational uses. This later observation has on food security. In line with these preliminary findings, the following tentative preliminary recommendations are made pending further field work on the topic.

##### **Establishment of Customary Land Secretariats (CLSs)**

Customary land tenure management has not been very efficient in delivering secured land tenure to peri-urban indigenes amid increasing land commodification. "Checks and balance that characterizes the customary land governance system has been eroded with traditional authorities able to manipulate the negotiability of customary law to serve their interests" (Amanor & Diderutuah, 2001; Maxwell et al. 1998; cited in Ubink 2008). As stated by Ubink (2008), when the economy rapidly changes and land becomes a high-priced commodity, customary systems are often unable to evolve equitably, and the tenure position of local

farmers is increasingly precarious. Despite the weakness identified in the customary system in the delivery of secured tenure, direct governmental interventions in customary land administration may not be the panacea in ensuring equity in customary tenure. Nevertheless, some level of collaboration between the State and customary land authorities is necessary to ensure effective customary land management in peri-urban Ghana. This can be achieved through the strengthening and establishment of Customary Land Secretariats (CLSs) in the peri-urban areas, which will serve as an instrument in managing land commodification and land use conversion processes while being an interface between traditional authorities and state land sector agencies to streamline customary land administration. The establishment of CLSs is a critical ingredient in ensuring that the customary system delivers secured tenure to the peri-urban indigenes through documentation of indigenous land rights.

The availability of documentation on land rights is undeniably one of the surest means of protecting the interest of peri-urban land users. In his assessment of documenting customary land rights in Ghana, Payne (1997) analyzed that “it would be far easier and less expensive for land delivery institutions to devote resources to documenting these customary land rights, especially in the urban periphery. At that stage, titles under customary law are discernible and easily recognizable without dispute” (Payne 1997). With the increasing individualization of landholdings and more precarious tenure security, documentation of access or use rights is widely recognized as necessary in protecting land rights (Niang et al., 2010). With the establishment of CLSs, traditional authorities will have the leverage to properly supervise the documentation of land rights, demarcation, and allocation of development land through the CLSs without rendering the peri-urban indigenes landless. As proposed by Amoateng et al. (2013), establishing CLSs is critical in co-coordinating the acquisition and allocation of peri-urban lands. This will ensure that decisions regarding land distribution are well-controlled and monitored instead of leaving it solely at the discretion of customary authorities.

### **Decentralization of Land Service Delivery**

Beyond the establishment of CLSs to coordinate allocations and to provide documentation for peri-urban land rights, there is an urgent need for the strengthening and decentralization of the land registration systems. This is a crucial requirement for ensuring good governance in land administration. With an increasing demand for peri-urban lands, decentralization of the land registration system has become very necessary in ensuring geographical accessibility of the registration services towards enhancing the tenure security of peri-urban land users, including indigenes. In ensuring this, there is a need for increased education of the peri-urban indigenes and all other categories of peri-urban land users on the necessities of documenting and registering their land rights in line with the Land Act, 2020 (Act 1036).

### **Sensitization and Engagement with Customary Land Authorities**

As part of the effort to ensure that the customary land administration system is strengthened to deliver secured tenure to peri-urban indigenes and to safeguard their livelihood, traditional leaders (Chiefs, Family Heads, and Tendamba) need to be sensitized and their capacities enhanced on how to deliver on their role of managing customary lands. This enhances their understanding of the benefit derived from streamlining the peri-urban customary land administration system and properly managing lands under their jurisdiction, as this reduces

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multiple land sales and strengthens the tenure securities of indigenes and settler farmers in the peri-urban areas. Moreover, in instances where development catches up with farmlands occupied by indigenes, traditional authorities have to allocate the lands in a manner that safeguards the land rights of indigenes. As stated by Act 1036, “an allodial title holder may in furtherance of the expansion of a town or settlement take over bare land or farmland of a usufruct only after prompt payment of fair and adequate compensation which in any case shall not be less than forty percent of the plots of land or the market value of the plots of land being taken over, and where possible providing suitable alternative land to the usufruct in respect of the land.(Land Act, 2020 (Act 1036), ” This is particularly necessary to avert the incidence of landlessness of indigenes, thereby minimizing poverty among peri-urban indigenes in Ghana.

## 5. CONCLUSION

The current study synthesized and examined empirical studies on the tenure security of peri-urban indigenes in the context of rising urbanization and land commodification in Ghana. Findings indicate that the influx of powerful businessmen, state officials and other migrants to the peripheries of the cities to acquire lands for settlement and other purposes puts the rights of the indigenes in a very precarious state leading to landlessness and loss of agricultural lands. Consequently most peri-urban indigenes are displaced from their ancestral lands to give way for a change in the land use pattern of peri-urban lands, usually from agriculture to residential, commercial, and industrial purpose. Within this context, access to land by indigenes is now dependent on one’s ability to pay. This has created intense competition between migrants and indigenes that possess the inherent rights to occupy and use the land for either settlement or agriculture purposes. It also identified the inefficiencies in the customary land administration system in delivering secure tenure to indigenes of peri-urban lands. The paper, therefore, proposes that to strengthen the customary land administration system in enhancing the tenure security of indigenes on peri-urban lands, there is a need for increased collaboration between the state and the customary land authorities in establishing Customary Land Secretariats. This will help streamline land administration at the customary level through coordinating and monitoring land allocation and ensuring documentation of customary land rights. Additionally, there is a need for capacity enhancement of traditional authorities in delivering on their mandate to safeguard the interest of indigenous farmers on peri-urban lands while protecting their livelihoods and promoting food security in urban areas.

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