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EXAMINING WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN LOCAL GOVERNANCE: EVIDENCE FROM THE WA MUNICIPAL ASSEMBLY IN THE UPPER WEST REGION OF GHANA

SAEED ABDUL-AZIZ

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL, POLITICAL AND HISTORICAL STUDIES, FACULTY OF INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT STUDIES, UNIVERSITY FOR DEVELOPMENT STUDIES IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY DEGREE IN SOCIAL ADMINISTRATION

OCTOBER, 2019

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BY

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OCTOBER, 2019

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DECLARATION

Student

I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my own original work and that no part of it has been presented for another degree in this university or elsewhere:

Candidate's Name: SAEED ABDUL-AZIZ

Signature: .....Date: .....

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Supervisor

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of the thesis was supervised in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of thesis laid down by the University for Development Studies.

Supervisor's Name: Dr. Francis N. Sanyare

Signature: ..... Date: .....

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ABSTRACT

Local governance is seen as an active involvement of the local population in ensuring improved quality of service and leadership at the local level, involves greater participation by civil society in decision-making processes. This study examined women's participation and the prevailing gender issues in local governance in Ghana particularly in the Wa Municipality of the Upper West Region. Analysis in this study is derived from an empirical study of women participation in local governance. Qualitative methods such as focus key informant interviews, personal observation and focus group discussions were used to generate data for the study. The findings of study discovered that the level of participation and representation of women considering the total number of members is woefully inadequate and series of efforts need to be done to make the level of participation appreciable. Also, in the absence of women empowerment programs and gender policy at the local level were hardly implemented. The study therefore recommends that policy makers both at the national level and local level should widen the decentralization process to increase the power and involvement of community members particularly women in the process.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my lovely parents, the late Alhaji Abubakari Seidu Sogmah Gulinaa Mourah and Bintu-Fatimata Seidu Sogmah and to my two lovely "wives" both maternal and paternal grandmothers, Hajia Ama-ba Yahaya and the late Hajia Afusata Abubakari Gulinaa Mourah (N'NAAH-WALUOMAH). May the Almighty ALLAH bless you all.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CDD	Centre for Democratic Development
CDG	Center for Democracy and Governance
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women
CEMR	Council of European Municipalities and Regions
CHPS	Community-Based Health Planning and Service
CODEO	Collation of Domestic Election Observers
CPP	Convention Peoples Party
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DA	District Assembly
DACF	District Assembly Common Fund
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
EC	Electoral Commission
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FOWODE	Forum for Women in Democracy
GDO	Gender Desk Officer
GSS	Ghana Statistical Service
ICPD	International Conference on Population and Development

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IEA	Institute of Economic Affairs
IPU	Inter-parliamentary Union
IULA	International Union of Local Authorities
LI	Legislative Instrument
MCD	Municipal Coordinating Director
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MMDAs	Metropolitan, Municipal, District Assemblies
MOF	Ministry of Finance
MOFA	Ministry Of Food and Agriculture
MP	Member of Parliament
MPO	Municipal Planning Officer
MTDP	Medium Term Development Plan
NALAG	National Association of Local Authorities of Ghana
NDAP	National decentralization Action Plan
NDC	National Democratic Congress
NDI	National Democratic For International Affairs
NDPS	National Development Planning Systems Act
NFLS	Nairobi Forward Looking Strategies

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NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NLC	National Liberation Council
NPP	New Patriotic Party
NRC	National Redemption Council
PFA	Platform For Action
PHC	Population & Housing Census
PHD	Philosophy of Doctorate
PM	Presiding Member
PNDC	Peoples National Defense Council
RCC	Regional Coordinating Council
SAP	Structural Adjustment Program
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SM	Small Medium Enterprise
UC	Unit Committee
UNCHS	United Nations Centre for Human Settlements
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNICEF	United Nations International Children Education Fund
UNIRSD	United Nations Institute of Research and Social Development
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

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WMA	Wa Municipal Assembly
WMAMTDP	Wa Municipal Assembly Medium Term Development Plan
ICDP	International Conference on Population and Development
EU	European Union
CLOGSAG	Civil and Local Government Service Association of Ghana
ICPD	International Conference on Population and Development

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CHAPTER ONE

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

Since the time of Aristotle, "political science has been concerned centrally with the distribution and division of government power'' (Maass, 1959 cited in Kokor, 1999:1). The local form of government practiced today has evolved from the administrative structure of this country for several years. Its form and scope however, has taken antecedence from the time when the conception of a comprehensive system of locally elected councils to take control of various basic services provided for the benefit of the community was first incorporated in the statutes law as early as 1920s (Nsarkoh, 1964). This period saw the establishment of four major ordinances which included native administration ordinance in 1927, native treasuries ordinance in 1936, native administrative treasuries ordinance in 1939 and the native authority ordinance in 1944 to regulate the activities of the chiefs and give them legal statute to their activities especially the collection of levies, area of jurisdiction and the exercise of power (Nsarkoh, 1964; Ahwoi, 2010a). Prior to the establishment of these ordinances to support the local government system at that time, chiefs had assumed an appreciable role in the administration of their locality. They had authority to oversee all matters concerning individual criminalities and civil cases within a locality.

From 1957 to 1993, Ghana's decentralization program saw eighteen major legislations and several other minor legislations in an attempt to implementing the program (kunbour, 2000).

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It is significant to indicate that, the attempts by all the various governments, be it military or civilian rule was to ensure grassroots participatory democracy. This could not come to light fortuitously, but needs a more calculative effort or engagement to bring it to bear (Ahwoi, 2010a). Until 1988, the Provisional National Defense Council (P.N.D.C.) regime under the presidency of Jerry John Rawlings presented a modest and well- acclaimed proposal called the 'blue book' edifice with the political commitment for implementation. This culminated into Local Government Law, 1988(P.N.D.C.) Law 207 and local government act, 1993 Act (462) as an integral part of the local government and decentralization system in Ghana as chapter twenty of the1992 constitution expressed (Ahwoi, 2010a; Ahwoi, 2010b).

Issues of women participation and representation gained currency both locally and internationally as legion of conferences are held to champion the course. Prominent among non-state actors/ organizations which Ghana is a signatory to internationally includes the maiden world conference on women at Mexico in 1975, " the world summit on social development 1995 in Denmark'' and the popular Beijing conference on women in1990. Subsequently, other conferences held stressed on issues of participation, gender, rights, inequality, poverty and empowerment (Gyimah and Thompson, 2008).

It is based on this premise that fair representation and participation of all groups within a society is a crucial tool for any Nation determined to embrace Development.

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At the household and community level, participating in decision making process is very instrumental to getting things done and cannot be under estimated hence the need for all stake holders and vulnerable groups to form part.

Also, in Ghana, more than 50% of the entire population are females and hold majority of votes in political elections in a democracy (Ghana Statistical Service, 2010).

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The idea is to promote a collective strength and the ability to encourage and educate society to learn more on the unexploited potentials and talents of women. It was until the latter part of twentieth century around 1893, women were not allowed to take part in all forms of voting worldwide. Fortunately, New Zealand set the pace towards the period of renaissance for being the first country in the world to allow women voting right in 1893. The historical political exclusion or marginalization of women has created an impression that the governance process was a preserve for men only. Finland, Britain and the United States adopted it in 1906, 1918 and 1920 respectively (Baah et al, 2005). On the contrary, there is a growing amount of women representation in governance and in national Parliaments around the globe. In 2012, New Zealand was placed 23rd in the international grading of countries with women representation as legislators constituting 32.2% of its parliament whiles Canada prominent in the midst of major English-speaking countries has 24.7% of its lower house represented by women whiles its upper house has 39% representation of women.

Australia as well has 24.7% representation of women in its lower house and 29% in its upper house (Abdul-Razak et al, 2014).

Scholars from different ontological and epistemological backgrounds have assume several reasons for the under representation and participation of women include poverty, colonialism, lack of confidence, lack and inadequacy of education, culture among others (Baah et al, 2005; Gyimah et al, 2008). In this study, Allah-Mensah (2001) attributed it to the absence of affirmative action's policies (quota systems), insufficient education, inadequate financial assistance and logistics, the volatile nature of politics at the various localities, lack of political commitment from various political parties and culture and tradition (Allah-Mensah, 2001,pp. 73-87).

Since the inception of local government and decentralization system in Ghana in the last two and half decades, the country has enjoyed significantly stable and a progressive democratic governance which can boast of having held seven (7) successive presidential and parliamentary elections and seven (7) Assembly and Unit committee elections at the various levels. The seven (7) presidential and parliamentary elections held includes 1992, 1996, 2000, 2004, 2008, 2012 and 2016 respectively and the seven(7) Assembly and Unit committees elections took place in 1988/89, 1994, 1998, 2002, 2006, 2010 and 2015 respectively (Electoral Commission of Ghana, Wa Municipal, 2016).

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In Ghana, the 1994 District Assembly Elections Act 473, provides that "elections to a District Assembly shall be held every four years except that District Assembly Elections shall be held at least six months apart from parliamentary elections", however the 2014 District Assembly Elections was postponed indefinitely due to funding constraints as well as a legal suit by a fisher folk(Benjamin Eyi-Mensah) in 2014 having prevented him from filing his nomination to contest in the Eyipeh Electoral Area despite fulfilling all the requirements. Supreme Court upheld his application, compelling the Electoral Commission to present a new Constitutional Instrument to parliament for consideration which was used in 1st September, 2015 District Assembly Elections across the nation(Electoral Commission of Ghana, Wa Municipal, 2016). The idea is to consolidate more inclusive democratic governance by encouraging citizenry to participate more vigorously in local governance and district level decision-making and implementation process via assembly and unit committee election mechanisms (IEA, 2010). However, the entire governance structure has been principally male dominated thereby magnifying the historically exclusion of women, marginalization, vulnerability, disadvantaged, as well as other minority groups at all levels of governance process globally (Baah et al, 2005).

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1.2 Problem Statement

Scores of countries around the world had acknowledged the momentous contributions of women in sharpening their democracies, economies, environments, education, health and energy and many other fields even though being underrepresented in almost all spheres of decision making processes, be it at the international, national and at the local level (women in parliament Global Forum summit, 2013).

According to women in parliament global forum summit in 2013 “Women take more than 70% of consumption-related decisions, be it food, clothing, furniture or cars. They tend to be in charge of health for their families and are a major influence on both the education and activities of family members”. Women play multiple roles as mothers, raising children, managing the household and in the development of the entire families as well as pulling together people and communities, hence vulnerable when there is social disorder (Baah et al, 2005).

Further than the archetypal gender-related activities, they participate in debates presently that are of major concern to people in society counting initiation of a policy, planning, implementation and monitoring and evaluation of policies.

The rationale for these debates of late is the bizarre worldwide political participation velocity of females in governance (presidents, legislators/ parliamentarians, national assembly's, ministers, managers, higher office holders etc…), are between 19% to 20% even though made up of over 50% of the global population and thereby possessing the greater part of votes in political elections globally (Abdul-Razak et al, 2013).

Today's world is volatile, multifarious and mutually dependent one and therefore needs to reach out to all persons at both national and local levels.

It is largely recognized that decentralization as a system of governance has the potential to ensure full participation and democratic governance necessary for human development (Robertson, 2002; The World Bank, 2001; United Nations Development Program, 2000). But the inclusion of traditional governance and particularly women in the decentralization process particularly in Sub-Saharan African countries have been overlooked by most regimes and as an oversight, resulted in loss of opportunities and participation for the women folks in the whole governance process (Ray and Reddy, 2003). Over the past decades, several efforts have been made by various governments, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) to promote participation particularly women in institutions of power and all forms of decision making.

A clear example is the Local Government Statute of 1993, the 1995 constitution and the Local Government Act 1997 of Uganda that was introduced through a legislative framework of decentralization.

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This reform converted the already established system of Resistance Councils originated from the civil war period to a more 'pyramidal structure' consisting of Local Councils at the village, parish, county, sub county and district levels (Mukibi, 2000).Also in South Africa, the Local government policy advanced by Chapter 7 of the constitution clearly sets out the policy directive through which development in the local communities was to be undertaken.

This directive places much emphasis on the participation and organization of local people particularly the feminine group in the development process (IULA, 1998a).

In Ghana, the local governance system can be traced back to the early 1980s. A coherent policy instrumentation came into being following the adoption of the 1992 constitution and in 2004, cabinet adopted and endorsed a National Decentralization Action Plan which outlined the various strategies and policies through which political power and decision making could be transferred to the local people particularly women.

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Even though some strives have been made by governments towards empowering women in the process of governance, the problem of low participation and representation of women still persists. In the Wa Municipality, a persistent gender stereotype and social limitations about what women can do and cannot do among the people and the inability of women's groups and individual women to engage in the activities of the assembly and demand for accountability towards women affect or hinder their level of involvement(Abdul-Razak, Prince & Eliasu, 2014).

This to a greater extent has been attributed to lack of awareness about the responsibilities of the assembly and its members, lack of information about opportunities available and ignorance about the fact that the assembly is accountable to them as women (Kuseg et al, 2011; IMCCD, 2010).

In spite of the varying degrees of efforts made by the government, NGOS and civil society organizations in the country which are aimed at improving the level of participation of women, the picture still remained bleak particularly in theWa Municipality. Currently, the Wa Municipal assembly is made up of 45 members out of which thirty-one (31) are elected members and fourteen (14) are government appointees. Again the assembly is composed of 39 males and 6 females, out of the 6 females only 1 was elected and 5 appointed. The females represent 13.3% of the entire Wa Municipal Assembly with males representing 86.7%. This situation in the Wa Municipality showing a very low level of female's participation in decision making, makes it imperative for such a study to be conducted in the Municipality.

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1.3 Main Research Question

What factors challenge women's participation in Local Governance in the Wa Municipal Assembly?

1.3.1 Sub Research Questions

To better answer the main research question, the research found answers to the following specific questions:

I. What is the trend of women's participation in Local Governance in the Wa Municipality?

II. What is the level of contribution and participation of women in Local Governance in the Wa Municipality?

III. Which factors militate against women effective participation in Local Governance in the Wa Municipality?

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1.4 Main Research Objective

To explore the major factors that challenge women's participation in Local Governance in the Wa Municipal Assembly.

1.4.1 Sub-Research Objectives

I. To examine the trend of women's participation in Local Governance in the Wa Municipality from 1988 to 2018.

II. To examine the level of contribution and participation of women in Local Governance in the Wa Municipality.

III. To ascertain the various factors militating against women's effective participation in Local Governance in the Wa Municipality.

1.5Significance of the Study

There are a number of issues confronting women in today's political set up ranging from women's low participation in governance, their poor access to resources critical for making a living, their predominance among people living in poverty and their health particularly, the unacceptably high rates of maternal death.

Upon all these problems, women still face discriminatory and harmful social practices which are usually vindicated in the name of culture. The entire world is concerned about the negative impacts of these challenges on the economic and social development of society particularly rural women.

It is also recognized that the legal instruments, institution and the media alone cannot tackle the issues affecting women. It is believed that the solution to these problems lie with every citizen, specifically the women.

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Government and various advocacy groups are convinced that 'the-today-woman' can make a difference in terms of development if equal opportunity is given to the woman in terms of harnessing and utilizing resources at the disposal of the community. The Ghanaian woman plays a pivotal role when it comes to family issues and socio-economic development of the entire society. But they are not given the space to occupy key decision-making positions in major sectors of economic, political and social life. They are downgraded to the background as far as public decision-making is concerned. In fact, there is no concrete policy measure that is in place to ensure that the structural inequalities between women and men are taken into account in promoting participation in policy decisions across the country.

Over the past years, various interventions have been implemented to get women participate actively in local and national politics. However, their contributions seem not to be convincing to the general public. Many have attributed this to certain factors such as traditional prejudices, beliefs and perceptions, gender discrimination and low levels of literacy.

Evidence of the lack of political will and commitment by the executive arm of governments and political parties also account for the failure of women to effectively participate in politics and decision-making.

It is based on these and many that the study seeks to discuss the extent of women's participation in the governance processes at the local level. It is hoped that this research work will highlight the various factors that impinge on women's active participation in local governance processes at the local level and identify new policies, frameworks and strategies that can promote women's active participation in the Wa Municipal and other parts of the country as a whole.

This study served as current contribution to existing knowledge in the area of gender and nation building/development. The findings of the study go a long way to demonstrate that when women participate in local governance, the entire decision making process will be improved. This will enable women to move towards self-reliance and bring about development as they are actively involved in taking strategic decisions towards nation building. The study at the end of the day serves as a good source of information or framework for development practitioners, future researchers and policy makers.

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1.6 Scope of the Study

In totality, the study covered two key dimensional areas, that is geographical and theoretical.

Geographically, the study covered Wa Municipality and in the Upper West Region of the Republic of Ghana. The study focused on communities covered by the Wa Municipal assembly and its substructures.

On a whole, it considered issues affecting or influencing women's participation in local governance in some selected communities.

This is done in order to find out the trends in women participation, the impact of women participation in the decentralized processes at the local level, identify the factors that accounts for low representation and participation of women in decision making and discover promotional strategies for ensuring active participation of women in local governance processes and decision-making in the municipality.

Theoretically, the study covered extensive literature on the emergence of local governance across the entire world, narrowed down the literature regarding some best practicing countries like South Africa, Uganda and others. It focused on literature relating to women involvement and participation in decision making at the national and local levels in Ghana particularly Wa Municipal.

Constitutional and legal instruments, Advocacy groups' reports on women participation in governance, conference papers and academic journals/articles shall be reviewed as core literature sources. These provide a wide range of information on the subject matter.

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1.7 Limitation of the Study

Factors that hindered the success of this research include the following;

1. Availability of literature on local governance data on women representation and participation particularly data about Wa Municipal. Preliminary investigations revealed that just a few of research have been conducted on women participation in the municipality, hence inadequate availability of data to the researcher.

2. Validity and Reliability of responses cannot be guaranteed because of the unwillingness of respondents to provide accurate responses. The investigations show that respondents have bad experiences with previous researchers and this have influence their attitudes and behaviors towards subsequent research works, thus no exception of this study.

3. Other unforeseen physical and natural occurrences such as rainfall and policy change of the concept of local governance were factors that hindered the speedy collection of data, thus delay the early completion of this study.

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1.8 Organization of the Study

The thesis is structured into five chapters. Chapter one consist of the introduction which has constituted the background of the study, problem statement, research questions, objectives, significance of the study, methodology and organization of the study.

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Chapter two is treated as literature review. Here, the study reviewed literature on historical trends with regards to women's participation, what account for their low interest in local governance participation, contribution of women towards development of the Wa Municipality.

A complete profile of the study area (Wa Municipality) has been provided under chapter three. In this chapter, areas of concern included socio-economic characteristics, livelihood economic activities of respondents and other sectors relevant to the study. Detailed analysis and presentation of data are treated in Chapter four (4). The final chapter as chapter five contains the major findings. It also contains the conclusion and recommendations of the analyzed data.

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CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This segment provides definitions of pertinent terms, review of issues with respect to participation, community participation and decentralization as well as, the conceptual and theoretical frameworks on participation and decentralization processes. This is to help make inferences from successful community participation and decentralization programs and how they can be customized to suit the Ghanaian situation in order to help improve and sustain governance systems. It further cross examines the local governance system in Ghana's democratic dispensation. The chapter also outlines the various questions, arguments and diverse views underpinning the inclusion of the local people especially women in national, regional and community based politics and decision-making. In essence, the chapter captures the key concepts, policies, the various actors in local governance and the level of participation by women particularly those in the Wa Municipality of the Upper West Region of Ghana.

2.2 Conceptual issues and Definition of Basic Terms

2.2.1 Politics

According to Wright (1955) cited in Adaina (2012:19) describe politics as " the art of influencing, manipulating or controlling major groups so as to advance the Purposes of some against the opposition of others".

It is thus a set of human interface fighting fit calculated principally by means of providing inadequate assets considered pleasing by the population and how decisions are made and acquired with respect to the circulation of these resources. In contemporary era, characters similar to Crick (1998), described the concept politics "as an activity by which differing interests within a given unit of rule are conciliated by giving them a share in proportion to their importance to the welfare and survival of the whole community".

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In furtherance to his (Crick) explanation, he indicated that every contradictory concern (interest) ought to be present equivalent participation and involvement in every facet of society as well as treating every person fairly devoid of prejudice. It is however important to note that, politics is a means to getting all excluded classes and gender groups involved, have a voice in and gain access to the requisite information, make more meaningful and positive contribution towards the general commerce of government (benefits of economic and social development) and maintain law and order (Gaventa &Valderrama, 1999).

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Hence, it is clear and must be pointed out that, involvement of women in politics in Ghana is imperative given that based on their full of zip participation as debaters and seeking information from their respective parties, voters and candidates, lobbyists and legislators that they can best guarantee endorsement and safety of their basic human rights (Lady Adaina, 2012).The above definitions of the concept politics emphasizes only on the legal structure. They do not pay attention to what is happening within the State.

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Recognizing the increasing interest and debates among activist and progressive intellectuals in the field of politics like Shvedova (n.d), Kuseg et al (2011), Ahmed (2013), Ofei-Aboagye (2000) and Fallon (2003) see politics as a "dirty game", bedeviled with violence, insults, hypocrisy, bloodshed, brutality, cruelty, hostility, aggression, corruption and worse of it fighting. Corruption unavoidably results in the formation of favorable conditions and opportunities for the survival of the most negative manifestation of well thought-out crimes. Politics therefore is understood as the ability and capacity of people to manage, organize, control and dominate others and have power over economic, social and natural resources within a locality. Despite the fact that it (politics) silhouettes the capacities, abilities and empowers people to participate, men have fewer restrictions in the exercise of power than women. Nevertheless, disparities in participation adversely affect both men and women, though differently, of course in most instances not as severely.

Empirically, no matter how objective and fair the process might be, individuals, groups, communities as well as nations involved does so to the disadvantage of others especially women.

2.2.2 Participation

The issue of Participation has been a substantive area of attention for both sociologists and political scientists, mainly pertains to the quintessential act of democratic citizenship, which includes, enrollment in a political party, discussion, debating, canvassing for votes, registering as voters, voting, seeking information, lobbying for position and networking with the leadership of the state. It means different things to different people at different places and at different times. Hence difficult and complex to pull off a clear cut definition of the concept (participation) (Lady Adaina, 2012). The definition of participation in recent times with regards to development has been found in development projects and programs. The concept has been defined to mean strengthening the relevance, quality and sustainability of planned projects and programs. The World Bank Learning Group on Participation in an influential statement, defined participation as a process through which stakeholders influence and share control over development initiatives and the decisions and resources which affect them (World Bank, 1995).

Participation could therefore be seen from this perspective as the level of consultation or decision making in all phases of a project cycle, from needs assessment, to appraisal, through to implementation, to monitoring and evaluation (MLGRD, 2010).

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While these participation projects could be funded by the state, participation within them was seen not as related to broader issues of politics or governance, but as a way of encouraging action outside the public sphere (Mahama, 2013). Scholars share sentiments in the World Bank's definition as a process through which stakeholders influence and share control over development initiatives and the decisions and resources which affect them (Wunsch., 2001). Similarly, ''Community/Public/Citizen participation is the act of allowing individual citizens within a community to take part in the formulation of policies and proposals on issues that affect the whole community'' (Onibokun and Faniran, 1995, p. 9).

More radical definitions of participation, however, not only emphasizes community involvement in the processes of local development, but also demand that social development lead to the empowerment of community members. This involves social change to bring about improved living standards within the community and is especially significant to women (Liebenberg, 1999).As a result, the emphasis on participation is therefore crucial, and the formerly disadvantaged must be central targets for participation as key to social development. As Kehler (2000) argues that, participation is defined as: the organized efforts to increase the control over and access to resources and regulative institutions in society, on the part of individual citizens, groups and movements of those hitherto excluded from such control aimed at the socio-economic development of the whole community.

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2.3 Political Participation

Political participation in a liberal democracy can be seen as a new term but not a new concept. It is a vibrant as well as developing social observable fact which is not stagnant and does not operate in a vacuum. It thus functions at various places as well as times where citizens are more likely to be more or less politically active. Even though "political participation" is currently extensively approved as a critical element of sustainable development in a modern democratic dispensation for close to six to seven decades now, still there is less consensus regarding what it means and how to accomplish it. In fact the term 'Political Participation' presents itself a number of difficulties in terms of its understanding and means different things to different people due to their ontological and epistemological orientation (Bass, Dalal-Clayton & Pretty, 1995; Kinyashi, 2006; Lamprianou, 2013; Bagenda, 2007).

Conceivably, at the commencement of the 21st century, more than 95 percent of nations in the globe have granted women the two mainly primary democratic rights, the right to vote and the right to stand for elections (Miller, 2002). In 1803 New Zealand was the first country to grant women the right to vote and subsequently Finland followed in 1906. Yet there are still a small number of countries that refute women both the right to vote as well as the right to stand for elections. The premise is that, the right to contest for election, to become a candidate as well as to get elected is based on the right to vote (Abdul-Razak Prince & Eliasu, 2014; Fallon, 2007).

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The truth however is that, women's right to vote, appointed and selected remains constrained, predominantly as the contestants and nominees are frequently male dominated. This undoubtedly is spot on not only for limited and emerging (developing) democracies, but for recognized democracies as well (Fallon, 2007). The low participation and representation of women in Ghana's parliament as well as local assembly can be seen as an abuse of women's basic democratic right and, as such, an abuse of their fundamental human rights. In line with liberal democratic perspective, the significance of participation has been central and recognized as a human right issue for a very long time and classified as a development and fulfillment of the human personality (Olico-Okui, 2004).

The centrality of participation as a basic human right issue in development is highlighted by many well-meaning individuals, organizations and governments on the concept (Miranda, 2005). This unequal rate of representation in legislative bodies signifies that women's representation, to some extent being an end result of democratization is a manifestation of the status quo (Abdul-Razak, Prince & Eliasu, 2014; Fallon, 2007). The significance of participation as a human right issue in development was stressed at the FAO Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development in 1979, and in publications such as Crowley (1985) and Nyerere (1973).

Generally, participation is conceptualized as taking the forms of consultation, representative government, access, inputs, action groups or pressure groups, mobilization, social media as well as empowerment (Kinyashi, 2006). Consultation takes three forms.

It takes the form of elected representatives, selected or appointed representatives as well as the general public and it is the weakest form of participation in planning and the provision of social services. Participation by Action groups is of the pressure group variety and invariably involves the expression of political demands.

It is important to improve access to public services such that large chunk of the population actually receives the benefits by setting up offices to enhance communication for claimants seeking benefits (Ahwoi, 2010a; Ahwoi, 2010b). Also, the seven step participation ladder includes Passive participation, Participation in Information giving, Participation by Consultation, Participation for material incentives, Functional participation, Interactive participation and Self-mobilization. Other forms of participation encapsulate popular participation, citizens, interactive, transitive, moral and manipulated participation (Lady Adaina, 2012). In a liberal democratic dispensation, the right to decide how and in what order to address the development needs as well as to control the design and implementation of projects is a means to sustaining and owning the projects (Danny et al., 2004).This will only happen if everyone within the community is allowed to share, influence, contribute, and participate wholly in the decision making processes linked with each of the phases of the development process (Gaventa & Valderrma, 1999).

To emphasize the importance of participation as not just women issue but as matter of necessity as a civic, political and social rights issue.

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The UN Beijing world conference (1995) states that, "The advancement of women and the achievement of equality between women and men are a matter of human rights and a condition for social justice and should not be seen in isolation as a women's issue. They are the only way to build a sustainable, just and developed society. Empowerment of women and equality between women and men are prerequisites for achieving political, social, economic, cultural and environmental security among all people". In that same platform, they advanced and defended every variety of human rights of women and girls as well as strengthen the efforts to guarantee equal enjoyment of all human rights and basic freedoms for all women and girls who face numerous obstructions to their empowerment and advancement because of reasons such as gender, race, age, language, ethnicity, culture, religion, or disability, or since they are local people (UN, 1995).

It is against this backdrop that the diverse nature in the definition of political participation gained it the capacity to accomplish what most development invention has not anticipated accomplishing currently (Kinyashi, 2006). According to Nelson and Wright (1995, cited Kenny, 1997:11) defined 'political participation as a top down or bottom up, uniform or diverse, simple or complex, static or dynamic, controllable or uncontrollable, predictable or unpredictable. By introducing professionals, controls, bureaucracy and systems, participation can lose its spontaneity, its flexibility and its usefulness'. A true understanding of participation needs to contain the complication inherent in participation and the power relationships that facilitate or impede participation.

Political participation is the ability of a country to legally or constitutionally avail certain democratic rights to its citizens devoid of discriminations in order to contribute meaningfully in the broad administration of the state and the preservation of law and order. Hence the leader sought to be liable, accountable and answerable to the populace (Lady Adaina, 2012).

Uhlaner (2001) cited in Lamprianou (2013), political participation is frequently seen as "political engagement" or "public involvement in decision making". As Riley et al. (2010) have pointed out; political engagement has customarily been thought of as "a set of rights and duties that involve formally organized civic and political activities (e.g., voting or joining a political party)". Diemer (2012) defined political participation as an "engagement with traditional mechanisms in the political system, such as voting in elections and joining political organizations". The concept (political participation) can be seen as the extent to which folks are working out their right to involve in political actions (demonstrating, protesting, speaking freely, and voting, to influence or to get more vigorously involved). The above explanations focus on the legal environment of political praxis, put differently, they obviously set up a structure of orientation with the obtainable range of political praxis surrounded by the conservative political models, even if these models are not essentially consistent transversely states or transversely time (Lamprianou, 2013).

The intent at the back of every successful local government is to improve participation and involvement of the people in issues touching their civic, political and social rights.

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This allows the opportunity for all leading segments (men, women, old, young, vulnerable and marginalize groups etc.) of the society to get involved meaningfully in the process of representation be it voting and / or appointment (Abdul-Razak, 2010).

The concept may perhaps significantly improve the eminence of our lives. And also aid in generating additional active populace, help handle complex problems in public service design as well as delivery, assist build the new relationships and swings of power as well as resources required for modern and 21st century governance, and develop individuals' expertise, self-confidence, aspiration and vision. The above and additional factors made political participation an indispensable component in public policy decision-making as well as delivery (Involve, 2005).

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An unambiguous legal structure is desired within which to exercise rights such as free speech, voting at elections, rights to join political organizations and right to contest for elections in modern democratic standards. This cannot be functional if the specific legal structures required sanctioning public right to use to information held by public authorities; participation in decision-making processes; as well as taking part in legal and decision-making analysis. Sanctions of this sort, if they are to be more emblematic, call for back up by efficient and effective measures, conspicuously the condition of due process as well as procedure of approaching and channels in decision- making (Oakley, 1995).

Similar privileges are factual in other cases of electoral democracy where the qualities of a candidate, aspirant and / or contender are valued so high and could have a major impact on the possibility of being a leader or even a candidate. Traditionally men have nurtured their skills and have had access to greater financial resources than women which are requirements of candidates (Khadar, 2013). Traditional politics and structures form the basis of alienation. Nevertheless affects people as well as societies differently. Gender, age and education are mostly factors considered hence affecting participation levels of individuals willing to engage in politics (Lamprianou, 2013).

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Parry et al. (1992, 2003:140-141), cited in Amponsah et al in a wider context distinct it as "taking part in the process of formulation, passage and implementation of policies". Verba and Nie (1972:2) viewed it (political participation) as "those legal activities by private citizens that are more or less directly aimed at influencing the selection of governmental personnel and or the actions they take". Participation politically, according to Lisk (1995:15-28) is the "involvement of the populace in the choice, execution and evaluation of programs and projects meant to bring about significant improvement in the lives of the people. Participation should also be seen as an increase in the power of the poor and disadvantaged, especially women, whose active involvement provides a voice for the ordinary citizens".

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To Gaventa and Valderrama (1999, as cited in Amponsah et al, 2003:141) the concept of participation, though defined, “expresses itself collectively or individually through voting, campaigning and contests and group action, geared towards influencing the representatives in government". In the works of Abdul-Razak (2010) and Fallon (2003), they combined both biological and biographical factors in determining the level of political participation in both inner and outer party methods influencing nearly all facets of recruitment (candidates, aspirants, appointees and nominees) into key positions of decision-making in one way or the other. These factors may include high educational background, adequate financial resources, race, ethnicity, popular family, family status or political backgrounds and socio-economic status of the family, certain genders or even religious/cultural beliefs or affiliations among others folks consider.

Significantly, the current and modern democratic governance goes beyond the simple practice of democracy as well as the creation of democratic institutions. It engrosses advancing the sustainability of democracy which encompass an enduring ability for: the separation of powers along with autonomy (independence) of the branches of government; the application of power in line with the rule of law; the appreciation for human rights and basic freedoms; ensure transparency, answerability as well as accountability of a responsible public service working mutually at the national as well as local levels (Miranda, 2005).

A modern democratic principle comes with difficulty and challenging social phenomena.

Decisions need to be made concerning the relative rights as well as needs of present and generations yet unborn. Alternatives (choices) have to be made between priorities at local, national and, in fact, global levels. The diverse intentions of the society -social, economic and environmental -need to be integrated where probable, and traded-off where they are unsuited. So as Institutional along with individual roles and responsibilities have to change, hence new ways of doing things will promote sustainable democratic dispensation (UNDP, 2005; Lady Adaina, 2012; Bass, Dalal-Clayton & Pretty, 1995).

The concept (political participation) is seen, diverse in nature with multiple forms, types, categories and sometimes clusters by scores of scholars in the field. To Y. Lady Adaina (2012), Ahwoi (2010a), IEA (2010) as well as Kinashi (2006) looked at the various forms of political participation. These include consultation, popular participation, intransitive, transitive, moral, manipulative, access, inputs, representative government and action groups political participation. Alternatively a scholar like Lamprianou (2013) holds different view on the various forms of political participation. In distinguishing between Conventional and unconventional (or legal and illegal, or official and unofficial and or lawful and unlawful) political participation needs an analogous terminology to accurately do it. To him both conventional and unconventional political engagement can be seen as legal political activity in a democracy and may as well be classified illegal depending on the hierarchy and the quality of political engagement within a society.

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Conventional political participation is seen as the formal, official and or orthodox approaches of political participation (for example joining political party, voting, contesting as a candidate, engaging in debates, official strikes, legitimate demonstrations etc.). Whilst unconventional political participation touches on any informal, unofficial, non-institutional and unapproved political engagements by citizenry (unofficial strikes, illegal demonstrations, throwing stones and shooting at the police, forwarding false political emails, false information on social media among others (Lamprianou, 2013). However, it is significant to put a caveat that, not all unconventional political activities are illegal and the vice-versa is true, hence takes us further to new classification of the concept (participation) “semi-conventional and semi-unconventional participation”. In other words, it can be classified as “partial conventional and partial unconventional participation”.

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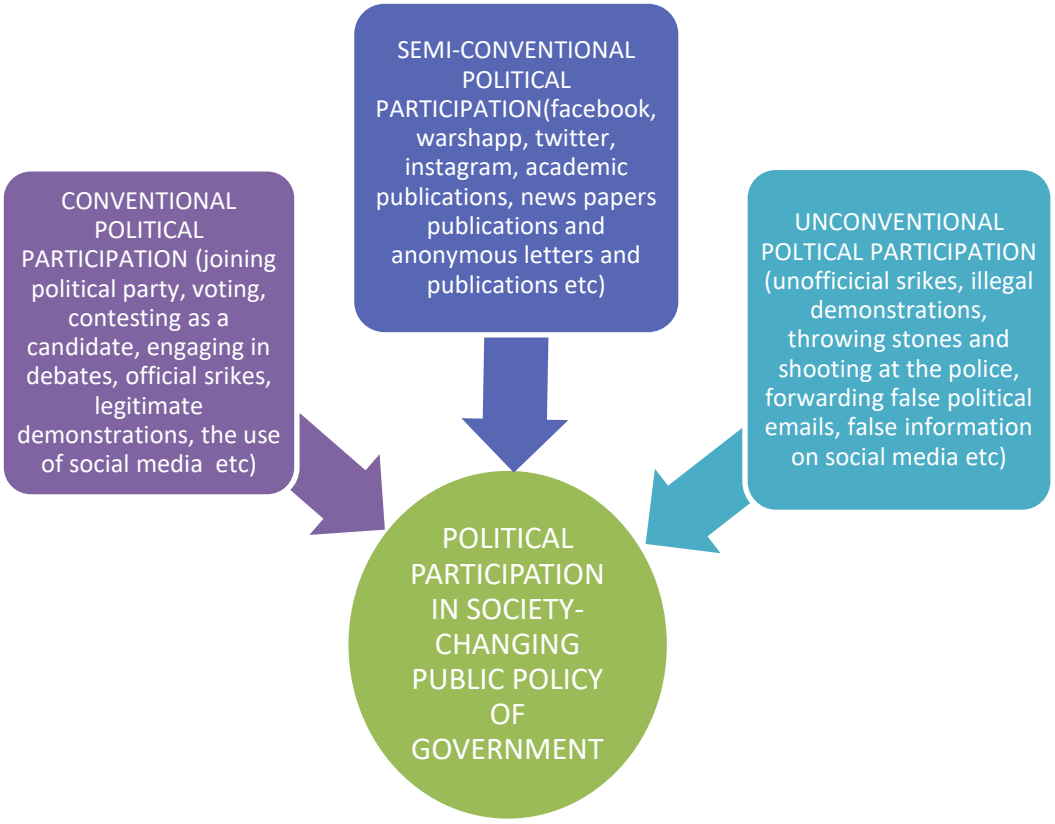
Figure 2.1: Links And Complexities Between Conventional And Unconventional Political Participation



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Source: Author's construct, 2016

This may as well be classified as "Electronic Participation" or "E-Participation" hence limitless permission to embark upon. In this regard the study classified all "Social Media" platforms (such as Facebook, Whatsapp, twitter, instagram, LinkedIn, academic publications, newspapers publications and anonymous letters and publications etc.) as "Electronic Participation" or "E-Participation.

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For example, in Ghana, the 18th August, 2015 demonstration held in Accra by a pro N.P.P group "Let My Vote Count Alliance" to press home their demands on the issue of the voter register can be classified "semi or partial conventional" and "semi or partial unconventional" political activity (The Ghanaian Times 20th August, 2015 edition). Semi or Partial conventional because they had used an acceptable political method of engagement with the state during the demonstration and "semi or partial unconventional" due to the acts that accounted for the violence during the demonstration, in other words, the acts were outside the accustomed legal structure and institutional practices of Ghana. In drawing up an analogous sense out of the opportunity given the group to openly express claims and grievances through demonstration coincided with confrontational action with the police resulting in 'abuse' of human rights and many injuries. This occasioned His Excellency former president John Dramani Mahama to order an investigation into the matter and described the issue as "an abuse of human rights in the 21st century in Ghana and should not be taken lightly".

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From the above analysis, the primary qualification for every individual in a state to participate is to first of all qualify as a citizen. According T. H. Marshall (1950, p: 28-29) cited in Fallon (2003, p: 526-527) "Citizenship is a status bestowed on those who are full members of a community. All who possess the status are equal with respect to the rights and duties with which the status is endowed."

He (T. H. Marshall) distinguished between civil, political, in addition to social rights: Civil rights center on personal freedom as well as justice, political rights center on involvement in and exercising of political authority and social rights elevated luminosity of economic wellbeing plus security. Indicated further, civil rights surface first, followed by political and, eventually, social rights. In the conversation of citizenship, conversely, overlooks issues such as gender, race, ethnicity, family status, education, age and socio-economic status which could influence citizenship rights (Miranda, 2005).

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Likewise, women sometimes attain their rights by securing political rights first, subsequently civil as well social rights, or attaining both political and civil rights concurrently which eventually leads to the attainment of social rights (Martha, 2000). To this end, if the definition of social rights (high light the economic wellbeing and security of the individual in a community) is anything to go by, then in modern politics ‘‘moneycracy’’ is the attainment of social rights followed every other right. To buttress it with Karl Marx assertion ‘he who controls the economy, controls the society’. Ideally, the development of rights in politics is directly linked to gaining suffrage for all gender groups, hence activism for suffrage leads to improve political as well as civil rights followed by social rights. Still today, political rights, such as voting, lobbying, and representation within governments, are essential to women improving their nationality status, thereby shaping local groups to tackle their social, civil, and political concerns and to guarantee the approval as well as enrichment of their basic human rights.

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2.4 Women Participation in Local Governance

The idea of women participation have become a substantive area of attention and gained currency in the intellectual front of contemporary political scientist, sociologist, lawyers, local governance experts, academics, technocrats and development practitioners as it pertains to the archetypal liberal democratic governance processes and procedures (Lamprianou, 2013; Bass et al, 1995). It is an infinite meadow of cram which has been scrutinized in scores of areas like education, health, governance, politics, environment, international rural development and urban renewal. Other areas that have also been scrutinized and investigated includes tapping local indigenous knowledge, voting right, voter education, enhancing the awareness of rights and responsibilities of citizens, lobbying and advocacy, frequently meant in developing a more informed public who possibly will hold elected representatives more answerable (Boyce & Lysack, 1997, Miller, 2002).

Women participation has turn out to be a central value and stratagem in these areas for a variety of reasons counting efficiency, effectiveness, equity, self-reliance, coverage, sustainability and offer social cohesiveness among others. The phenomenon of women participation has been a topic of prolonged debates on its historical source, its theoretical foundation, plus its practical application (Kinyashi, 2006; Gaventa & Valderrama, 1999). Women form more than 51% of the totality of population of the Republic of Ghana (GSS, PHC, 2010 and Kuseg et al, 2011).

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At all historical moments, women in Ghana have contributed hugely towards Ghana's political life. They are downgraded to the backdrops as far as public decision-making is concerned (The women's manifesto, 2004; Allah-Mensah, 2005; Lady Adaina, 2012).

There are no materials policies actions set to guarantee and avoid the structural disparities stuck between women as well as men are taken into deliberation or account in supporting participation in policy decisions (Miranda, 2005). The proportion of female to male membership of parliament in addition to metropolitan/municipal/district assemblies, private/public arenas along with those in corporate associations do not mirror a populace composed of over 51 percent (%) women. conversely, Women account for an amount of 15 percent (%) of the populace in public and private sectors. Also in the recent research conducted by Public Service Commission, females form only 20 percent (%) as against 80 percent (%) for males in Ghana (TV3 7 pm major news, 27th April, 2016). Out of the 275- member parliament, only 30 women were elected into the sixth parliament, making up 10 percent (%) of the entire seats in parliament. Even in the composition of the Council of State, a body that is supposed to be counseling the president, few women is being represented as well as ministerial and other board appointments (Vieta, 2013).

It is against this background Ghana has made some strides and established laws meant to regulate the society and protect the human rights of the populace. The 1992 Constitution has clear provisions guaranteeing the basic human rights of all persons.

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Article 12 of the 1992 constitution guarantees each individual in Ghana has basic rights as well as freedoms and article 17 gives fortification against discrimination and charges the state to take steps to end all forms of bias on reasons of religion, ethnicity, color, race, gender and creed, social and economic status. Article 35 (5 and 6) charges the state to end all forms of discrimination via restructuring of law as well as affirmative action policies (Constitution of Ghana, 1992). Also the Ministry for Women and Children Affairs was established in 2001 under the exst while J.A. Kuffour administration of the New Patriotic Party (N.P.P) and now modified as Ministry of Children, Women, Gender and Social protection to champion the cause of women and children following the World Conference on Women in Beijing, China (Abdul-Razak, 2010).

Ghana has made colossal steps by appointing the first ever female Speaker of the legislature (Rt. Hon. Justice Joyce Adeline Bamford-Addo in 2009 to 2013), also the first female Chief Justice, first female Minister for Justice and Attorney General in 2009 (Madam Betty Mould-Iddrisu) and was replaced by Marrieta Brew-Appiah subsequently. Presently, Madam Gloria Akufo is the Minister for Justice and Attorney General and Sophia Akufo heads Attorney General's Department. Madam Charlotte Osei was appointed as the first female Electoral Commissioner in 2015 and was replaced with Madam Jean Mensah in 2018 following the retirement of Dr. Kwadjo Afari Gyan by President Akufo-Addo on the basis of misbehavior and incompetence in 28thJune, 2018 abruptly (Communications Directorate Jubilee House, 2018).

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Besides the constitution, there are various commitments arising from the UN conferences on women. The 1995 Beijing Platform For Action (PFA), the 1985 Nairobi Forward Looking Strategies (NFLS) and the 2000 review of Beijing commitments known as Beijing +5. As well, UN conferences such as the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) (1994), the Vienna Human Rights Conference, the social summit (1994), and more recently, the 2000 Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and now Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have apparent provisions for improving the states of women and promoting gender parity (The women's manifesto, 2004).

Despite these efforts, Ghanaian women remain on the fridges of national and local politics or decision-making affairs and are confronted by restricted alternatives as well as frightening social, economic and cultural barricades that place them at a huge drawback (Mawuli and Allah-Mensah, 2005). These include lack of political will and commitment by political parties, traditional prejudice, negative cultural beliefs and perceptions, gender discrimination and low level of literacy among others. Power as well as control in the administration of political as well as economic processes for development has constantly been in favor of men. Given the UN assessment that a threshold of at least 30 percent representation is needed for women's participation in decision-making to be meaningful, greater effort is needed to achieve gender parity in Ghana (Abantu for Development, 2011). Real change requires genuine transformative measures that will allow both men and women to participate equally in politics and decision-making processes at all levels.

As well, there is the need for a transformation of political culture to make it more transparent, accountable and sensitive to the needs and concerns of women (ibid).

2.4.1 Participatory Local Governance

Anywhere local governance is participatory, local governments are progressively more responsive to as well as interactive with the society. They are more participatory, transparent, as well as answerable to the local populace. Services are progressively provided in response to inhabitant order as well as preference (Center for Democracy and Governance, 2000). Routine local elections or electoral accountability are at the heart of this procedure. Participatory governance, which might rely on methods such as town as well as interest group meetings, hearings, as well as community participation in budgeting as well as planning, is becoming routine. People are normally well-versed as well as give contribution into key local decisions frankly at public meetings, possibly through surveys, occasional referenda, or other means (Bland, 1999).

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Civil society groups, dazzling the composition of the community, interrelate frequently with local authorities. The populace is likely to participate freely in area development. In short, citizens usually participate in decisions that influence their value of life (Commission for Local Democracy, 1995). Eventually, local leaders know they may endanger their political careers if they dismiss the public consent. Preferably, a combined public awareness develops as well as the improvement of the society as a whole as opposed to local leaders, business interests, or political allies turn out to be supreme (Center for Democracy and Governance, 2000).

2.5 Theoretical framework

Participatory governance can be defined as the formal extension of public voice into political decision-making beyond the ballot box, "the devolution of decision-making authority to state-sanctioned policy-making venues jointly controlled by citizens and government officials" (Wampler 2012b: 669; Fischer, 2012).

Participatory governance theory is a variant or subset of governance theory that puts emphasis on democratic engagement, in particular through deliberative practices. In academic circles, the concerns of participatory governance have rapidly become important topics in social and policy sciences. Moreover, during the past several decades participatory governance has made its way into the political practices of a significant spectrum of political organizations, both national and international. Generally advanced as a response to a "democratic deficit" characteristic of contemporary political systems, participatory governance has been embraced by major organizations such as the World Bank, the US Agency for International Development, UN Habitat, and the European Union (EU); all have put money and effort into the development of participatory processes (Gaventa, 2002).

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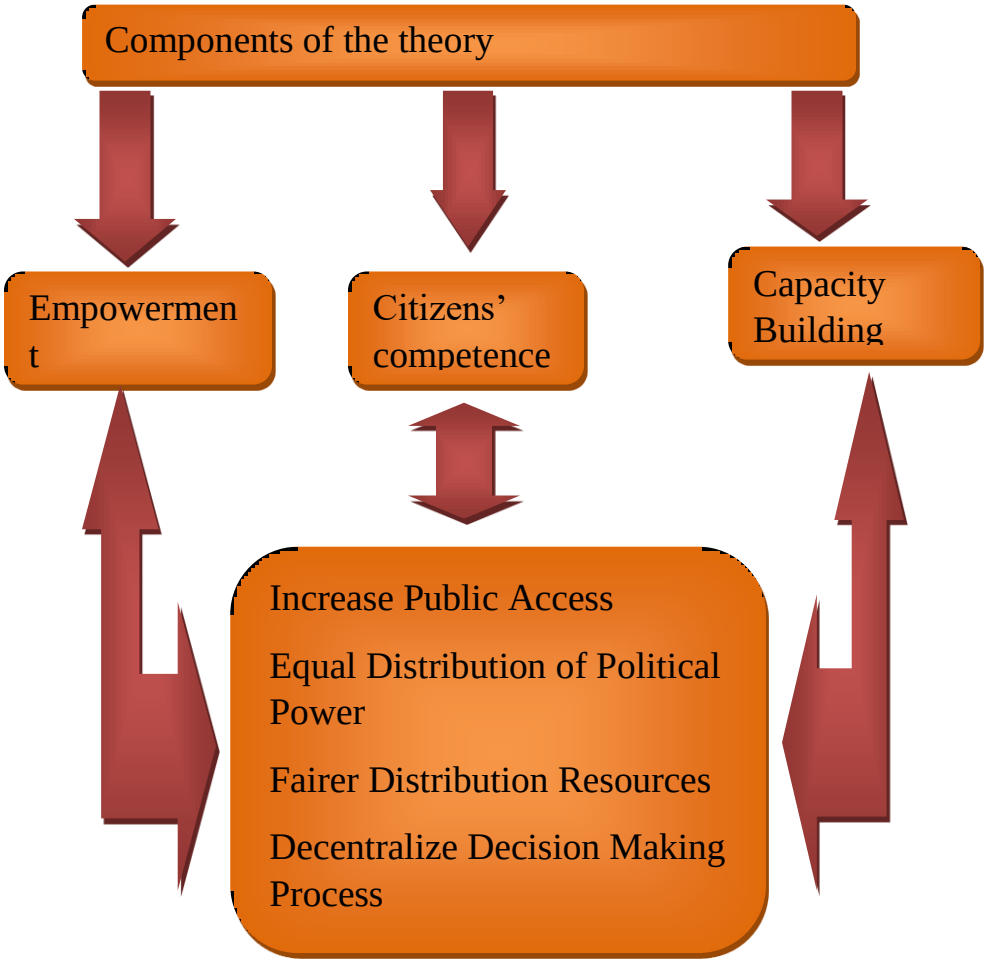
Figure 2.2: Participatory Governance Theory



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Source; Adapted from Frank. O. Fischer, 2012

2.5.1 Empowerment

Democratic participation is generally considered a political virtue unto itself. But participatory governance claims to offer even more; it is seen to contribute to the development of communicative skills, citizen empowerment, and community capacity building (see figure 2.2).

First, with regard to citizen competence and empowerment, the practices of participatory governance are put forth as a specific case of the broader view that participation contributes to human development generally, both intellectual and emotional. Empowerment through participation has, as such, been part of the progressive political involvement especially women and numerous citizen-based deliberative projects bear out its influence on personal development (Joss 1995; Dryzek, 2008).

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Many institutions and organizations are engaged with the practices of participatory governance, in particular in the developing world, speak of "people's self-development" and empowerment as primary goals, emphasizing, political rights, social recognition, and economic redistribution in the development of participatory approaches (Rahman, 1995). Rather than merely speaking for the poor or marginalized citizens' interests and issues, they have labored to assist people develop their own abilities to negotiate with public policy-makers. Beyond institutionalizing new bodies of client or user groups, they have created new opportunities for dialogue and the kinds of citizen education that it can facilitate especially communicative skills.

2.5.2 Citizen competence

Participation, it also needs to be noted, is more than a matter of competence. Competent people may not perceive an incentive to participate. Thus, getting them to do so is another important issue.

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Engagement in the public realm is not without its costs, and most people have little interest in participating unless the costs of engagement are outweighed by the possibility of benefits from it (Osmani, 2007). Local people, including competent citizens, may themselves be highly skeptical about the worth of investing their time and energy in participatory activities. In some situations, participation will lack immediate relevance; it may carry more significance for outsiders than it does for those in the relevant communities. Moreover, not everyone within the communities will be able or motivated to participate. Even when there is sufficient interest in participation there may be time barriers and such barriers need to be curtailed for the smooth take off. Sometimes decisions have to be taken before deliberative projects can be set up and carried out.

2.5.3 Capacity building

Finally, questions of participation and competence also bear directly on the issue of capacity-building. Capacity-building, as the development of a community's ability to deal collectively with the problems that it confronts, can contribute to a sense of social togetherness. Rather than the relative passive role of the individual associated with traditional conceptions of citizen participation, participatory governance helps to connect and enable competent individuals in local communities build together the kinds of "social capital" needed for joint problem-solving (UNDP, 2005). It does this in part by building social trust and the kinds of mutual understanding that it can facilitate.

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Basic to the development of building capacity is devolution of power and resources from central managerial control and toward local democratic institutions and practices, including street-level administrators willing and able to assist community members in taking charge of their own issues, thus in effect by electing their own people. Whereas community members under conventional forms of representative government are more often than not relegated to a vicarious role in politics, under participatory governance they move to a more direct involvement in the political process.

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2.5.4 Strengths of the participatory

A range of experiences shows that community participation can improve the efficiency of programs (in terms of uses of resources) and effective projects (that achieve their intended outcomes) in the provision and delivery of services, in both the developed and developing worlds. In fields such as politics, education, health care, environmental protection, forestry, and irrigation, it is seen to lead to quicker responses to emerging issues and problems, more effective development and design of solutions appropriate to local resources, higher levels of commitment and motivation in program implementation, and greater overall satisfaction with policies and programs (Kunbour, 2000). Furthermore, an emphasis on efficiency typically leads to improved monitoring processes and verification of results.

Participation also has the potential to combine efficiency with equity.

Research shows that decisions made through the participation of community members rather than by traditional elites or unaccountable administrators offers less powerful groups in the community better chances of influencing the distribution of resources (Heller 2001; Fischer, 2000). This view is founded on the presumption that through critical reflection in participatory processes disadvantaged citizens have improved chances of expressing their preferences in ways that can make them count.

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2.6 Local Government and Decentralization

Local governments as well as decentralization are extremely strongly interconnected theories, although they are not synonymous, also they do not at all times bear equivalent connection to both, on the other hand, where as local government can be said to constantly embody several shapes of decentralization, decentralization does not at all times have to take the shape of several local government. Furthermore, diverse models of local government may possibly signify diverse types of decentralization (NDI, 2004).

Local government may perhaps see as representing the utmost form of decentralization, which is, the devolution model, nevertheless this is not for all time so. Anywhere local governments function basically as representatives of central government rather than instruments of local eloquence, this in certainty represents deconcentration rather than devolution (Miller, 2004).

Its contrast is extremely relevant in the Ghanaian circumstance, as the majority of local government in the area function as representatives of central government.in that they have restricted scope for locally influenced decision-making, and is extremely powerfully controlled from the Centre in respect to recruiting of staffs, financing as well as work out of their legal powers (Miller, 2004).

Scores of apparently substantially powerful advocates of local government in the area subscribe to the aged model or school of thought which embraces the connection involving central and local government is fundamentally that of principal and agent. This analysis sees local government as lower to, and certainly as being a creature of central government, and hence subject to its whims and fancies. The impression that local government must not be a subordinate level however somewhat a distinct field of government, with it's owned noticeably distinct array of functions above which its workout complete sovereignty (focus just on the evidently distinct procedures for raising general concern), is not generally accepted (Kunbour, 2000; UNDP, 2013).

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Conversely, this observation symbolizes the contemporary model of local government, and is mirrored in reality that several countries around the globe have currently opted to establish that system in their constitutions, in addition to have recognized that local governments are not creatures of central government, nevertheless somewhat have sovereign existence as well as enjoy strong safeguards not in favor of capricious achievement by central authorities (Lamprianou, 2013).

The impact of this is that local governments which basically are representatives of central government will not give nearly all of the benefits/ return of decentralization, as they would not aid local self-management or give range of self-determining action, out of which comes the capacity to obtain decisions which mirror local state of affairs, preferences or priorities.

Neither does it give power to localities to take initiatives for their personal improvement. So the flexibility which decentralization presents to diverse areas to take action in accordance with local circumstances or preference will not be realized (Anwar & Sana, 2008).

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2.6.1 The Structure of the Local Government System in Ghana

The local government system is established and backed by the supreme law of the country; the 1992 constitution of the Republic of Ghana (Ministry of Local Government, 2014). The constitution provides for the establishment of District Assemblies and that the District Assembly is the highest political authority in the district.

The constitution also provides that the District Assembly has deliberative, legislative and executive power which shall be exercised without influence, fear or favor. The provisions in the constitution clearly state that Ghana as a sovereign nation shall be governed by a local government system through a process of decentralization.

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The Local Government Act No. 462 of 1993 and many other legislative instruments such as the District Assemblies' Common Fund Act 455 of 1993, Local Government Service Act 656 of 2003, Institute of Local Government Studies Act 647 of 2003; Civil Service Law 1993 (PNDCL 327), National Development Planning (System) Act 480 of 1994 and National Development Planning Commission Act 479 of 1994, prescribe the powers, composition, functions and duties of the Assemblies given them some sort of autonomy. However, the autonomy of the District Assemblies is limited by the influence of the president through his ability to appoint and sack some members of the assembly especially the District Chief Executives and the 30 per cent government appointees of the Assemblies (ILGS, 2014; Ministry of Local Government, 2014).

By law, a community or area can be regarded as a district or get District Assembly if it has a minimum population of 75,000 people. A District Assembly becomes a Municipal Assembly if it gets a minimum population of 95,000 people and a Metropolitan Assemble if it has a minimum population of 250,000.A District Assembly consists of the District Chief Executive, the members of parliament (MPs) representing constituencies within the district and a significant number of people usually called Assembly members from each of the electoral areas in the district.

Of the Assembly members, two-thirds (2/3) or 70% are directly elected by universal adult suffrage, and the remaining one third (1/3) or 30% of the members appointed by the president in consultation with chiefs, traditional leaders, political party and other interest groups in the district.

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The local government minister can also establish within the areas of authority sub-metropolitan district councils, urban or Zonal council, town or area councils and unit committees but with the consultation and approval of cabinet. As part of the decentralized structures, the District Assembly may delegate some of its powers and functions to these councils. Currently, there are 13 sub-metropolitan district councils, 1,300 urban, zonal, town, and area councils, and a total of 16,000 unit committees in the country.

The sub-metropolitan District Councils which comprise of not less than 25 and not more than 30 members, made up of all elected members of the assembly in that sub-metropolitan district and such other persons resident in the sub-metropolitan district appointed by the president. Each of the urban council also consists of not less than 25 and not more than 30 members, made up of not more than eight persons elected from among the members of the relevant District Assembly, not more than 12 representatives from the unit committees in the area of authority of the urban council and not more than 10 persons ordinarily resident in the urban area. The zonal council consists of not less than 15 and not more than 20 members made up of not more than five persons elected from among the members of the relevant municipal assembly, not more than 10 representatives from the unit committees and not more than five persons ordinarily resident in the zone.

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The town/area councils consist of not less than 15 and not more than 20 members made up of not more than five persons elected from among the members of the relevant assembly, not more than 10 representatives from the unit committees and not more than five persons ordinarily resident in the town or area (Lamprianou, 2013).

The unit committee consists of not more than 15 persons made up of 10 elected persons ordinarily resident in the unit and not more than five other persons resident in the unit and nominated by the district chief executive, acting on behalf of the president. The district Assemblies are basically established in order to ensure that development in the local communities and to achieve this objective, they perform various functions including the following;

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I. The District Assemblies are accountable for the total development of the district and have the responsibility of ensuring the preparation and submission of development plans through the Regional Coordinating Council to the commission and budget and finally to the minister of finance for approval

II. The Assembly is also responsible for the formulation and execution of plans, programs, projects and strategies for effective and efficient mobilization and disbursement of resources and funds necessary for the overall development of the district

III. The Assembly is to promote and support productive and useful economic and social activities that can propel social development in the district. It has to also ensure that obstacles that can hinder development are removed.

IV. The District Assembly initiates programs and projects for the development of basic infrastructure and offer community works and services to all the citizens in the district.

The functions of the District Assembly are many and require the use of many local resources both human and material. Therefore, it is important to get women to participate in the decision making and resource mobilization (Adaina, 2012).

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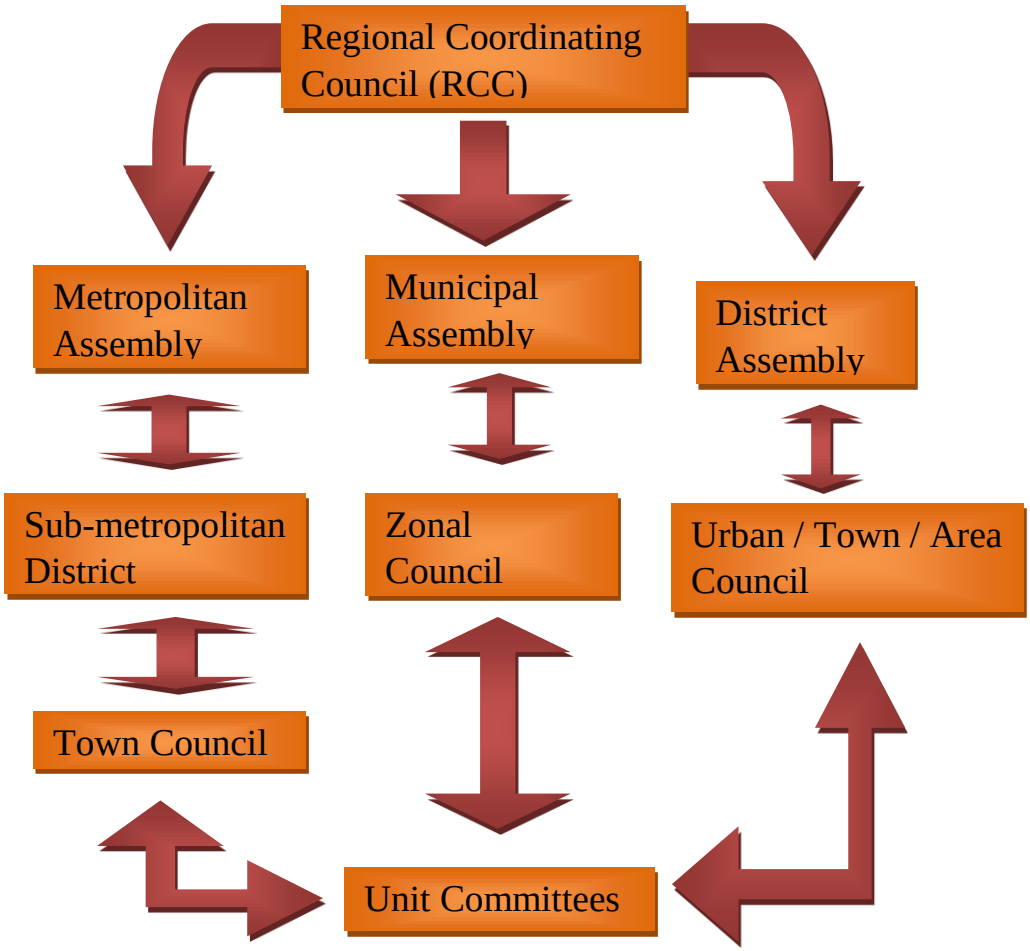
2.10 The new structure of local government and Administrative units in Ghana

Figure 2.3: Basic characteristics of the Local Government structure



Source: ILGS, 2008; Der Bebelleh & Nobabumah, 2013; Abdul-Razak, 2010.

Ghana has sixteen (16) administrative decentralized regions that coordinate the activities of central government and the District Assemblies within each region.

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The Regional Coordinating Councils (RCC) is headed by Regional Ministers appointed by the President and does not have legislative as well as evaluating function (Ahwoi, 2010a; Goel, 2010; A Guide to District Assemblies in Ghana, 2010).

However, following several petitions from chiefs and some well-meaning Ghanaians concerning the creation of new regions for some time now coupled with the campaign promise in 2016 by the two major political parties (N.P.P and N.D.C). In 2017, a new ministry was created called ministry of re-organization and development by President Nana Addo led N.P.P government to spur head the creation of the new regions. Upon series of consultation with chiefs, opinion leaders, youth groups, civil society organizations and other stakeholders like the electoral commission, National commission on civic education (NCCE) and the media. By September, 2018 the ministry held a press conference on the guidelines for the creation of the new regions where six (6) areas were proposed. Subsequently a referendum was held on December 27th, 2018 in these areas which saw the creation of these six (6) new regions namely North East, Savannah, Bono East, Ahafo, Western North and Oti regions following a parliamentary approval and legislative instruments (LIs) establishing each of these regions. The structure of the local government system consists of a Regional Co-coordinating Council, a four-tier Metropolitan as well as a three-tier Municipal/District Assemblies Structure.

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The Assembly can be classified as metropolitan, municipal and or district depending on the population density of the place (A Guide to District Assemblies in Ghana, 2010). There are three (3) types of districts in Ghana – metropolis, municipalities and districts. Each of them has an Assembly as the highest political authority in the district: a Metropolitan Assembly, Municipal Assembly or a District Assembly popularly called MMDAs.

A population in excess of 250,000 people in a district can be classified as Metropolitan, Municipal is with a population in excess of 95,000 and a District with a population 75,000 and over. In other words, the composition and core functions of the metropolitan/municipal/District Assemblies (MMDAs) are alike, however different population sizes: 250,000, 95,000 and 75,000 correspondingly (ILGS, 2010; Der Bebelleh & Nobabumah, 2013; Goel, 2010; A Guide to District Assemblies in Ghana, 2010, Abdul-Razak, 2010).

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The RCCs are made up of the representatives from each of the district assemblies in the region and from the Regional House of Chiefs. The role of these bodies is to coordinate policy implementation amongst the district assemblies, hence are in charge of the general progress of the districts and take oversight responsibility to coordinate, integrate as well as complement the activities of all development agencies in the district inclusive of central government ministries, departments and agencies and non-government organizations (ILGS, 2010; Der Bebelleh & Nobabumah, 2013; Goel, 2010; A Guide to District Assemblies in Ghana, 2010, Abdul-Razak, 2010,MLGRD, 2010).

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The 1992 Constitution prescribes that Ghana shall have a system of local government and administration which shall, as far as practicable, be decentralized (GOG, 1992). It thus provides the establishment of a District Assembly which shall be the highest political authority in the district, and shall has deliberative, legislative and executive powers (MLGRD, 2010). The Local Government Act provides that there are three kinds of districts in Ghana – districts, municipalities and metropolis.

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Each of them has an Assembly as the highest political authority in the district: a District Assembly, Municipal Assembly or a Metropolitan Assembly and per the provision in the constitution, the President has the power to declare an area as a district and assign a name to the district.

The first District Assemblies were established in 1988 after the first District Assembly elections were held (Kuusi, 2009). From then, various constitutional reforms have been made to widen and strengthen the decentralization process.

The Assembly consists of the district chief executive (similar to Mayor), the members of parliament (MPs) representing constituencies within the district and a significant number of people usually called Assembly members from each of the electoral areas in the district. The president is mandated by the constitution to appoint 30 per cent of the members of the Assembly and the District Chief Executive but in consultation with chiefs, traditional leaders, political party and other interest groups in the district. The remaining 70 per cent are elected through district elections organized by the electoral commission.

Each District Assembly has an executive committee, which is responsible for the performance of the executive and administrative functions of the District Assembly. As the chief representative of the Government in the district, the District Chief Executive actions in most instances allows the central government to exercise considerable control over the affairs of the local government (Kuusi, 2009).

However, to ensure less political influence in the decision making process of the Assemblies, the Member of Parliament within the district has no vote and the president appointees cannot exceed 30% of the membership (Ohene-Konadu, 2001). The most important purpose of these provisions was to "promote popular participation by shifting the process of governance from command to consultative processes" (Constitution of Ghana, 1992).

Also within the executive committee of the Assembly is the presiding member who is also an elected member from among the Assembly members by two-thirds of all the members of the assembly (Constitution of Ghana, 1992).The Minister responsible for local government may also establish, with the approval of the Cabinet, sub-metropolitan district councils, urban or zonal councils, town or area councils, and unit committees within the area of authority of the District Assembly (Local Government Act, 1993). The District Assemblies may delegate some of their functions to these bodies, which comprise of elected and appointed members (Local Government Act, 1993). There are presently in total 13 sub-metropolitan district councils, 1,300 urban, town and area councils, and 16,000 unit committees in Ghana (Kuusi, 2009).

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2.7 Significance of enhancing the Interest of Women Participation in Governance

Systematic integration of women augments the democratic basis, the efficiency and the quality of the activities of local government.

If local government is to meet the needs of both women and men, it must build on the experiences of both women and men, through an equal representation at all levels and in all fields of decision making, covering the wide range of responsibilities of local governments; In order to create sustainable, equal and democratic local governments, where women and men have equal access to decision making, equal access to services and equal treatment in these services, the gender perspective must be mainstreamed into all areas of policy making and management in local government (International Union of Local Authorities (IULA) worldwide declaration on women in local government).

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"The empowerment and autonomy of women and the improvement of women's social, economic and political status is essential for the achievement of both transparent and accountable government and administration, and sustainable development in all areas of life"(UN Women's Conference Beijing, 1995). Participation of women in local governance is often easier to achieve than participation at the national level, because eligibility criteria are less stringent on the local level, and local government is the closest to the women's sphere of life, and easier to combine with rearing children. It can be the first level that women can break into and as such it can serve as a springboard to national politics, by developing capacities and gaining experiences.

Likewise local politics can be more interesting for women as they are the persons who know their community well, being the major users of space and services in the local community, such as water, electricity, waste disposal, health clinics, and other social services.

They participate actively in organizations in their neighborhood, and it is easier to involve these organizations in formal political decision making at the local level (IULA, 1996). Below are ways of enhancing women interest in participation in local governance.

Institutional ambiguities and insufficiency on part of the electoral arrangements, the Party-community relationship, and the organization of government, all contribute to exacerbate women‘s low political status. Women who make to the villager‘s committees, for example, are often assigned marginal portfolios, such as family planning. Such assignments reinforce and institutionalize the gendered social roles of women, reproducing women‘s lower and limited status within the local social and political structure (González, 1995).

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2.7.1 Justice

Women constitute half of any country’s population, and therefore have the right to constitute half of the decision-making bodies. Only by having more women (local) elected, women will feel truly represented and recognized in the democratic process. A society where women are not part of the political system is an unjust society.

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2.7.2 Efficiency

Women have different experiences and resources to bring into politics. A political system, which does not exploit both women's and men's experiences and resources, is therefore not efficient.

2.7.3 Diversity

In general, women and men perform different tasks and live in different economic and social conditions. Therefore they have separate political interests.

Being mainly responsible for reproductive activities, women have a particular interest in the allocation of local resources and services, such as water, fuel, electricity, sanitation, housing, public safety, and health services. Men politicians normally do not automatically represent women's interests. Women's active participation in decision making is essential in order to ensure that women can promote and defend their specific needs and interests. They can be prime actors in promoting gender sensitive governance that addresses the interests of both women and men and enhances access to and control over local resources for both. In some countries women have succeeded in changing the political agenda by putting women's issues on it (social services, child care, reproductive rights, women's land rights, and violence against women). A survey of women's political experience, carried out by the Inter-Parliamentary Union in 1999 and including 187 women from 65 countries shows that 89% of the women politicians consider that they have a special responsibility to represent the needs and interests of women (IPU, 2000).

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Besides, neither men nor women form a heterogeneous category, inside these categories exist diversity as well, which have to be taken into account when a democratic local process is to be achieved.

2.8 The Contribution of women in Local Governance and Development

Women's participation in political life is gaining attention from policy makers and researchers but systematic data remains lacking. Analytical work done in other parts of the world has shown that increased women's participation in political, social and economic life of a country can lead to significant improvements in equity and effectiveness of policies to the benefits of all stakeholders (Miranda, 2005).

Barriers to women's participation in sub-national governance are found to include: a lack of experience and certain skills, low intra-household bargaining power, high time constraints, restrictions on women's travel, traditional norms that ascribe authority and glory to men over women, a lack of confidence, and a lack of acceptance of female leadership (Minoletti, 2014; Miranda, 2005).

However, enabling factors for women's participation include: a relatively high level of gender equality in formal educational attainment, the deliberate actions of certain governance actors to increase women's participation, and the women who are already in leadership positions inspiring and enabling other women to follow in their footsteps (Miranda, 2005).

It is also found that a number of the barriers to women's participation are starting to fall. There is still much scope for government, and other governance actors, to take positive action to increase women's participation in sub national governance.

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In so doing the country can meet some of its outstanding obligations as a signatory to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), and commitments under the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (Minoletti, 2014).

Broadly speaking, women at all levels of decision-making are under-represented and are poorly engaged in governance processes. It is an important end in itself to achieve gender equality in governance. This implies equal right of participation for women in decision-making processes who are otherwise traditionally excluded for various reasons.

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Thus promoting gender participation in governance is one of "critical areas of concern"-its strategic aim is to adopt those procedures and measures that guarantee women's complete partaking in governance and equal access to decision-making through socio economic empowerment. The questions to be answered are how to redefine governance that recognizes gender equality as its central and core value and eliminate gender blind policies at institutional levels (Broady, 2009).

The impact of different level of governance institutions in policy making such as community, national and global institutions has to be assessed to create space for gender equality and women's participation in the governance process (Center for Democracy and Governance, 2000).

The hypothesis that women can deliver provided their capacity is built up and institutional support is available has to be looked into. The change in governance institutions to make them responsive to women specific needs can be strategized.

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Every society has a wide range of governance institutions (Fukuyama, 2013). The understanding of governance paradigm that who are empowered to make decisions, who they listen in the process of decision making and what material impact these decisions have on public life are of vital importance (Khadar, 2013). Gender equality is, therefore, an objective, which people have realized, since women in most societies are marginalized in governance institutions, civil society/community, local government, national government and international agencies (Shamim & Kumari, 2002).

Experience shows that even though some women are included in the process they, however, have little share in decision making and acceptance of women's specific needs are below the threshold. This phenomenon has now got wide recognition that women must be included in the governance at institutional level and their existence and voice is heard in decisions making to achieve a gender balanced society (Broady, 2009).The political participation of women is a sine-quo-non for the success of modern democracy.

So far as global scenario is concerned, women got right to vote in USA in 1920, UK in 1928, in France in 1944, and in Switzerland in 1971. Thus women got political liberty in the twentieth century and still they have long way to go to achieve their political destination which is possible only by their political empowerment and active participation in political governance institutions (Fukuyama, 2013).

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2.9 Challenges Militating against Women's Participation in Governance

The mix of numerous factors, including traditional patriarchal stereotyping of women, gendered division of labor and responsibilities, economic structures, institutional norms and procedures and inadequate state intervention, lower average educational levels of females, timing of campaigns especially in the night, political culture, male-centered social practices as well as religious factors have all been put forward to explain this phenomenon (Gyimah & Thompson, 2008; Shamim & Kumari, 2002).With most of these factors deeply historically and culturally entrenched in Chinese society and many other parts of the world, scholars so far seem to be in agreement that the prospects for women political equality in rural China and other parts stay bleak.

Howell for example, first points out, in general (that is, across countries), women's participation in politics faces challenges including gender socialization, structural factors such as the gender division of labor (both in the economy and in the household), gender ideology, and political and institutional barriers.

In the Chinese countryside, sexist attitudes coincide with the perception of women as less competent (*disuzhi*, or ―low quality), and should confine their activities within domestic instead of public arenas. These attitudes have tremendous effects in producing and reproducing gender inequality, as female children face serious disadvantages against male ones in education obtainment and the opportunities to waged employment.

What is more problematic is that such social beliefs are held by villagers of both genders, making the challenge to change them more formidable (Howell, 1996). The issues that hinder or aid women's political participation differ with level of socio-economic development, geography, culture and the type of political system. Women themselves are not homogeneous group (have major differences) based on class, race, ethnicity, cultural background and education.

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2.9.1 Insufficient Political Party Support

Women take part in vital responsibilities in campaigning as well as mobilizing support for their parties; nevertheless they hardly ever occupy decision-making positions in these organizations. In actuality less than 11 percent (%) of party leaders globally are women. Even though political parties release funds for men dominated election operations, women once in a blue moon profit from these funds. For instance, scores of parties do not make available adequate financial support as well as logistical assistance for women aspirants. Studies show that a huge collection of women aspirants, combined with adequate financial funds, be able to significantly augment the number of women voted for (Mould-Iddrisu, 2010).

The selection as well as appointment procedure in political parties is unfair and not in favor of women in that 'male characteristics' are accentuated and frequently turn out to be the standard for choosing aspirants. For instance associations like 'old boys' association can impede as well as avert women from incorporating themselves into their party's works.

This affects the opinion of women as feasible aspirants on the part of those who offer support for election operations or campaigns (Khadar, 2013).

Again, women are not frequently positioned in winnable places on party records. Women's involvement and participation is then better appreciated once there are proportions or quotas with an appointment directive. In countries like Sweden, nearly all political parties employ 'zipper' lists system where both males as well as females names alternate on the party records, ensuring 45.3 percent (%) women in parliament (Miranda, 2005; Khadar, 2013).

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2.9.2 Socio-economic Obstructions

Socio-economic circumstances play a major function in the enrollment of women to governing bodies in both venerable as well as fresh democracies. The social and economic class of women in society has a straight influence on their participation in political institutions and elected bodies (Mould-Iddrisu, 2010; Ofei-Aboagye, 2000; Abdul-Razak et al, 2014).

Adding to the absence of sufficient financial funds, the socio-economic hindrances affecting women's participation in both parliament and local government level encapsulates:

i. Illiteracy as well as inadequate access to education and choice of professions; and
ii. The twofold load of domestic duty as well as professional requirements (ibid).

Contextualizing Raiza's idea to Wa municipality, social and cultural conventional wisdom express gender biases and reinforce discrimination against women. In the Ghanaian setting or society men are expected to marry women not the vice-versa. In the works of kuseg et al, (2011) women are moved from one known community to an unknown community just for the purpose of marriage. This takes some of them too much time to socialize with the new community members and to build social prestige and social capital.

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2.9.3 Lack of Training and Education

On the issue of education and training levels, there are huge differences between men and women. According to the Ghana Living Standards Survey in 2000(GLSS 4), 44.1 percent (%) of women as opposed to 21.1 percent (%) of men have no formal education. Given that formal sector employment now requires various higher levels of education (diplomas, degrees as well as masters) hence allowing women to be disadvantaged in terms of access to the formal sector (The Women's Manifesto, 2004; Allah-Mensah, 2005).

Again, in terms of articulation, it is extremely hard for women to speak, argue, to push for their worries. The question now is how can we encourage women to speak out and to articulate themselves? Fascinatingly women may perhaps have a lot to say, however we need to encourage them to speak, not merely concerning politics, but also regarding their problems, life, subjects that concern them. The answer is education and continuous training. Education has led a lot of women in scores of societies to join political parties or participate in political activities.

Education and training are the most essential means of expression to encourage women to speak out and to participate in decision making processes (Mould-Iddrisu, 2010).

In addition to basic education, scores of women require the political training necessary to participate efficiently in the political ground (Allah-Mensah, 2005). The universal remedy is not only in training but the continuous extension of the collection of women who are competent for recruitment to political callings is thus desirable (Women in Parliaments Global Forum Summit, 2013).

There is widespread perception of the concerns of women, gendered political consciousness- raising, lobbying abilities as well as networking are central for the process of training women for political careers. To that conclusion, women's headship programs play exceptional role in view of the fact that they afford the prospect for links to be made with wider clusters of women can be geared up for a political career in the executive, legislature and the local assemblies hence confident to seek to such careers.

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Exceptional concentration ought to be given to young women participating in politics and the need to work together with men (Gyimah & Thompson, 2008).

2.9.4 Traditional Roles of Women

Countries all over the globe, traditions persist to highlight women's most important functions as mothers as well as housewives and to confine them to those functions.

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A traditional strong, patriarchal value system favors sexually segregated responsibilities, and 'traditional cultural values' militate against the improvement, advancement and involvement of women in whichever political process (Ofei-Aboagye, 2000; Abdul-Razak et al, 2014; Voice Ghana, 2014; Gyimah & Thompson, 2008; Khadar, 2013).

Nations across the continent and among several other continents in the world are subjugated by the philosophy of "a woman's place". According to this philosophy, women ought to simply play the responsibility of 'working mother', which is usually poorly paid as well as apolitical (UNDP, 2013). In reality, the more authoritative and "mainly" a woman are, the more she corresponds to the implicit male convention of the game. That is why a number of women politicians in general have to overcome the complexity of feeling uncomfortable in the political field, as though they are somewhere where they do not fit in, acting in ways that are not natural to them (Gyimah & Thompson, 2008).

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A woman should be ready for the reality when she became a politician she does not cease to be a woman. It is this womanhood which should be placed first, since it contains diverse inspired potentials as well as scholarly strength.

The capacity to make decisions and execute them is not a gender precise attribute, however a widespread human one; in other words, it is as natural for a woman to hold power as for a man to hold power (Valkanova et al, 2007).

2.9.5 Lack of Confidence

The lack of confidence is one of the major grounds for women's under-representation in recognized political associations; it could be in parliament, ministries and political parties or even at the local government level. Through confidence as well as willpower women can attain the peak stages in the political course.

It is based on this reason women ought to believe in themselves and must do away with the general opinion that men have to be their leaders (Martha, 2001).

Women are equivalent to and have the same latent as men, except only they can battle for their privileges. Women are exceptionally first-class crusaders, campaigners, coordinators as well as activists, except panic and fear occasionally stops them from contesting elections as well as from partaking in political process (Valkanova et al, 2007; Francis & Skelton, 2005).

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2.9.6 Perception of Politics as 'Dirty'

In several countries, women see politics as a 'dirty' venture. This has jolted their poise in their capacity to contribute in political processes. In reality, this opinion is not limited to developing economies and is widespread in the developed economies too. Unfortunately, this view mirrors the veracity in scores of countries.

Even though the causes for this may vary, at hand are several widespread trends (Chigwenya & Chazovachii, 2013; Arthur, 2012; Abantu for Development, 2011).

The root for unreceptive dishonesty (corruption) can clarify by a swap relating the advantages as well as benefits of the public market (e.g. legislation, budget bills) and of economic market (funds, votes employment), which look for economic gains by evading competition and by nurturing monopolistic position. In adding up to this, a momentous swell in the expenditure of election campaigning has turned out to be palpable, furthermore this sequentially boost the persuasion to utilize whichever source of funds that turn out to be accessible (Wunsch, 2008).

Procurement of goods as well as services is key symptoms of these inducement and dishonesty in the public sector.

While fresh democracies require time to establish themselves and to build up roots, bribery has extended extra in nations where the practice of political and economic transformation system have previously fully situated, the market financial system has entangled in the ‘ law of jungle’, the mafia and dishonesty (corruption).

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Additionally, hypocrisy is progressively more universal attribute in nations with recognized centralist as well as dictatorial governments. At hand are ‘rules of survival’ in an economy of constant scarcity which situate in harsh disparity to the dreams legitimately declared by the state.

In countries where their financial wherewithal is not strong and shaky coupled with scores of infrastructural needs, funding political parties and the continued existence of a free press remain most important unsolved troubles for the development of democratic functions.

However this is not a trouble-free duty, corruption inevitable results in the creation of favorable conditions and opportunities for the existence of the most negative manifestations of well thought-out (organized) crime. These reasons merge to frighten women and inflame their reservations, worries and fears of losing members of their relations or families, all of which militate against their political involvement or their standing for elected bodies.

Even though the opinion of corruption might not at all time be a fair expression of the real state of affairs, hence having an effect on women's participation and representation in elected bodies? It is important to note that there is a correlation between corruption and representation. For instance countries (Norway, Finland, Sweden, Denmark and New Zealand) where women MPs make up between 30 percent and 45.4 percent of the total number of MPs are perceived as the least corrupt, that is between five and ten times more than in countries where corruption rates higher (Paxton et al 2007).

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Women who prepared their minds to contest for elections must take all these circumstances into account and be ready to oppose the corruption "disease". Corruption involves concealment, while democracy strains improved transparency resulting from political pluralism, freedom of the press, and the rule of law.

By means of ensuring genuine participation and representation of the people especially women and the design of well-organized countervailing actions, democracy can contribute to curbing corruption.

One significant mode of reducing the canker of corruption is via economic liberalization; however market forces cannot substitute the rule of law.

Even though this will not happen automatically, but a synchronized market economy will lessen the opportunities for corruption. Therefore, it remains imperative to have the political obligation and resolve to get rid of the phenomenon of corruption by prioritizing this on the political agenda.

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CHAPTERTHREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter captured the profile of the study area and the methodology employed, detailing the techniques and procedures employed in carrying out the study. It also gives a detailed description of the research design, data requirements for the study as well as sampling procedures for data collection and mode of analyzing the data collected.

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3.2 Profile of the Wa Municipality

3.2.1 Location and Size

The Wa Municipality is one of the eleven (11) administrative areas (District Assemblies) that make up the Upper West Region of Ghana. It has administrative boundaries with the Nadowli District Assembly to the North, the Wa East District Assembly to the East and South and the Wa West District Assembly to the West and South. It lies within latitudes 1º40′ N to 2º45′ N and longitudes 9º32′W to 10º20′W. Wa Municipality has its capital as Wa which also serves as the regional capital of Upper West Region. It has a landmass area of approximately 234.74 km², which is about 6.4% of the region. The Assembly is empowered as the highest political and administrative body charged with the responsibility of facilitating the implementation of national policies.

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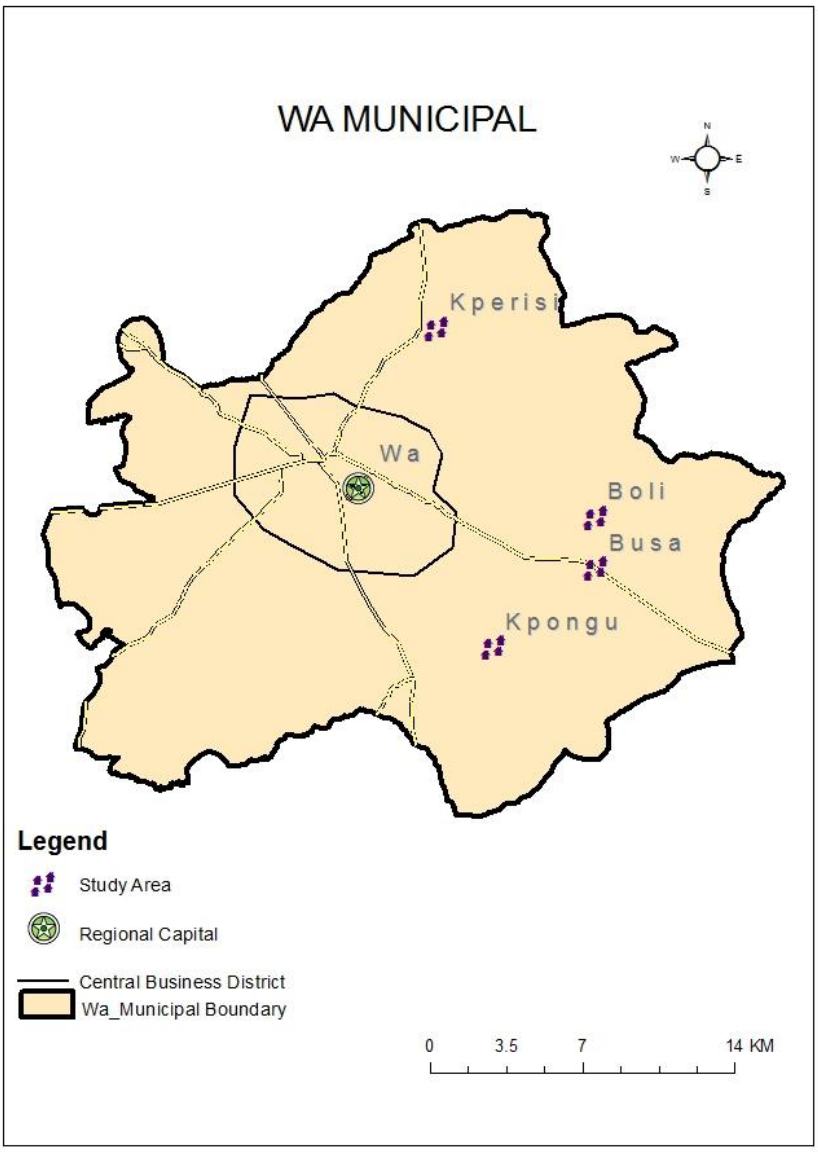
Figure 3.1: Map of the Wa Municipality



Source: Wa Municipal Assembly Profile Guide, 2015

Figure 3.1 presents a map depicting the Wa Municipal boundary, major towns and the selected study communities (Wa, Boli, Busa, Kperisi and Kpongu).

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3.2.2 Population Structure

According to the 2000 Population and Housing Census, Wa Municipality had a total population of 98,675 with the town alone constituting 66,441 of the total population of the Municipality (GSS, 2000).

The growth rate of the Municipality varies between 2.7% for rural and 4% for the urban. In the year 2006 the Municipality's population was estimated to be 119,387 (male: 57,985/female: 61,402), a percentage change of 20.9%. Currently, the total population of the Municipality stands at 127,284 with males constituting about 61,826 and female constituting 65,458 of the population (GSS, 2010). Boli has a total population of about 2,562. Busa has about 2,486; Kperisi has about 1,046, whilst Kpongu has a total population of about 3,531 people (GSS, 2012).

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3.2.3 Vegetation and Climate

Wa Municipality is located in the Guinea Savannah vegetation. The vegetation includes grass with dotted drought resistant trees such as the baobab, neem, dawadawa and Shea trees. The diverse set of plants within the neighborhoods of Wa provide all domestic requirements for charcoal and fuel wood, building of houses, fencing of gardens and cattle kraals (especially dry season farming).

The climate of the district is one that is common to the three northern regions. There are two main seasons; the dry and wet seasons. The wet season commences in April and ends around October, whiles the dry season is characterized by hazy and cold harmatan that starts from mid-November and ends in the latter part of March when the hot weather conditions start.

The nature of both the wet and dry seasons in the municipality affects the livelihood activities of some of the inhabitants since they have to always restructure their livelihood activities within shorter periods to meet the requirements of the season.

The lengthy dry season requires the institution of irrigation facilities of which people that choose their livelihood in farming activities could be engaged throughout the year. The continuous farming system could increase yields hence reduce food insecurity in the region. The mean annual rainfall is about 1100mm with its peak in August. Relative humidity is between 70% and 90% in the rainy season but is as low as 20% in the dry season. The minimal rains usually affect farmers in the sense that they harvest lower yields at the end of the wet season (WMA, 2012).

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3.2.4 Strategic Sectors of the Local Economy

About 70% of the inhabitants of the Wa Municipality are in the agriculture sector. Agriculture as the dominant livelihood activity is followed by commerce which constitutes about 9% whilst the industrial sector consists of about 3%. Some other key sectors of the economy are energy, communication, tourism and transport. Inhabitants of the selected settlements of the Municipality have their livelihoods in the agriculture, commerce and industrial sectors. Less than 5% of the inhabitants of the Municipality are engaged in communication, tourism and transport sectors (WMA, 2012).

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3.2.4.1 The Agriculture Sector

Notwithstanding the fact that the Municipality is the commercial hub of the region, agriculture is the main economic practice.

Crop cultivation and animal rearing remains the largest single contributor to the local economy and employs about 70% of the active population.

The main staple crops grown include millet, sorghum, maize, rice, cowpea, and groundnut cultivated on subsistence basis. Nevertheless, soyabeans, groundnuts, Bambara beans are produced as cash crops. Economic trees within the Municipality include teak, mango, Shea, baobab and dawadawa among others. However, the inhabitants of the Municipality have most of their livelihood activities within the informal sector because majority of them have low levels of education and are not able to find jobs within the formal sector. They therefore engage themselves in local politics belonging to several political parties in the country in order to cope with ramifications of urban life (MOFA, 2012).

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3.2.4.2 Trade/Commerce

The trade/commerce/service sector is second to agriculture in terms of employment in the Wa Municipality. The main activities are retailing, transport, finance, public service, among others. The Wa Municipality is currently the regional commercial/service centre with average trading/office facilities (infrastructure). The market facilities (shops), however do not meet the dimensions of trade. Shopping amenities and facilities lack space and trading on the street is common. One-stop shopping centers and shopping malls are absent. Modern shopping facilities are therefore required to facilitate commerce.

About 60% of the slum dwellers of the Municipality are engaged in trading activities as their main livelihood activities.

These urban poor are however restrained in their trading activities because they can't afford to rent shops within the market, hence are force to trade within little spaces (routes) in the market and the major roads of within the Municipality.

3.2.4.3 Industry

The industries in the Municipality are small scale and are categorized into agro processing, wood, textile, metal, glass, leather and hide, clay/sand/stone, art and craft. Majority of the enterprises in the Municipality are owned and operated by sole proprietors. This confines the capacity and aptitude of enterprises to secure the necessary funds for growth and expansion. Co-operatives and Small Medium Enterprise (SME) clustering and networking is to be encouraged to ensure that the industrial sector take its roles in the creation of jobs and generating income.

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About 15% of the slum dwellers within the Municipality are engaged in the industrial sector in which they take part in wood, textile, metal, leather etc. processing. These people have been able to process durable products from these items and therefore earn some income that they depend on for survival (Wa Municipal Assembly, 2016).

3.2.4.4 Services

There are about 15 financial institutions (Banking and Non-banking) in the Wa Municipality. Nonetheless due to poor financial record maintenance and inadequate collateral it is not easy for businesses to secure loans from the banks.

Venture and working capital is mostly sourced from personal savings, relatives/friends and cash lenders. This seriously endangers the growth of businesses and other industries (Wa Municipal Assembly, 2016).

The study communities in the Municipality are low income earners hence have inadequate collaterals in order to secure loans from the financial institutions so as to improve upon their businesses.

Since the various financial institutions require huge collaterals in order to give a loan, business activities of the urban poor usually remain as they were formed and faces the raft of collapsing as they are not able to sustain the business activities.

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3.2 Methodology

3.2.1 Research Design and Approach

A research design is a plan explaining in detail how the researcher intends to conduct a research work right from the research topic through the methodology, sampling and sampling procedure, data collection, data analysis and interpretation to reporting (Sarantakos, 2005). According to Kerlinger (1986) preference of a research strategy depends on the intention of the study since it guarantees that the measures adopted are best fitting to achieve applicable objectives as well as accurate data to reply the research questions.

The study is qualitative in nature and as such, employed a cross-sectional survey design. In cross-sectional studies, data is always collected or gathered once within a period of days, weeks, or months from people with different characteristics in order to answer questions related to a phenomenon under study.

The cross-sectional survey design actually helped the study to understand the significance of the context of local governance and the participation of women. Also, cross-sectional survey design assisted the study by providing better explanation to the factors militating against women participation in local governance.

The main objective of qualitative research is to interpret and narrate a whole phenomenon from an individual's and naturalistic point of view or frame of reference. As a qualitative study, the cross-sectional survey design provided facts concerning the nature and status of the situation on the ground as it exists at the time of the study as noted by Creswell, (1994).

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3.2.2 Type and Sources of Data

The study is basically an empirical study that relies so much on primary data though it made use of secondary.

3.2.2.1 Primary Data

The study employed primary sources for the purpose of enhancing the credibility and reliability of the findings that would be obtained by the study. The primary sources of data collection also have the potential to check biases in perspectives of previous works and current responses from respondents, hence would help reduce inaccuracies. The primary data was obtained from assembly members, former assembly women and women who ever contested and lost the Assembly elections, traditional leaders, gender desk officer, officials from NGOs into gender issues, women group leaders etc.

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3.2.2.2 Secondary

The study also employed secondary data which refers to published data readily available to the study.

The secondary data was obtained from local scholarly Articles and Journals, government archives, technical publications including manuals, handbooks, data sheets, census reports, Demographic Health Surveys, internet data basis, computer based data and government departmental reports. An advantage of this source of data is it's readily availability, cheaper and easy to access as compared with the primary sources.

The use of both sources allowed the study to explore the extensive literature on the subject matter. It also provides the study the opportunity to use ideas opinions and perspectives from previous scholarly works and results from the empirical data collected from the field.

3.2.3 Sample Size and Sampling Techniques

The sample is a set of elements taken from the whole elements presented to be considered as a result of the sampling procedure. Baker (1994:148) describes a sample as a "selected set of elements or units drawn from a larger whole of all the elements, the population".

3.2.3.1 Population and Target Population

Population refers to "what is being studied" and in this case, the population comprised of assemblymen and well-positioned staff of other stakeholder institutions (such as Unit Committees, NGOs, Civil Society Organizations (C.S.Os), Women Associations, opinion leaders (chiefs, queen-mothers called Margazia's or Pognaamene's, women groups and male and female youth groups), assembly men and women in the Assembly.

Currently, candidates of previous local government elections (both winners and losers) active influential women and husbands of assembly women (both elected and appointed as well as candidates of the previous elections) in the Wa municipality.

However, preference was given to women and this was to allow them (women) to tell their own story in order to reflect the realities of the barriers that affect their participation in local governance. The study on the other hand seek (sample) supporting views from men as well as women folks in the Assembly so as to help establish the study of women in the context of a mixed environment of men and women in order to ascertain the barriers to women participation in local governance. The entire population of the Municipality as at 2010 was approximately 107,214 (GSS: P&HC, 2012). As a result of this high population, in order to gain copious information on the phenomenon under deliberation, the study focused selecting a sample that can provide adequate information on the subject matter.

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3.2.3.2 Sample Size Determination

The sample frame for the study is large and as such, necessary for the study to select a sample size that can conveniently produce the desired results for the study. Sampling gave every individual equal chance to be selected for the study. The study used a sample size of 100 respondents who were selected from the assembly members, traditional leaders, leaders of women groups and associations in Wa.

A sum of 100 respondents was sampled from the target population for the study. This sample consist of 30 assembly members (both elected and appointed), 4 past assembly women in the last assembly session (both elected and appointed), 5 staff of the Municipal Assembly, that is, the MCE, MCD and Planning Officers and other women working in the Assembly, 5 "Margazia's or Pognamene's", 5 chiefs, husband of the only elected assembly woman and the candidate who contested with the only female elected assembly woman with the assembly and 6 staffs of NGO, 2 each representing one of NGOs of Plan Ghana, Pro Net-North and Action Aid Ghana.

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3.2.3.3 Sampling Techniques

Two non-probability sampling techniques were employed thus, purposive and snow ball sampling techniques.

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a. Purposive sampling

Purposive sampling is a form of non-probability sampling where samples are chosen by intentionally seeking individuals or circumstances that meet criteria of interest or are likely to offer greater understanding of a chosen concept of research (Sarantakos, 2005). It is sometimes referred to as judgment sampling. With this method, the investigator consciously used to decide on information due to some qualities the informer possesses. It is non-random sampling technique that does not need underlying theories or a set number of informants.

Purposive sampling method was consequently used to choose key organizations and players (key informants) to be investigated.

These key organizations as well as players were traditional authorities (Chiefs, "Margazia's" or "Pognamene's") from all the zonal areas and suitable organizations that are into local governance and gender related activities in the Municipality. The appropriate officials who could offer desirable information necessary for the study were interviewed. The officials chosen and interviewed were the heads of departments responsible for the various units (the Municipal Chief Executive, the Municipal Coordinating Director, the Municipal Planning Officer, Gender Desk Officer, Presiding Officer and the Municipal Community Development Officer) and sub-district structures (Unit Committee Members) within the Municipality.

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Also the Municipal Director of the Electoral Commission and other women working with the Assembly, Local Government and Gender related NGOs (staff), women associations, youth groups and husband of the only elected Assembly women, the man who contested with the only successful assembly woman were interviewed to enhance the data collected from the field as stakeholders using prearranged standard; sex, age, position, knowledge on local governance system as well as experience of assembly members were considered.

The rationale for choosing purposive sampling was that the researcher presumes that people have knowledge and understanding of the topic being studied, these categories of people may have unique, different or important perspective on the phenomena in question and their presence in the sample should be ensured (Robinson, 2014).

Another good reason for utilizing purposive sampling is that, the respondents (samples) are chosen deliberately seeking individuals or circumstances that meet criteria of interest or are possible to offer greater understanding of a preferred concept of research (Sarantakos, 2005). Also the interpretive paradigm argues that researchers' understanding of the social world can be intensified when they make an attempt to appreciate it from the viewpoint of the citizens being studied (Weber, cited in Henn et al, 2006).

It is based on this that, the researcher selected (30) thirty assembly men and women (both elected and appointed) out of the forty-five (45) assembly members using snowball sampling. The researcher guaranteed these citizens of the principle of confidentiality as one of the ethics in social research.

In addition four (4) respondents were selected, based on their positions as past assembly women (one was elected at that time and the three (3) were appointed). Also, as a result of time and resource limitations which could not allow for all players of all the recognized organizations to be investigated, snowball sampling method was used to choose individual units from the Assembly.

b. Snowball sampling

The study also employed snowballing in collecting data. In this case, the investigator first of all identify few respondents who are characterized by the qualities the investigator is searching for; the researcher interviews them; then asks them for names of other persons whom they know who have analogous abilities and other qualities that interest the investigator.

The investigator then accrues more and more respondents by using every respondent you get as a source of new names for your sample. A snowball sample is built from the subjects recommended by preceding subjects. It is a great pleasure to develop a sample using existing networks of people to identify or locate or introduce you to their friends, or family, or boss, or teachers, or more specifically assembly members, or past assembly women in our context. Snowball sampling was used in a very practical and private manner for the study of "Examining women participation in local governance: evidence from Wa Municipal Assembly". This method was used to choose respondents for the study.

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The investigator was able to find few assembly members willing to talk and then ask them for the names and locations of the others (Assembly Members) they know who might also be willing to be interviewed. Sampling of this type has often been done in studies of the elite groups, either those in power in a community or members of the upper classes. In community studies like this, there has often been the sense that only those in power really know who else is in power. In other words assembly members (current and past) know their colleagues' assembly members (both current and past) very well and will be able to identify and locate them quickly. Since there is a sampling frame listing all those who are powerful (as there is a listing of all those who hold office), a snowball sampling method led the researcher from one power holder (Assembly Member) to another.

The rationale for the use of this method is that, it reduces access problems in human populations and can help the researcher reach certain hard-to-find people such as the only assembly woman as well as past assembly women if the investigator were to use the simple random sampling method. The methods here fore take people or units that are readily accessible as well as eager to answer questions under consideration. In community studies like this, there has often been the sense that only those in power really know who else is in power. In other words both assembly members (current and past) know their colleagues' assembly members (both current and past) very well and will be able to identify and locate them quickly.

In all the respondents were sampled for the study based on their knowledge, positions, age, sex and experience in local governance system. Hence the sample becomes a reflection of the population.

3.2.3.4 Sample Size Distribution

In this study, Wa Municipal Assembly is divided into five (5) zonal councils (Wa, Busa, Kpongu, Kperisi and Boli) with forty-five (45) assembly members comprising thirty-one (31) elected and fourteen (14) appointed Assembly Members and with 146 Unit Committee (UC) Members. The sample size was also drawn from the five (5) Zonal Councils within the Municipality as shown in table 3.1.

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Table 3.1 Distribution of sample size

CATEGORY OF RESPONDENT	**SAMPLE FRAME**	**ACTUAL NUMBER INTERVIEWED**
Current Assembly members (31 elected and 14 appointed)	45	30
Past Assembly Women (1 was elected and 3 appointed)	4	4
MCE/MCD/PM/ MPO/GDO/ Assembly Staff (women)	6	6
Husband of the elected assembly woman	1	1
The man who contested with the only assembly woman	1	1
Unit Committees, (31) electoral areas	146	10
Chiefs	5	5
Margazia's / Pognamene's	5	5
Women Associations	42	10
Youth Groups	51	10
Electoral commission staff	2	2
NGO's	6	6
Active and Influential women in the municipality	10	10
TOTAL	215	100

Source: Author's Construct, 2016

In addition to the questionnaire interviewed were 10 active and influential women interested in politics, fifteen (15) separate FGDs were conducted. Two (2) were conducted with two (2) youth groups.

Two (2) were again conducted with two (2) women associations and the other two (2) were conducted with two (2) unit committee groups one from each Zonal Councils respectively. The FGDs held with these groups and associations were made up of the core executive members and six (6) women in each of the zonal councils (chairperson, secretary, women organizer and treasures and women).

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3.2.4 Data Collection Techniques and Instruments

The study employed different tools to collect its data some of which include semi-structured interviews with the use of a questionnaire, Focus Group Discussion and Direct Observation. Prior to the collection of the data, a letter of introduction from the University for Development Studies, Graduate School was copied to all targeted institutions and some individuals.

3.2.4.1Semi-Structured Interviews

The researcher used semi-structured interviews to collect data from Assembly members and leaders of Women groups and Associations. As observed by Abu (2013), semi-structured interviewing is most excellently employed when an investigator has only one opportunity to interview a respondent on the subject matter under deliberation particularly when numerous interviewers will be out into the field to collect data.

A questionnaire with a check list of questions as well as topics pertinent to the study was developed to extract as well as collect information from respondents concerning their involvement in women's participation in local governance in the Municipality.

Open ended and closed ended questions were used in eliciting the diverse sorts of information necessary to address the study objectives. The procedure of interviewing involved a face-to-face interface involving the researcher and the respondents. The option of the semi-structured interviewing method was fitting since it permitted the investigator dig deep into the problem by offering space for the respondents to elaborate their answers and accordingly give rich information for the study. It as well presents an apparent set of directions for interviewers as well as produces dependable, qualitative data (Robert Wood Johson foundation, 2008). The rationale is that it presents a chance for the investigator to examine the respondent on all mind bordering questions.

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3.2.4.2 Key Informant Interviews

Also, the study employed key informant interviews to collect data from officials from NGOs, former Assemblywomen and social workers in the municipality. A key informant interview is one where an individual with prior knowledge of the affected community is questioned to gather key information on solid waste. Key informants are people with explicit facts, knowledge and understanding concerning certain aspects of their institutions as well as area; either because of the professional background, position, leadership responsibilities and specific experience (ACAPS, 2011).

Specifically, the study interviewed the Municipal Chief Executive, Gender Desk Officer and three (3) NGOs (Action Aid Ghana, Pro Net and plan Ghana) to elicit information from them using key informant interview.

3.2.4.3 Focus Group Discussion

Focus group discussion is a small group of individuals of about six (6) to twelve (12) people led through discussion on some specific theme by a researcher or skilled moderator. The group needs to be average large enough to generate useful ideas, but not too large that some participants are left out. Usually this group is homogeneous in nature thereby leveling the playing field for discussion.

Rana and Muhammed (2013) asserts that, focus group discussion is used to gain insights into the dynamic relationships of attitudes, opinions, motivation, concerns and problems related to current and projected human activity. It is also believed that people are vital in providing information about problems that affect them and their experience on issues as well as what influences their patterns of thinking.

The focus group discussion was conducted in five (5) Zonal Councils comprised of fifteen (15) separate FGDs were conducted. Five (5) were conducted with five (5) Youth Groups. Five (5) were again conducted with five (5) Women Associations and the other five (5) were conducted with five (5) Unit Committee Groups with each group comprising of six (6) women from each Zonal Councils respectively. The FGDs for all these groups and associations were made up of the core executive members and women in the community (chairperson, secretary, women organizer and treasures and women).

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The focus group discussion for the fifteen (15) separate groups and association selected from the adult males and females aged 18 and above in the Wa Municipality and as well knowledgeable people on the topic.

The discussions usually commenced with questions on their lived experiences; in relation to local governance and the issue of women participation within the study area; one from each Zonal Council namely; Wa, Kpongu, Busa, Kperisi and Boli. The focus group discussion was conducted in the local dialect (waale) by the researcher. The focus group discussions were written verbatim as well as audio recorded with the participants' consent.

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3.2.4.4 Direct/ Physical Observation

This method as an efficient data collection instrument involves recording of what the investigator witnessed, listened to and smelled in the field. This is to profile our understanding of the problem under study. Observation is furthermore a first-class technique of cross checking the respondent's answers to the questions being posed by the investigator given that the interviewer has the chance to compare what is said as well as what is observed and practical on the field. The use of observation might breed additional questions for study as well as assist shape future discussions or frame questions in case of contradiction among what the interviewer of a key informant observes and what the respondents are saying.

In order to cross check what some of the respondents had previously revealed in their responses, the investigator personally visited the Assembly during their working hours, meeting days and other interactive sessions of Assembly members in order observe how women participate during decision making.

The researcher also had the privileged to witness and observed five (5) separate community meeting at the only elected assembly woman electoral area (Konta).

This helped the researcher assess the influence and functioning capabilities of women at both Assembly and at the community level. The method was employed in order to acquire information in their normal state in the study area (ACAPS, 2011).

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3.2.5 Data Analysis and Presentation of Results

As stated earlier, the study is qualitative in nature. Consequently, the data that was collected for analysis was mostly qualitative. With this, the study used thematic analysis, familiarization, and coding to analyze the data and the results further presented in the form of narrations and quotations. This actually helped the study establish relationships between variables on socio-demographic characteristics and the level of participation in local governance. For the qualitative data presentation, the research made use of simple percentages. Qualitative methods for data examination and analysis also included analytic induction and grounded theories.

3.2.6 Validity and Reliability of the Research Instruments

Like any other research, the validity of the research instruments used in this study is critical. Validity is the degree to which a research instrument measures what it is supposed to measure.

In any case, validity is always concerned with evaluating the accuracy and the effectiveness of the instruments or techniques employed for a particular research (Leedy, 1980). In the first place, the study ensured that its tools and techniques were very valid.

To ensure this, it pre-tested the questionnaire and interview guides which were later used to gather the primary data from the respondents. This was done in order to assess the appropriateness of the instruments in measuring the level of women participation in local governance.

Another issue considered was the reliability of the research instruments that were employed. Reliability mainly indicates the extent to which a measure contains variable errors and these errors have to differ from observation and that vary from time to time for a given unit of analysis measured twice or more by the same instrument. In line with this, the study ensured the consistency and the accuracy of its instruments for the collection of data. Similarly, it pre-tested the instruments to establish the extent to which they could consistently measure what they were designed to measure. Difficulties in the use of these instruments were revised in line with the results of the pretest.

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3.2.7 Ethical Consideration

The study made sure that the work produced has observed the necessary ethical considerations as have being advocated in the APA Ethics Code 2002(Neuman, 2012). Like any other research, the study considered the issue of anonymity and confidentiality, informed consent as well as accurate reporting of findings in the process of conducting the activities.

3.2.7.1 Informed Consent

The study further considered the informant consent very critical. With regards to this, the study took all the necessary steps toward informing all respondents about the purpose for which the research was being conducted. It also informed the respondents about their right to participate or decline to participate in the study. It will further draw the attention of respondents to the fact that they can at any point in time refuse to part-take in the research. The respondents were told the possible consequences of declining or withdrawing and any prospective research benefits.

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3.2.7.2 Anonymity and Confidentiality

The study safeguarded the anonymity of the respondents and confidentiality of the information that was provided by these respondents. It assured respondents that no user or readers of the report would be able to identify them or identify who has said what. It further assured them that no one will hold them responsible for the information they have provided for the purpose of the study.

3.2.7.3 Reporting of Findings

The study reported and presented its findings in a simple language form for the understanding of every reader. It did not anyway attempt to fabricate any data for any purpose. In accordance with research ethics, the studies made every effort to avoid false and deceptive declarations and proclamations. All the necessary steps were taken to discover all significant errors in the data analysed and the necessary steps taken to correct the errors which were detected in a work.

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CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter focuses mainly on field data analysis and the discussion of findings. The chapter is divided into four sections, namely, demographic characteristics of respondents, the trend historically of women's participation in local governance, the interest of women in the participation of Local Governance and the contributions of women towards developmental projects since their participation in Local Governance. The data collected was evaluated in relation to the suitable research questions as well as presented consequently.

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4.1 Socio-Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

The background information of the respondents focused on sex, age, level of education as well as occupational status of the respondents. A total of 100 respondents were interviewed of which 65% were females whereas 35% were males. Their ages ranges from 18 years to 55 years and above. The subject under consideration may look gender biased, but the study considered both sexes in obtaining its data though females form majority of the respondents. The fact of the matter is that the study seeks to assess the level of women's participation in local governance issues and as such gave more women the opportunity to express themselves as far as the subject matter is concerned.

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The results also showed that 8% of the respondents fall in the age group of 18-25 years, 21% fall in the age group of 26-35, 53% of them were within the ages of 36-45 years and 18% of the respondents fall in the age group of 46-55.

It is clear that majority of the respondents forming (about 92%) fall within the age group of 26-55years, thus the targeted group of the study. People within this age limit are mostly recognized as active citizens capable of taking their own decisions and can actively participate in any developmental activity of their communities. In the literature, (Ofei–Aboagye, 2000; ABANTU, 2004) it has been observed that women above 40 years are often considered to be matured enough to take up leadership positions in governance. Like other parts of the country, the above revelations suggest that age has been a factor that affects women participation in the governance

Similarly, out of the 100 respondents interviewed, 27% are single or were never married before, whereas 68% were married. The remaining 5% were either divorced or widowed. All these categories of people are involved in the study in order to determine whether their marital status has any influence in their ability to fully participate in local government activities particularly at the Assembly level. In terms of education, majority (representing 41% of the respondents) had obtain college education with a diploma or a bachelor degree whiles 35% and 17% had completed Senior High School and Primary/JSS, respectively and only 2% of the respondents had Master's or PhD. On the other hand, 5% of the respondents had no formal education at all.

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With regards to the educational background, it can be deduced that; the formal educational level of respondents is high because majority of them have obtained some level of formal education as compared to those who have not obtained any form of formal education. This is not to suggest that those who have not received any form of formal education are not capable of participating in local government activities at the Assemble level. The finding showed that those with no formal education are often the least preferred.

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In a FGD, a female respondent is noted to have revealed that;

> *"I wanted to contest the Assembly elections, but most of the people I consulted told me that I cannot win because I have not successfully completed basic school. They prefer someone with big certificates"*
>
> *(FGD with female respondent, Wa February, 2018).*

However, the interest is to bring to light the impact of any form of formal education on the chances and ability of the respondents to effectively participate in the decision making process at the Assembly as well as communicate well to those in authority for the betterment of their communities. Of the respondents interviewed, an insignificant percentage of 4 were public servants, 14% of them indicated that they were farmers, 10% engaged in trading whereas 72% of them were in the teaching field.

4.2 Trends of Women Participation in Local Governance

This section analyses objective one of the study which seeks to examine the historical trends with regards to women participation in local governance.

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Broadly speaking, women at all levels of decision-making are under-represented and are poorly engaged in governance processes. As shown by the results, both at the assembly membership level and the unit committee level women are poorly represented. Documentary review revealed that in the Upper West Region, where seven hundred and four (704) males contested and thirty seven (37) females' who contested the local level Assembly elections, only nine (9) females' came out victors in the latest 2015 district level elections in the two hundred and ninety-three (293) electoral areas in the region. The evidence further showed that Ms. Margaret Vera Sann, a 57-year-old nurse from the Konta Electoral Area, was the only female contestant in the Wa Municipality who emerged victor to represent her people in the Wa Municipal Assembly (Electoral commission, Upper west region).

In the 2015-2019 sessions, out of a total of 201 candidates contesting for 146 positions, only 16 were female candidates and 185 were males. 14 out of the 16 candidates were successful as unit committee members while the remaining 132 unit committees were males (Electoral Commission District Assembly Election Reports, 2015).

In the 2010-2014 sessions only one woman was successful in the contest from the Konta electoral area; however four women additionally were appointed making the entire number to 5 out of 45 assembly members representing (9.3%). also in the 2015-2019 sessions, Hon. Margaret Vera B. Saan was retained as an Assembly member for Konta electoral area out of the 31 electoral areas.

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In 2010 only 3 women contested as candidates only one was successful while in 2015 the only female candidate from Konta electoral area won. The situation is no different at the unit committee levels over the years in the Wa Municipality. In the 2010-2014 sessions, out of the total 139 unit committee members, only 4 women were elected (Electoral Commission District Assembly Election Reports: 1994, 1998, 2002, 2006 and 2010 respectively). Further analyses of the primary data gathered from the field indicate that 19% of the respondents were of the view that women are fully represented in the local governance system. Meanwhile 81% of the respondents were of the opinion that women are not fully represented in the local governance system. By inference, one could acclaimed that majority of the respondents in the study community were of the view that much is needed to be done in order to increase the female numbers at the local governance level to create balance and fair representation.

Also, previous trends in the municipality regarding the level of representation by women was not different where the 1994-1998 session of the district assembly and unit committee results reveals that no female was either elected nor appointed out of the total number of 31 Assembly Members representing (0%) .

Again the (1998-2002 session) had only one woman elected and eight appointed thereby having nine (9) members in all out of the total 83 members. This was a significant increase due to government directive to (10.8%). From 2002-2006 also, only three were elected and eight appointed out of the total of 83 membership saw a consistent rise of (17.5%).

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Interestingly in the 2006-2010 sessions only three women were appointed and only one woman was elected out of the 25 membership saw a decline to (12.0%). The reduction of the assembly membership from 83 to 25 was as result of the creation of 2 districts out of the Wa Municipality which is the Wa West district and Wa East district. Considering the findings revealed, there is still much scope for government, and other governance actors, to take positive action to increase women's participation in sub national governance. This implies equal right of participation for women in decision-making processes who are otherwise traditionally excluded for various reasons. Thus promoting gender participation in governance is one of the critical areas of concern. The strategic aim is to adopt those procedures and measures that guarantee women's complete partaking in governance and equal access to decision-making through socio economic empowerment.

In the literature, Miller (2002) observed that at the commencement of the 21st century, more than 95 percent of nations in the globe have granted women the two mainly primary democratic rights, the right to vote and the right to stand for elections. However, the low participation and representation of women in Ghana's parliament as well as local assembly can be seen as an abuse of women's basic democratic right and, as such, an abuse of their fundamental human rights. In line with liberal democratic perspective, the significance of participation has been central and recognized as a human right issue for a very long time and classified as a development and fulfillment of the human personality.

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The centrality of participation as a basic human right issue in development is highlighted by many well-meaning individuals, organizations and governments on the concept (Miranda, 2005).

The findings of this study was in line with Crawford (2004), he indicated that women around the globe at every socio-political stage discover themselves badly represented in governance, legislature (parliament) and at the assembly (local government) stage as well as far uninvolved in participating in decision-making. Equally quantitative statistics as well as qualitative lexis authenticate that the representation of women in all decision-making arenas, especially in the district assembly stage, is quite near to the ground. Empowerment of women and equality between women and men are prerequisites for achieving political, social, economic, cultural and environmental security among all people'. In that same platform, they advanced and defended every variety of human rights of women and girls as well as strengthen the efforts to guarantee equal enjoyment of all human rights and basic freedoms for all women and girls who face numerous obstructions to their empowerment and advancement because of reasons such as gender, race, age, language, ethnicity, culture, religion, or disability, or since they are local people (Crowley, 1985; Nyerere, 1973).

Women hold 16 percent of parliamentary seat in the world and successive trends of both parliamentary as well as assembly and unit committee elections has been a source of worry to government, civil society organizations (C.S.Os) and to many non-state actors as depicted below.

In Ghana, the Sixth Parliament of the Fourth Republic, women constitute only 30 people representing (10. 9 %) of the 275 seats in the parliament (Vieta, 2013 and Inter-parliamentary Union (IPU), 2004).

With regards to level of representation at the local government system, a range of experiences show that women's participation can improve the efficiency of programs (in terms of uses of resources) and effective projects (that achieve their intended outcomes) in the provision and delivery of services, in both the developed and developing worlds, their participation also has the potential to combine efficiency with equity. But representation of women at the Wa municipal Assembly is low. As indicated during an interview session with a male respondents;

> *"The numbers are really not encouraging at all but it is not our making because women who try to venture into politics and therefore local governance are always considered disrespectful, bully and take decisions for their husbands and the larger society as well, this therefore has the potential to cow competent women to coil to their shells since they want to be submissive to society".*

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The findings therefore confirm studies that, barriers to women's participation in sub national governance are found to include: a lack of experience and certain skills, low intra-household bargaining power, high time constraints, restrictions on women's travel, traditional norms that ascribe authority and glory to men over women, a lack of confidence, and a lack of acceptance of female leadership (Minoletti, 2014; Miranda, 2005).

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4.3 Level of Women Participation and Contribution in Local Governance

This section of the study seeks to address objective two which sought to identify the level of contribution and participation of women in local governance.

Generally, local governance for that matter decentralization is adopted to assist the central government provides every citizen the opportunity to participate in the governance and development of his/her rural community. But over the past years, various research works have shown that many people at the grass root are not aware of what is required of them per the concept of decentralization and in most cases are not involved in the development of their communities. The low level of local people, particularly women involvement in local governance could be attributed to various reasons such as lack of information on how local people can get into the system and contribute in their own ways towards the development of their communities.

4.3.1 Level of Participation/Involvement of Women

There are different ways of getting women to represent people and their communities at the Assembly.

From the results, 93% of the respondents indicated that elections are the main way through which women get to represents people in local governance. Also, 82% of the respondents indicated that most women are able to represent people through appointment by the central government whereas 11% and 2% of the respondents, respectively, indicated appointment by traditional leaders and through staff appointment are the modes of getting women represented in the Assembly.

In the FGD, a male Unit Committee member as a respondent revealed that;

> *"Women are given the opportunity and support to contest the Assembly elections, but most of them always lose the elections. However, few of them (women) are government appointees and contribute very well during Assembly sessions when given the opportunity to contribute in debates" (Unit Committee member, February, 2018).*

This implies that majority of the respondents in their wisdom believe that allowing women to contest keen elections before getting to the assembly makes them vibrant and deliberative; closely following elections as a medium of getting women to the assembly is through appointment by the central government which will enhance their capacity and give them voice during decision process.

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During an interview, a female respondent emphasized that;

> *"The game should be made open, transparent and intimidation free for all and sundry who have the desire and able to contest, to try their lot in the election to the Assembly than any other mode of appointment and in most cases, women are not encouraged and allowed to participate in the District election by husbands for fear of being insulted, call names such as prostitutes, arrogant, un-submissive and disrespectful".* She further indicated that *"in my candid opinion the central government should give a quota to women and always do the appointment in consultation with the traditional authority to avoid clashing of the chiefs and traditional leaders" (Female respondent Sokpayiri, February, 2018).*

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This falls in line with studies that enabling factors for women's participation include: a relatively high level of gender equality in leadership role, the deliberate actions of certain governance actors to increase women's participation, and the women who are already in leadership positions inspiring and enabling other women to follow in their footsteps (Minoletti, 2014). It also found that a number of the barriers to women's participation are starting to fall. There is still much scope for government, and other governance actors, to take positive action to increase women's participation in sub national governance.

The study also holds the view that people with some appreciable level of education, spirit of voluntarism, ready to serve without inducement and good understanding of governance be appointed and given the opportunity to serve at the local governance system in order to strengthen not only women but the activities within the assembly. Again hardworking women can put themselves up for elections, staff appointment can target women technocrats devoid of partisan consideration, and above all, traditional representatives are equally very important in enhancing local participation.

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In the past, women hardly had the opportunity to represent people and their communities at the Assembly level, but there has been an improvement in the number of women representatives at the Assembly. Out of 100 respondents contacted, 77% stressed that more women are represented in the assembly than before whereas 23% in the sampled population think otherwise. But it is significant to note that majority of the respondents are with the opinion that more women are now in the assembly than it used to be and they attributed it to a constitutional provision that facilitated gendered development within the Wa municipal assembly.

During an interview with a male respondent at Nakore argued that;

> *"Preferably, women should be fairly educated. Bold and confident, self-respect and have a descent employment or responsible person before she can stand for election or appointed to the Assembly to enable her muscle the manly dominated local governance" (A male respondent at Nakori, February, 2018).*

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This is reiterated in the literature that women very often lack support from their husbands or family members. Barriers in the structure of society for women are: limited access to leadership, managerial skills and training, lack of female role models and mentors, disproportional expectations, and violence against women. The political participation of women also depends on the social and cultural climate of a country: religious and patriarchal norms and values may exclude women from public life. Andersen's research in Tanzania (1992) showed that all women local leaders – despite internal differences – have had to fight hard in order to get education and to conquer male resistance against their political activity.

As revealed in the data, 76% of the respondents also acknowledged the fact that sex is always a factor for consideration during appointments to the assembly while 24% of the respondents are of the view that sex is not a factor worth considering in appointment to the assembly. Against this backdrop one could envisage that sex really plays a very significant role in determining appointment to the Wa municipal Assembly. It is revealed that the law mandates that part of the 30% should constitute women and further supported that political consideration has to do with the appointments of such people to vary often (Shiraz, 2015).

Women's participation in political life is gaining attention from policy makers and researchers but systematic data remains insufficient.

Analytical work done in other parts of the world has shown that increased women's participation in political, social and economic life of a country can lead to significant improvements in equity and effectiveness of policies to the benefits of all stakeholders.

4.3.2 Level of contribution of women in local governance

There are a number of benefits that communities and local level institutions can derive from the participation of women in local governance.

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Table 4.1: Level of Contribution of Women in Local Governance

Benefits	Not Important (%)	Somehow Important (%)	Important (%)	Very Important (%)	Exceptionally Important (%)
Ensures Efficient Management of Local Resources	2	8	19	20	31
Promote Accountability and Transparency	0	15	16	31	38
Ensures greater Equity during allocation of Resources	0	9	18	38	28
Facilitate Feedback and Government response to the Demands of citizens	8	11	25	39	18
Increase women Participation	0	5	21	35	28
Reduce the Cost of Organization at the Local Level	2	17	27	25	37

Source: Field Survey, 2014

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From the responses in table 4.9, about 21%, 35% and 28% of respondents indicated that decentralization is important, very important and exceptionally important, respectively, to the development and participation of women in local governance.

This also shows that majority of the respondents (thus out of the 100 respondents 84%) are of the view that decentralization has the potential of bringing development to the threshold of women who formed the chunk of the population. With this, virtually none of the respondents indicated that an increase in women participation as a benefit of decentralization is not important to the development of local governance. About 5% of the respondents are however indifferent as they indicate that an increase in women participation in local governance is somehow important to women towards developmental projects. Women participation in decentralization ensures greater equity during allocation of state resources. This is evident in table 4.1 above that; 18%, 38% and 28% indicated women's participation is important, very important and exceptionally important, respectively, to the contribution of women towards developmental projects since their participation in local governance in the Wa Municipality.

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It is very important for women to participate in local governance and as such, women's participation in local governance needs to be enhanced. From the study, it has been observed that women have less numbers as compared to their male counterparts at the most of the Assemblies if not all. Consequently, women represent less influence during decision making especially decisions that are gender bias.

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The responses from the field showed that 86% of the respondents suggested that it is important for women to participate in local governance whilst 14% in the sampled population are of the view that, it is not that important for women to participate in local governance.

Against this background, majority of the respondents deemed it necessary for women to participate in local governance in the Wa Municipal Assembly since they have much impact to play. The study revealed that; Women participate in decision making process to ensure that the interest of women is reflected in development programs, they form the majority of the population. They are the group that is so vulnerable and therefore should be given space to articulate the views and concerns in the local development decision making.

The Assembly woman for Konta electoral area had this to say;

> *"In a sports situation, imagine if you have a team and you don't allow half of the team to play 'you are stupid' that makes no sense and the evidence show communities that gave their daughters the same opportunities as their sons, there is more peace, prosperity and they develop faster and are more likely to succeed, if this is true elsewhere in America and that can be true in Ghana too especially in Wa municipality" (The Assembly Woman For Konta, February, 2018).*

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In an interview at Busa, a male respondent claimed that;

> *"Women concerns are unique and needs to be represented by women ranging from issues of family planning, child raising, education, women and girls (gender,) sitting of boreholes, clinics and schools etc, women are in-born and have the lobbying skills when it comes to initiation of projects due to their patients level".*

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This falls in line with studies conducted by Kehler (2000) who argues that, participation is the organized efforts to increase the control over and access to resources and regulative institutions in society, on the part of individual citizens, groups and movements of those hitherto excluded from such control aimed at the socio-economic development of the whole community.

It also affirmed findings in the study that, women participation leads to the formation of programs that address genuine concerns of women's and have greater sustainability (WMA, 2018).

Almost every person contacted recognizes that women need to be encouraged and supported so that they can contribute positively to local governance. Respondents have generally outlined the following reforms by which women's participation in local governance can be enhanced in the district which are presented in table 4.2.

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Table 4.2: Ways of Improving Women Participation in Local Governance

No	Ways of Improving Women's Participation
1	Institution of reserve/quota system for women.
2	Building capacity to women for participation to strengthen local governance.
3	Women interest groups with local development agenda are given representation in local assemblies.
4	Financial capacity building models are formulated to target women for local development decision making process.
5	Support the under-privilege families through education.
6	Both the assembly and NGOs to empower women candidates with finance and logistics.
7	Allocate funds for education of men especially husbands of the female candidates to support and encourage their wives during campaign and after.

Source; Field Survey, [June], 2018

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In an interview, the Municipal Coordinating Director revealed that;

> *"Women must be given all the necessary support and encouragement to contest and compete with men in all local level elections. Men must be advised not put fear or intimidate women who are willing to contest and must be advised not to peddle lies about women who come out to challenge them at the Assemble level" (Wa Municipal Coordinating Director, February, 2018).*

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As contained in the findings, it is an undeniable fact that women can make a huge impact in the assembly when given all the necessary support and encouragement for both economic and social development. They have the ability to lobby in the assembly for the installation of boreholes, construction of CHPS compound, renovation of dilapidated government buildings, have the tenacity to lobby for tarred roads especially in their electoral areas, able to influence the mechanization and extension of the existing boreholes, organize clean-up campaigns in their jurisdictions. Women by their nature are good in management positions; especially Shea-nut extraction, financial institutions and the formal banking sector hence should be offered the opportunity to make their impact in the development of the Wa Municipal Assembly.

4.4 Factors militating against Women's Participation in Local Governance

This section analyses objective three which seeks to examine the factors militating against women in the participation of local governance.

There are a number of factors influencing the level of participation of women in local governance.

Table 4.3: Women's Participation in the Activities in Local Governance

Question	SDA %	DA %	A %	SA %
The lower numbers of women representatives in the Municipal Assembly causes their inability fully participate in the decision making process	10	25	14	28
The inability to access resources necessary for decent living of women limits their level of representation and participation in the governance of the Municipal Assembly	16	30	15	21
The presence of cultural and discriminatory social practices against women within the Wa enclave account for their low level of representation and participation in the Municipal Assembly	30	20	10	22
The Wa Municipal Assembly as a local government institution has put in place important mechanisms to progressively capture women involved and enable them participates in the affairs of the District.	15	42	14	6

Source; Field Survey, [June], 2018

From analysis of the responses gathered from the field, about 28% and 21% of the respondents strongly agreed that, the lower numbers of women representatives and inability to access resources necessary for decent living of women in the Municipal Assembly causes their inability to fully participate in the decision making process respectively whereas 14% and 15% of the respondents agreed respectively.

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On the other hand, 25% and 30% disagree on the assertion that lower numbers of women representatives and poor access to resources for decent living of women in the district causes low participation in decision making within the enclave of the Wa Municipal Assembly respectively, whilst 10% and 16% strongly disagreed to the declarations that lower numbers of women representatives and inability to access resources necessary for decent living of women in the municipal assembly causes their inability to fully participate in decision making process respectively.

Also from the analysis of the responses, 22% of the respondents strongly agreed that the presence of cultural and discriminatory social practices against women within the Wa Municipal account for their low level of representation and participation in the governance process, 10% agreed, 20% of the respondents disagree whilst 30% strongly disagreed to the assertion that the existence of cultural and discriminatory social practices against women within the Wa territory account for their low level of representation and participation in the governance process.

It also revealed that, a significant percentage of 86 are of the view that the Wa Municipal Assembly as a local government institution has put in place important mechanisms to progressively capture women involved and enable them participate in the affairs of the Municipality. Women participation in governance in general is widely recognized and has been the main agenda of many gender advocacy groups.

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In seeking the views of respondents on a better method of involving women in local governance, 53% of the respondents are of the opinion that the current decentralization system is the best way of practicing local governance. On the other hand, 47% of them expressed a divergent view. They argued that the current decentralization system (adoption of quota system with legislation) is not the best way of practicing local governance in the Wa Municipal.

However, there have been instances where women fail to participate in governance issues due to certain factors, some of which are economic, social or cultural. As noted that by ABANTU, (2004), at every stage of the Ghanaian society, different forms of discrimination against women are practiced in the name of culture or social setting. In Ghana, culture belongs to the whole society, but most often than not women are held to a "higher standard of cultural compliance than their male counterparts.

It is also established from the data that, 69% of the respondents supported the idea that the president should use the constitutional provision of thirty percent to appoint more women to achieve gender balance whereas 31% in the sampled population argued that the president should not use the constitutional provision of thirty percent to appoint women.

Again 51% of the respondents are of the notion that, the adoption of electoral quota system with legislation in parliament will be an effective way that can empower women's political participation in the assembly but 49% of the respondents think otherwise.

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Based on these responses it is significant to conclude that, majority of the respondents in the sampled population maintained that the quota system is the feasible option in getting more women to effectively participate and empowered for overall development within the local governance in the Wa Municipality.

During an interview session a respondent emphasized that

> *"It is in the good interest for all of us to pursue the adoption of quota system with legislation since most at times women fear to put up themselves for elections with the simple reason that elections are ugly in this part of the sub region but women can help make better deliberations and decisions concerning women and children and women form the chunk (majority) of the population in the municipality and the country at large, hence needs to be represented fully by given reserved seats at the Assembly" (A female Respondent at Sokpariyiri, February, 2018).*

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Many other studies do recognize this as a move in the right direction. One system that has been identified as having the necessary requisite structures that provide women the opportunity to participate in governance is decentralization.

The system of decentralization is regarded as an arrangement capable of ensuring that every citizen within a society fully participates in the governance and development of their society and the national at large. However, it is widely recognized that a country cannot practice effective decentralization without the full participation of the masses at the grass root level.

And before one can fully participate and contribute significantly to national issues such as social development, resource management and democratic participation, state institutions must be established, resourced and strengthened in order to ensure that various activities are well coordinated (Jordon et al 2005).

Another revelation from the study indicates that, the Wa Municipal Assembly and therefore the study area is making every frantic effort that will provide women the opportunity to improve their own livelihood conditions. The Assembly in its quest for political and economic emancipation believes that if women's economic rights are empowered they would be able to compete with their male counterparts in elections and other political events within the region and beyond.

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CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary

This chapter is the final section of the study. It presents a summary of the key findings of the study as well as the conclusions drawn and recommendations made to enhance the participation of women in local governance in the Wa municipal.

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5.2 Major Findings

The study provides a summary of the key findings with regards to the influence of the demographic characteristics of women on their involvement in local governance issues in the Wa Municipality, the interest of women in local governance issues the mechanisms put in place by the District Assembly to assist women, the impact women representation have in the decision making process at the District Assembly as well as the influence of women independence in the decision making process. It also outlines the major factors militating against women's effective participation in governance issues and provides ways and means by which women participation can be enhanced.

5.2.1 Trends of Women's Participation and Contributions in Local Governance

As observed, women at all levels of decision-making are under-represented and are poorly engaged in governance processes.

As shown by the results, both at the assembly membership level and the unit committee level women are not fairly represented.

5.2.1.1 Level of Women Participation in Local Governance

The study community were of the view that much is needed to be done in order to increase the female numbers at the local governance level to create balance and fair representation which will ultimately increase their voice during decision making process. Furthermore, the findings from the study revealed that women have less than 10% representation at the local government system in the Wa Municipal. With this available data, it is crystal clear that the level of representation of women considering the total number of members is woefully inadequate and series of efforts need to be done to make the level of representation appreciable.

The findings also revealed that most women get the opportunity to participate in local governance through elections and appointment by the central government though there are other means such as appointment by traditional leaders and through staff appointment as well as voluntary service.

The study again holds the view that people with some appreciable level of education, spirit of voluntarism, ready to serve without inducement and good understanding of governance be appointed and given the opportunity to serve at the local governance system in other to strengthen not only women but the activities within the Assembly.

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Again hardworking women can put themselves up for elections, staff appointment can target women technocrats devoid of partisan consideration, and above all, traditional representatives are equally very important in enhancing local participation. It is significant to note that majority of the respondents are of the opinion that more women are now in the assembly than it used to be and they attributed it to a constitutional provision that facilitated gendered development within the Wa Municipal Assembly.

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The findings revealed that majority of the respondents also acknowledged the fact that sex is always a factor for consideration during appointments to the assembly while 24% of the respondents are of the view that sex is not a factor worth considering in appointment to the assembly. Against this backdrop one could envisage that sex really plays a very significant role in determining appointment to the Wa Municipal Assembly. It is revealed also that, the law mandates part of the 30% should constitute women and further supported that political consideration has to do with the appointments of such people to vary (male and female) often.

The findings further established that the level of representation of women in the local governance enables them participate effectively in the decision making process.

In furtherance, one would have realized that majority of the respondents thought it relevant for married women to be encouraged to join local governance in the municipality as 83% of the respondents supported it with 17% of them arguing that it is not desirable for married women to link themselves to local governance.

Marital status should not be a criterion in encouraging governance since one interacts well with people and that could be replicated into your family as being an assembly woman gives you confidence and experience in front line politics.

5.2.1.2 Contribution of Women in Local Governance

From the findings, it was realized that majority of the respondents agreed that women's participation in decentralization ensures greater equity during allocation of state resources. This is evident in the findings as majority of the respondents indicated that women's participation is important, very important and exceptionally important, respectively, to the contribution of women towards developmental projects in the Wa Municipality. The finding also shows that, 86% of the respondents suggested that it is important for women to participate in local governance. There are a number of benefits that communities and local level institutions can derive from women's participation in local governance. Women's participation in decentralization ensures greater equity during allocation of state resources.

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They have the ability to lobby in the assembly for the installation of boreholes, construction of CHPS compound, renovation of dilapidated government buildings, have the tenacity to lobby for tarred roads especially in their electoral areas, able to influence the mechanization and extension of the existing boreholes, organize clean-up campaigns in their jurisdictions.

Women by their nature are good in management positions especially Shea-nut extraction, financial institutions and the formal banking sector hence should be offered the opportunity to make their impact in the development of the Wa Municipal Assembly.

5.2.2 Factors Militating against Women Participation in Local Governance

Women have low representation in local governance and this low level of women involvement in local governance could be attributed to various reasons such as lack of information on how local people can contribute in their own ways towards the development of their communities. The findings of the study revealed that the inability to access resources necessary for decent living of women in the Municipal Assembly causes their inability to fully participate in decision-making process effectively. Similarly, the findings showed that the presence of cultural and discriminatory social practices against women within the Wa Municipal account for the low level of representation and participation of women in the local governance process.

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5.3 Conclusion

In today's democracies several enabling factors for women's participation abound which include: a relatively high level of gender equality in formal educational attainment, the deliberate actions of certain governance actors to increase women's participation, and the women who are already in leadership positions inspiring and enabling other women to follow suit. It is also found that a number of the barriers to women's participation are starting to fall.

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There is still much scope for government, and other governance actors, to take positive action to increase women's participation in sub national governance. Local governance is widely considered as a form of governance capable of ensuring that every citizen at every level fully and effectively participates in the governance and development of the country either at the national, regional, and district or community level. Nonetheless, the participation of local or traditional leaders as well as community members in the decentralization process particularly in Sub-Saharan African countries has been reduced by most administrations and this neglect has subsequently resulted in the loss of opportunities for the citizens especially women in the whole governance process.

Based on these, the lower numbers of women representatives in the Assembly does affect their level of participation more especially the Wa Municipal. This happens with the reason that certain decisions are lineup for voting in the Municipal Assembly where women have lesser numbers.

In the local governance system women have fewer numbers as compare to their male counterparts; hence represent less influence during decision making especially decisions that are gender partiality. The seeming appointment of women in governance is also contributory factor hindering their effective participation as most of them at the local levels are government appointees. This in effect allows women in the Assembly to initiate or support decisions that are frequently in the best interest of those who gave them the appointment or their pay masters.

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5.4 Recommendations

Based on the outcome of this study, even though much have been dealt into the issues of decentralization and local governance , it is important to appreciate that, there are other areas that need to be addressed. The study therefore makes the following recommendations;

1. The study recommends that the Municipal Assembly should develop sensitization programs as well as organize training sessions for community members especially women to educate them on the need for their full involvement in the entire governance process since most of them are unaware of their potentials in harnessing resources for development.
2. Participation at all levels by women is central to the achievement of local governance and the decentralization system being adopted.

The study therefore recommends that policy makers both at the national level and local level should widen the decentralization process to increase the power and involvement of community members particularly women in the process. Stakeholders particularly the technocrats in every facet of human endeavor are having more control over the system than the ordinary community members, thus impeding the full participation of women at the local governance level.

3. The study has identified that some women do not participate in local governance issues because they are not well informed about what is required of them.

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4. They are not informed about the significance of their contributions to the process. The study therefor recommends that the Assembly should develop sensitization programs as well as organize training sessions for community members especially women to educate them on the need for their full involvement in the entire governance process.
5. In furtherance, the study recommends among other things that a broader scale study that would include other aspects such as infrastructure development, sanitation and health issues, revenue mobilization, monitoring of projects as well as widen the consultation on the enactment of bye-laws in the Municipality. This will help provide a well thought out program which will strengthen the call for effective women participation in local governance issues in the Wa Municipal.

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APPENDIX: A

UNIVERSITY FOR DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

GRADUATE SCHOOL

FACULTY OF INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL, POLITICAL AND HISTORICAL STUDIES

THESIS QUESTIONNAIRES

UNIVERSITY FOR DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

Dear Respondent

My name is **Saeed Abdul-Aziz**, a student of University for Development Studies, pursuing a Master of Philosophy (MPhil) Degree in Social Administration. I am undertaking an academic research on: **"*Examining Women's Participation in Local Governance: Evidence from the Wa Municipal Assembly in the Upper West Region of Ghana".***

I would be very grateful if you could respond to these questionnaires. Accuracy of your response and cooperation is very important to collect relevant data. The responses provided will be strictly confidential, anonymous, and purely for this academic purposes but nothing else.

Thanks you very much for your kind cooperation.

Name of community: .....

Interviewer: .....

Date of interview: .....

Questionnaire Number: .....

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SECTION A

DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

Please tick the appropriate box

i. Sex;

A. Male [ ] B. Female [ ]

ii. Age;

A. 18-25 [ ] B. 26-35 [ ] C. 36-45 [ ] D. 46-55 [ ] E. Above 55 [ ]

iii. Marital Status;

A. Married [ ] B. Single [ ] C. Divorced [ ] D. Widowed [ ]

iv. Level of education;

A. Primary/JSS [ ] B. Secondary /Senior High school graduate [ ]

C. College/Undergraduate [ ] D. Masters/PhD [ ] E. No formal Education [ ]

v. Occupational status;

A.Farming [ ] B. Teaching [ ] C. Trading [ ] D. Nursing [ ] None [ ]

SECTION B: TRENDS OF WOMEN PARTICIPATION IN LOCAL GOVERNANCE

1 Do you think women are fully represented in the local government system within the Wa Municipality? Yes [ ] No [ ]

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2 What is the level of representation, considering the total number of members? Less than 10% [ ] 10%-15% [ ] 15%-20% [ ] above 20% [ ]

3 Tick the appropriate response in respect to mode of getting women represented in the Assembly.

Through elections [ ]

Through staff appointment [ ]

Voluntary service [ ]

Appointment by central government [ ]

Appointment by traditional leaders [ ]

4 Explain your response in (3)

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5 What do you think would be the best forms to get women represented that will make them efficient at the assembly?

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6 Who in your candid opinion recommends people for appointment to the assembly?

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7 What are the main criteria in appointing members to the assembly to strengthen local governance of women?

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8 Are women more represented in the assembly now than ever before? Yes [ ] No [ ]

9 What qualities necessitate appointment of women to the assembly?

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10 Do you think the appointments really bring expertise to the appointees as visualized by the policy? Yes [ ] No [ ]

11 Is sex a factor for consideration during appointments to the assembly? Yes [ ] No [ ]

12 Explain your response in (11)

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SECTION C: CONTRIBUTION AND PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN THE PARTICIPATION OF LOCAL GOVERNANCE

- In your opinion, do you think the level of representation of women in the local governance enable them participate effectively in the decision making process? Yes [ ] No [ ]
- If yes, how does the level of representation help them participate effectively?

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- If no, how does it affect effective participation in local governance in the municipality?

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- Do you think it is encouraging for married women to join local governance in the municipality? Yes [ ] No [ ]
- Explain your response in (4)

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What is your level of agreement with the following statements as they relate to women involvement and participation in the activities of the Municipal Assembly? Please indicate by ticking appropriately

(1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=agree 4=strongly agree)

- The lower numbers of women representatives in the Municipal Assembly is what causes their inability to fully participate in the decision making process

  1 [ ] 2 [ ] 3 [ ] 4 [ ]

- The inability to access resources necessary for decent living of women limits their level of representation and participation in the governance of the Municipal Assembly.

  1 [ ] 2 [ ] 3 [ ] 4 [ ]

- The presence of cultural and discriminatory social practices against women within the Wa enclave account for their low level of representation and participation in the governance of the Municipal Assembly.

  1 [ ] 2 [ ] 3 [ ] 4 [ ]

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- The Wa Municipal Assembly as a local government institution has put in place important mechanisms that progressively catch women involved and enable them participate in the affairs of the district.

  1 [ ] 2 [ ] 3 [ ] 4 [ ]

10. Did you have sufficient financial resources to support your election campaign?

Yes [ ] No [ ]

11. Do you think the adoption of specific quota system with legislation in parliament for women will be helpful to local government enhancement? Yes [ ] No [ ]

12. Explain your answer in (11) above…….....

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13. In your view, does the President use the constitutional provision of thirty percent to appoint more women to achieve gender balance in the Wa Municipality? Yes [ ] No [ ]

14. Do you think the adoption of electoral quota system with legislation in parliament is an effective way that can empower women political participation in the assembly? Yes [ ] No [ ]

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SECTION D: CONTRIBUTION OF WOMEN TOWARDS DEVELOPMENTAL PROJECTS SINCE THEIR PARTICIPATION IN LOCAL GOVERNANCE

1 The following are benefits that can be derived from decentralization. Please rate on a scale by ticking the appropriate box from 0 to 4 the importance of each of them to the development of local zonal communities in the Wa Municipality.

(Where 0=Not important at all, 1=somehow important, 2=important, 3=very important, 4= exceptionally important)

Benefit	**0**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
Ensures greater equity during allocation of national resources					
Facilitate feedback and government response to the demands of local citizen					
Ensures efficient management of local resources					
Increased democratic/rural participation					
Reduced the cost of organization at the local level					
Promote accountability and transparency					

2 In your opinion, do you think women involvement and participation in the decentralization process have any impact in the development of the Wa Municipality?

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Yes [ ] No [ ]

3 If yes, in what ways does women representation impact in the decision making and development of the communities in the Wa municipality particularly the zonal areas?

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4 Do you think it is important for women to participate in local governance in the Wa municipality? Yes [ ] No [ ]

5 If Yes, Why do you think is important?

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6 If No, why do you think is not important?

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7 What peculiar reforms do you think can be adapted towards improving active participation of women in the Assembly for total development?

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8. Do you think women can make an impact in the Assembly? Yes [ ] No [ ]

9. If yes, give examples of cases, initiatives or policies they have made impact on?

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THANKS FOR PARTICIPATION

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APPENDIX: B

UNIVERSITY FOR DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

GRADUATE SCHOOL

FACULTY OF INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL, POLITICAL AND HISTORICAL STUDIES

KEY INFORMANT

INTERVIEW GUIDE (STAFF AND NGOs)

UNIVERSITY FOR DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

Dear Respondent

My name is **Saeed Abdul-Aziz**, a student of University for Development Studies, pursuing a Master of Philosophy (MPhil) Degree in Social Administration. I am undertaking an academic research on: **"*Examining Women's Participation in Local Governance: Evidence from the Wa Municipal Assembly in the Upper West Region of Ghana".***

I would be very grateful if you could respond to these questions. Accuracy of your response and cooperation is very important to collect relevant data. The responses provided will be strictly confidential, anonymous, and purely for this academic purposes but nothing else.

Thanks you very much for your kind cooperation.

1. Who recommends people for appointment?
2. What are the main criteria in appointing members to the assembly?
3. What qualities do you consider as important in appointing members to the assembly?

4. To what extent are members' financial resources influential in their appointments?

5. Have appointments really been done to bring expertise to the assembly as envisaged by the policy?

a. Yes ( ) b. No ( )

6. Why the answer above?

7. To what extent is gender considered during appointments?

8. To what extent is education of appointees important to their appointment?

9. Do you think groups support some people to stand as candidates for local level elections?

a. Yes ( ) b. No ( )

10. If yes, which groups support candidates and why?

11. Does the president use the constitutional provision of thirty per cent to appoint more women to achieve a gender balance?

a. Yes ( ) b. No ( )

12. Why the answer in (20) above?

13. Do you think the adoption of electoral quota system with legislation in parliament is an effective way that can empower women political participation in the assembly?

a. Yes ( ) b. No ( )

14. Why?

15. Are women more represented in the assembly now than ever before?

a. Yes ( ) b. No ( )

16. Why?

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THANKS FOR PARTICIPATION

APPENDIX: C

UNIVERSITY FOR DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

GRADUATE SCHOOL

FACULTY OF INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL, POLITICAL AND HISTORICAL STUDIES

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

UNIT COMMITTEE MEMBERS, WOMEN ASSOCIATIONS AND YOUTH GROUPS

UNIVERSITY FOR DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

Dear Respondent

My name is **Saeed Abdul-Aziz**, a student of University for Development Studies, pursuing a Master of Philosophy (MPhil) Degree in Social Administration. I am undertaking an academic research on: **"*Examining Women's Participation in Local Governance: Evidence from the Wa Municipal Assembly in the Upper West Region of Ghana".***

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Thanks you very much for your kind cooperation.

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1. Do you think more women should be elected to the Assembly?

a. Yes ( ) b. No ( )

2. Why?

3. Do you think more women should be appointed to the Assembly?

a. Yes ( ) b. No ( )

4. Why?

5. What challenges do women face in standing as candidates for local government elections?

6. What are the challenges of women Assembly members?

7. Do you think women can make an impact in the Assembly?

a. Yes ( ) b. No ( )

8. If yes, give examples of cases, initiatives or policies they have made impact on?

9. Are there some groups (organizations or institutions) advocating for more women to be appointed or elected into the assembly?

a. Yes ( ) b. No ( )

10. If yes, which groups are they and why?

11. Do you think the adoption of electoral quota system with legislation in parliament is an effective way that can empower women political participation in the assembly?

a. Yes ( ) b. No ( )

12. Why?

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THANKS FOR PARTICIPATION

APPENDIX: D

UNIVERSITY FOR DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

GRADUATE SCHOOL

FACULTY OF INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL, POLITICAL AND HISTORICAL STUDIES

INTERVIEW GUIDE

CHIEFS AND POGNAMENES

UNIVERSITY FOR DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

Dear Respondent

My name is **Saeed Abdul-Aziz**, a student of University for Development Studies, pursuing a Master of Philosophy (MPhil) Degree in Social Administration. I am undertaking an academic research on: **"*Examining Women's Participation in Local Governance: Evidence from the Wa Municipal Assembly in the Upper West Region of Ghana".***

I would be very grateful if you could respond to these questions. Accuracy of your response and cooperation is very important to collect relevant data. The responses provided will be strictly confidential, anonymous, and purely for this academic purposes but nothing else.

Thanks you very much for your kind cooperation.

1. Do you think more women should be elected to the Assembly?

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a. Yes ( ) b. No ( )

2. Why?

3. Do you think more women should be appointed to the Assembly?

a. Yes ( ) b. No ( )

4. Why?

5. What challenges do women face in standing as candidates for local government elections?

6. Do you think women can make an impact in the Assembly?

a. Yes ( ) b. No ( )

7. If yes, give examples of cases, initiatives or policies they have made impact on?

8. Are there some opinion leaders advocating for more women to be appointed or elected into the assembly?

a. Yes ( ) b. No ( )

9. If yes, which leaders are they and why?

10. Do you have some influence as a leader to lobby for more women to be appointed or elected in to the assembly?

a. Yes ( ) b. No ( )

11. If yes, how?

12. Do you think the adoption of electoral quota system with legislation in parliament is an effective way that can empower women political participation in the assembly?

a. Yes ( ) b. No ( )

13. Why?

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THANKS FOR PARTICIPATION

APPENDIX: E

UNIVERSITY FOR DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

GRADUATE SCHOOL

FACULTY OF INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL, POLITICAL AND HISTORICAL STUDIES

CHECKLIST FOR OBSERVATION

UNIVERSITY FOR DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

Dear Members

My name is **Saeed Abdul-Aziz**, a student of University for Development Studies, pursuing a Master of Philosophy (MPhil) Degree in Social Administration. I am undertaking an academic research on: **"*Examining Women's Participation in Local Governance: Evidence from the Wa Municipal Assembly in the Upper West Region of Ghana".***

I would be very grateful if you could allow me to observe proceedings and meetings. My observation will be strictly confidential, anonymous, and purely for this academic purposes but nothing else.

Thanks you very much for your kind cooperation.

1. Observation at the general assembly meetings and proceedings.
2. The number of women at the assembly.
3. How women are participating at the assembly meetings.

4. The reaction of males towards women at the assembly.
5. Observation at community forum at konta how the only elected assembly woman is able to organize community meetings.
6. How deliberations and meetings are done with community members.
7. How decisions are arrive at and the role of the only elected assembly woman in arriving at those decisions.

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