

UNIVERSITY FOR DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

TACKLING ELECTORAL VIOLENCE IN THE UPPER WEST
REGION OF GHANA

BY

ADZOMADI PHILIP KODJO

THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF
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IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT FOR THE REQUIREMENTS

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IN DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT

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(UDS/MDM/0057/09)

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AUGUST 2015

DECLARATION

I submit this work towards the partial fulfillment for the awarding of M.Phil Degree in Development Management by the University for Development Studies (UDS), Wa Campus. I declare that, this is my own work and to the best of my knowledge it has not been submitted by anybody, person or institution for the award of MPhil Degree.

All due acknowledgements have been made to all sources consulted in the processes of the study.

Signature.....

Adzomadi Philip Kodjo

Student

Date.....

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of the thesis were supervised in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of dissertation or thesis laid down by the University for Development Studies (UDS) and that the laid down guidelines were strictly followed.

Signature.....

Dr. Africanus L. Diedong

Supervisor

Date.....



ABSTRACT

Since the return of Ghana to multiparty democratic regime from 1992 to 2008, Ghana has gone through five major successive general elections and has received numerous commendations all over the world. Incidentally, all these elections were associated with electoral violence. This study aimed at studying the causes, nature, and effects of electoral violence in the Upper West Region of Ghana. The objective of the study included how electoral violence affect the credibility of the electoral system and what measures the Election Management Body (EMB) and the stakeholders in the conduct of elections have put in place to address the occurrence of electoral violence in the Upper West Region in particular. The study identified two broad factors as responsible for the occurrence of electoral violence. The first factor is the process factors that serve as immediate causes of eruption of electoral violence. These factors include demarcation, registration, nomination, campaigning, voting, counting, collation and the final declaration of election results. The second is the external factors which, also serve as fertile grounds for electoral violence to occur. The external factors are existing socio-economic problems like marginalisation, discrimination, politicisation high level of unemployment, poverty and societal conflicts. The study used the qualitative research design in gathering data. The study used purposive sampling technique. In-depth interviews and focus group discussions were used as the primary sources of data collection while secondary sources were gathered through existing documents, reports, textbooks, and internet search. The study recommended that EMB should be professional in their electoral activities so that their actions would not serve as a spark of electoral violence. The state should adequately resource and strengthens legal institutions to handle all existing conflicts from degenerating into violence at the least provocation during elections.



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DEDICATION

With support and encouragement, I again dedicate this intellectual piece to my parents, brothers, sisters, and friends and of course my dear lovely wife, Agnes N. Adzomadi and my two children: Elikplim and Mawunyo Adzomadi.



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LIST OF ACRONYMS

AAEA.....	Association of Africa Election Administrators
ACDEGG.....	African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Good Governance
AFAG.....	Alliance For Accountable Governance
AUDPGDE.....	African Union Declaration on the Principles Governing Democratic Elections
BRIDGE.....	Building Resource In Democracy Governance and Election
CDD	Centre for Democratic Development
CI	Constitutional Instrument
CJA	Committee for Joint Action
CPP.....	Convention People Party
D1.....	Demarcation One (1)
D2	Demarcation Two (2)
DCE.....	District Chief Executive
DEO	District Electoral Officer
DIPAC	District Inter-Party Advisory Committee
DRRC.....	District Registration Review Committee
EC.....	Electoral Commission



EMB.....	Election Management Body
EVER	Election Violence Education and Resolution
FGD.....	Focus Group Discussion
GBA.....	Ghana Bar Association
GCPP.....	Great Consolidated Popular Party
GT.....	Ghanaian Times
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
IDEA.....	Institute Of Democracy And Elections Assistant
I-DI.....	In-Depth Interview
IPAC.....	Inter-Party Advisory Committee
JHS.....	Junior High School
LI.....	Legislative Instrument
ID.....	Identity
NCCE.....	National Commission for Civic Education
NCP.....	National Convention Party
NDC.....	National Democratic Congress
NPP.....	New Patriotic Party
PHP.....	People Heritage Party



- PNC.....People’s National Convention
- PNDC.....People’s National Defence Council
- RCCRegional Coordinating Council
- RIPAC.....Regional Inter-Party Advisory Committee
- SAP.....Structural Adjustment Programme
- SHS.....Senior High School
- TUC.....Trade Union Congress
- UGM.....United Ghana Movement
- URPUnited Renaissance Party
- USAUnited State of America
- WANEP..... West Africa Network for Peacebuilding
- WHOWorld Health Organisation



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CHAPTER ONE

1.0 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Globally, the aspiration for democratic system of government by countries over the last centuries has been overwhelming. Those countries that were not democratic are now struggling to be associated with it. Africa as a continent has not been left out in this movement for embracing democracy. According to Ademola (2009:45) since the early 1990s, the wave of democratization has been increasingly spreading across Africa. The long struggle for democracy in Africa is beginning to show results as the continent is overcoming a legacy of authoritarianism and indifference to democratic culture. He argues that, African countries are moving towards the consolidation of democracy, and free and fair elections have become the standard for measurement than before.

Boateng (1996) cited in Frempong (2008:23) asserted that the 1990s has witnessed the complete dominance by democracy over all other forms of government or the universal acceptance and practice of democracy by the whole or even the majority of the human community. Dahl (1989:33) has indicated that today, the idea of democracy is universally popular to the extent that undemocratic regimes claim the title of democracy and those who do not, often insist that their particular instance of undemocratic rule is a necessary stage along the road to attainment of democracy.

According to Ake (1991) cited in Ademola (2009:44), the spread of democratization is too impressive and too widespread to be ignored. He contended that, the spread of democracy has led to the popular rejection of military rule in Nigeria, the demise of apartheid in South Africa, and the downfall of Samuel Doe in Liberia and Kerekou in



Benin.. The gains of majority rule and multi-party democracy in Niger, Madagascar, Cameroon, Zambia, Algeria, Gabon, Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea, Zaire, Mozambique, Angola, the Congo and Sao Tome and Principe; the growing democratization processes in Kenya, Somalia, Sudan, Togo, Ghana, Sierra Leone, Ethiopia, Cameroon and Zimbabwe are all ample evidence of the spread of democracy in Africa (Ademola, (2009:47).

The acceptance, dominance and endorsement of democracy by countries are due to the inherent benefits. Donor institutions and developed countries prefer dealing with and assisting countries that choose democratic system of governance. In Africa, there are two major reasons or factors why democracy was embraced. The first factor according to Ademola (2009:48) was occasioned by the development failures of many African states in the 1980s, and in particular, the mixed and meager accomplishment under structural adjustment programmes (SAP). This demand for improved governance led to the rise of pro-democracy movements in African states, which resulted in concerted popular agitation for change. The second factor was that, the international agencies and donor nations mounted pressure on the autocratic regimes in many African states. The pressure from the international scene for universal human freedom and life with dignity, coupled with promises of improved bilateral relations for non-dictatorial states, stimulated the internal drive for democratization in Africa.

The above discussions suggested that both pro-democracy movements in African states and the preference of owners of the international agencies in dealing with countries that are non- dictatorial led to the unparalleled spread of democracy. The realization of democratic rule in any country is a catalyst for achieving an ultimate



goal of the general wellbeing or improvement of the living standard of the people. Democratic system of governance encourages stability, it ensures smooth transfer of political power, promotes freedom of expression and association, and economic and social development of the people.

In a democratic system of governance, the qualified citizens of a country in competitive periodic elections select their political leaders through secret ballot voting. Periodic, transparent and credible competitive elections are therefore important element for facilitating good governance practices and consolidating democracy. In the words of Biegon (2009: 5) “elections may thus be said to be ‘Janus-faced’- they are partly human and partly monster. If well managed, they are a source of democratic consolidation but when mismanaged, they have the potential of plunging a society into violent conflict. He argued that in most African countries, rather being a means of constructively managing differences, elections have often ended up in electoral violence.

The mismanagement of elections in the less developed countries has made elections look like a monster instead of resolving social differences. For example, the outcome of the elections in some Asian countries such as; “India, Pakistan, Philippines, and Malaysia are characterised by violence leading to loss of human life, property, injuries and chaos. In the Philippines, 75 people were killed prior to the May 2007 elections, while 80 others were wounded in election violence. In Africa, countries like Zimbabwe, Kenya, Uganda, Ethiopia, Chad, Nigeria, Sierra Leone and Zambia elections to elect their political leaders were often been characterized by violence” (Atuobi, 2008). Kambudzi cited in Biegon, 2009:7). To him, election tension and the



explosion into violence are events that grow out of a period of gestation. He argues that “there is usually very little that is spontaneous about it. The outbreak of violence during elections or in reaction to an announced outcome should be seen as a symptom of deep-rooted centrifugal factors ingrained in society. It is as a result of long neglected but very important issues. He maintained that election related violence is a product of protracted political mismanagement in a country whether that involves tyranny, dictatorship, lack of accountability or corruption.”

Notwithstanding the support and presence of international electoral observers, the incidence of election violence in Africa is relatively high that even an election considered being free, fair and transparent, the outcome might not have been free of violence which undermines the stability and security of most African states (Atuobi, 2008). In support of Atuobi’s assertion, Biegon (2009:8) argued that elections are events that lay bare the political fragility of majority of African states, even those that have long been considered stable and touted as bastions of peace. He contended that until the last disputed election results, Kenya was seen as the oasis of peace and stability in the African continent. It is a possibility that, almost all the African countries are potentially pro-electoral violence According to Almami (2010:13), the 2003 federal elections violence in Nigeria claimed at least the lives of 100 people with many more injuries. He further argued that the post-electoral violence in 2007 in Kenya claimed more than 1,200 lives and displaced an estimated 350,000 people within a period of two months. This he said was fuelled by deep ethnic divisions and years of economic frustration which nearly brought Kenya to the brink of collapse.



1.2 Problem Statement

Like some African countries and elsewhere around the globe, Ghana is not an exception in terms of electoral violence. Violence has characterized the Ghanaian electoral system since the inception of the fourth republic. All the elections held in the fourth republic from 1992 to 2008 have witnessed some form of electoral violence. Comparing those elections to other Asian and African countries in terms of death, injuries, and destruction to property, Ghana is far ahead of them in the elections management and continues to receive commendations from democracy lovers all over the world. However, from 1992 to 2008, the occurrences of electoral violence are on the increase and taking various dimensions. The incidences of electoral violence are real as at least there were issues of intimidations, injuries, loss of lives, and damage to property through electoral processes (CDD, 2009:12).

According to Aning (2009) cited in CDD (2009:12), most acts of electoral violence in the country are perpetrated through open confrontations, death threats, mob action, intimidation, molestations, abductions, lynching and murder. Properties worth millions of Ghanaian cedis owned by political parties and their supporters as well as government property got vandalised by disgruntled party supporters and elements of unscrupulous political opponents. The trend of the electoral violence is very complex as it manifests when least expected. For instance, the opposition parties led by the New Patriotic Party (NPP) boycotted the parliamentary election that was held on 2nd December 1992 as a result of alleged lack of transparency, intimidations with impunity, impersonation and alleged manipulation of election results by the National Democratic Congress (NDC). This led to the famous publication of “The Stolen Verdict” by the NPP led by Prof. Albert Adu Boahen. There was “loud protestations



and some un-orchestrated isolated incidents of violence by its supporters, in which the NPP simply chronicled what was alleged to be the electoral infractions” (Agyeman-Duah, 2005:11).

Even though, the 1996 elections witnessed an improvement over the 1992, there were issues with regards to credibility, legitimacy of the voters register, abuse of incumbency, unequal access to resources, lack of equal access to the media to enhance level playing field which were antecedents to electoral violence. The 2000 elections seemed to be more credible as compared to the 1996 elections in terms of transparency. However there were some incidences of violence.

For example, prior to the 2000 general election, an argument between two young men resulted in one of them being stabbed to death in Tamale Central Constituency. In the Ashanti Region, the 2000 elections campaign security guard of NDC candidate, the then Vice President John Evans Atta Mills beat some youth for hooting at it (Agyemang-Duah, 2005:13). At Bawku in the Upper East Region, on and around 7th December 2000, supporters of rival political parties were locked in bloody conflict. At Asutware, violence between supporters of the NPP and NDC led to the injury of thirty persons Ghanaian Times (2001) cited in Tsikata and Seini (2004:28) also in the Elections 2000, Report, (2001) In 2004 and 2008, there were incidences of electoral violence, which resulted in loss of lives, injuries, burning and destruction of property. For instance, the Electoral Commission Offices including ballot boxes that contained ballot papers at Pru District in the Brong Ahafo Region and at Tain District in the general elections respectively were burnt. Pockets of electoral violence have been witnessed around the country in all the elections conducted in Ghana. The 2004



Presidential results were declared without five constituencies' results. According to the Chairman of the Electoral Commission, Dr. Kwadwo Afari-Gyan, because of acts of vandalism which occurred in certain constituencies after the 7th December, 2004 balloting, the results in those constituencies were slow in arriving at the head office for collation (Elections 2000 Report; 2001:15).

In the Upper West Region which is the study locality, similar cases of electoral violence have been recorded in some communities. For example at Busa, a community in the Wa Municipality, violence erupted leading to the burning of a motorbike and injury to people (Elections 2000 Report, 2001:15). According to Wa East Elections 2008 Report (2010), there was incidence of violent confrontation between the supporters of the NPP and the NDC in the constituency because of an alleged snatching of ballot boxes by the constituency secretary of the NPP just after the counting of votes at a polling station at Bayiri Primary school during the presidential election run-off. According to the former District Electoral Officer (DEO) for Sissala East District, his life was threatened during the first round of the elections and he had to run away from the town. As a result, he was not allowed to conduct the presidential run-off during the 2008 general elections. In the Sissala West constituency, there was a reported case of electoral violence when one of the contesting candidates attempted to undertake an illegal transfer of voters. The electorate resisted and it resulted in violence. There were also reported incidences of electoral violence over the number of party agents at polling stations at Old Council No.1 at Lawra Constituency, which resulted in a scuffle between the supporters of the NPP and the NDC. Similar cases of electoral violence are reported in some communities within the study locality.



The problem however is that, these reported electoral violent cases are not empirically proven hence given room to much rumor mongering among the populace in analyzing the persistent nature of electoral violence in Ghanaian politics. This has necessitated an empirical study to investigate the nature of electoral violence in the three constituencies namely; Wa central, Lawra, and Sissala East in the Upper West Region and its implications for voter confidence in the electoral system of Ghana.

1.3.0 Research Questions

1.3.1 Main Research Question

How does electoral violence affect the credibility of the electoral system in the Upper West Region of Ghana?

1.3.2 Sub-Research Questions

- ❖ What are the immediate causes and nature of electoral violence in the Upper West region?
- ❖ Can covert conflicts create a fertile ground and in some cases trigger the eruption of electoral violence?
- ❖ How does electoral violence affect voter confidence in the electoral process in the Upper West region?
- ❖ What measures do the Electoral Commission of Ghana and stakeholders have in place to tackle electoral violence?

1.4.0 Research Objectives

1.4.1 Main Research Objective

To examine how electoral violence affect the credibility of the electoral system in the Upper West region.



1.4.2 Sub-research Objectives

- ❖ To determine the immediate causes and nature of electoral violence in the Upper West region.
- ❖ To examine whether covert conflicts create a fertile ground and in some cases trigger the eruption of electoral violence.
- ❖ To determine how electoral violence affect voter confidence in the electoral process in the Upper West region
- ❖ To evaluate, measures the Electoral Commission of Ghana and the stakeholders have in place to tackle electoral violence.

1.5 Justification of the Study

Many people and entities such as The Ghana Peace Council have expressed displeasure about violence which has characterized the Ghanaian electoral system in contemporary times. Ironically, no empirical studies have been conducted in the study locality to find the actual causes of electoral violence and its ramification on voters confidence in the region. This study seeks to fill such a gap.

The study would serve as a document for future reference for policy makers, political parties, students of political science and the academia. It will also contribute to the debate on how legitimate choices of candidates could be made by the electorates without the recourse to violence.

1.6 Limitations of the Study

The researcher encountered a number of problems in the course of the study. The initial uncooperative attitude of the respondents to give accurate and objective



account of the nature of electoral violence was a major constraint. However upon persistent explanation of the objective of the study backed by the university introductory letter, the respondents opened up which saw the coming out of this report.

Geographically, this study is limited because its coverage extends to only three constituencies out of 11 in the study region. Nonetheless, it is anticipated that the finding from these three constituencies can serve as baseline information which can be replicated elsewhere in the region in particular, and the country as a whole.

Language was also a major problem in the course of the study. The dominant languages; Dagaare, Sissali, Wale, Lobi and Brifor spoken by the respondents were completely foreign to the researchers. However, with the assistance of interpreters, the problem of language barrier was addressed. This in effect did not affect the content of the report.

1.7 Scope of the Study

The study covers Ghana's multiparty democratic dispensation since 1992 to 2008. This period was chosen because it is the longest democratic history since Ghana started consolidation of democracy. It is within that period where five successive elections have been conducted namely; 1992, 1996, 2000, 2004, and 2008. Unfortunately, in spite of the gains, all the elections have witnessed different kinds of violence.

The main thematic issues in the study included the fundamental triggers of electoral violence, the effect of electoral violence on voter confidence, measures the electoral



commission and its stakeholders adopt to manage electoral violence as well as the challenges confronting these electoral management bodies and the processes they adopted in addressing such challenges.

1.8.0 The Location of Upper West

The Upper West region of Ghana is the youngest region in the country. It is located in the North Western part of the country. The region shares its boundaries with Burkina Faso in the north, Ivory Coast in the west, in the east with Upper East Region and in the south and southeast with the Northern Region of Ghana. It occupies a total of about 18,476 sq. km which is about 12.7% of total land space of Ghana (Ghana Statistical Service Report, 2010).

1.8.1 Population Size and Growth

According to the statistical Service, the population figure of the region as at 2010 stood at 702,110 out of which 341,182 (48.59%) were male and 360,928 (51.41%) were female. The population growth rate of the region is 1.7 % lower than that of the national rate of 2.7% (Ghana Statistical Service Report, 2010).

1.8.2 Ethnicity and Religion

There are five (5) ethnic groups in the region and they are the Dagartis (Dagaare), the Sissalas (Sissali), Waala (Wale), the Lobi, and the Brifor. In terms of percentages, the Dagartis are 57.5%, Wala for 16.3%, Sissala 16.0% and the other ethnic groups together constituted 10.2%. The Upper West Region is dominated by three main religious affiliations. These religious groups are the Christians (35.5%), Islam



(32.2%), and the Traditional religion (29.3%), other religion (0.6%), and no religion (2.4%) (Ghana Statistical Service Report, 2010).

1.8.3 Economy and Education in the Region

Occupationally, the region is dominated by subsistence agriculture employing about 72.2% of the population who depend on rainfall, and the remaining 27.8% consist of administrative, clerical, sales, service providers and other related workers. The agricultural sector is dominated by crops and livestock. The crops include groundnut, yam, maize, rice, cotton, cowpea, soya beans, tiger nut, okra, pepper and cassava while the livestock also include cows, goats, sheep, guinea fowls, fowls and pigs. The main tools of farming and rearing of livestock in the region are simple hoe, cutlass and manual way of tilling the land as well as the nomadic methods. Only 30% of the subsistence farmers relied on intermediate tools like tractors services, animal powered plough implements and irrigation.

The region has pre-school facilities of about 130, primary school facilities of 395, JHS facilities of 236, Senior High School facilities of 19, two teacher-training colleges, five health assistant training schools and a campus of University for Development Studies, Wa Campus. However, the illiteracy level of the region is 73.4%, which is higher than the national figure of 49% (Ghana Statistical Service, 2010:29-30).

1.8.4 Tradition and Modern Governance System

There are two levels of governance system in the region. These are the traditional and modern systems of governance. Concerning the traditional system of governance,



Upper West consists of seventeen (17) paramount chiefs. The authority of a Paramount chief could cover more than one traditional community. The paramount chiefs are assisted by divisional and sub-chiefs in their area of jurisdictions. In every traditional system of governance, there are also priest who are the spiritual as well as the custodians of the land. The chiefs and the elders serve as the liaisons and the entry point to the communities. They operate in and the outsiders world as well as the custodians of traditions and customs (Gyimah, 2008.) The traditional rulers are enskinned only through the rightful traditional lineage. This means that, if you are not from that royal lineage, you could not become a traditional ruler. However, the structures of the modern system of governance consists of the Regional Coordinating Council (RCC), the highest political decision making level headed by the Regional Minister appointed by the president and assisted by representatives from the district assemblies and regional heads of the decentralized ministries or departments. Currently, the region has one Municipal and ten (10) district assemblies namely, the Wa Municipality, Wa West, Wa East, Nadowli/Kaleo, Daffiama/Bussie/Issa, Jirapa, Lawra,Nandom, Lambussie/Karni, Sissala East and Sissala West (Ghana Statistical Service, 2010:6).

The Municipal and Districts assemblies are headed by Municipal and District Chief Executives (MCE and DCEs) who are nominated by the president and approved by not less than two/third (2/3) majority of assembly members present and voting. Each district is consisting of electoral areas through which two/thirds (2/3) of assembly members are elected while one/third (1/3) are appointed by the central government to represent the people in the district assembly. In all, Upper West Region consists of



293 electoral areas and unit committees. Each unit committee is composed of five elected members of the electoral unit they come from.

Administratively, the region is represented in parliament by eleven (11) political constituencies. The names of the constituencies are: Wa Central, Wa East, Wa West, Nadowli/Kaleo, Daffiama/Bussie/Issa, and Jirapa, Lawra, Nandom, Lambussie/Karni, Sissala East and Sissala West.

1.9.0 Organization of the Study

The thesis is organized into five (5) chapters as follows: Chapter one captures the introduction to the study, the problem statement, research questions, research objectives, justification, limitation of the study, scope and profile of the study area, and organization of the work. Chapter two covers the theoretical perspectives. It examines some theoretical discourses pertinent to the study as well as review of relevant concepts.

Chapter three focuses on the research methodology. Areas covered include research design, the sampling procedures, and methods of data collection, tools and techniques for presenting and analyzing the data, and reliability and validity of the findings. Chapter Four deals with the main presentation and analysis of the data obtained from the field. The last chapter consists of discussion of findings, conclusion and recommendations as well as relevant appendices.



CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter reviews the existing literature on theories of violence, democracy, constitutional democracy, representative democracy, electoral system and how internal and external factors contribute to electoral violence during elections.

2.1 Theoretical Framework

2.1.1 Psychological Theory of Violence

Psychological violence is the deliberate use of the mind to hurt and dominate another person. Here, the mind and emotions of the person is the target of abuse. These forms of violence are more damaging and very subtle even though we cannot see the effect physically (Kuenyehia 1998). Psychological violence are situations where human beings are indirectly denied access to service, facility, that tend to worsen the quality of the living standard. Whenever the affected people realised that they are being marginalised, they begin to address the effect which normally leads to violent situations. In the same way, when supporters of candidates and political parties in competitive electoral contest are perceived to be denied from winning election, they demonstrate their emotions and feelings which could be violent in nature.

2.1.2 Frustration-Aggressive Drive Theories of Violence

Frustration-aggression drive theories posit that people are driven to attack others when they are frustrated or disappointed or when they are unable to reach their set



goals/ objectives, or when they are unable to obtain the rewards they expect (Diego 2002).

Dollard et al. (1939) defined frustration as external conditions that prevent a person from obtaining the pleasures he or she had expected to enjoy. Dollard et al believed that, every aggressive action could ultimately be traced to a previous frustration... and the greater the frustration, the greater the quantity of aggression against the source of frustration. It means therefore that frustration that leads to violence is induced by external environment. The frustration could be a deliberate effort towards denying someone from the attainment of stated objective or goal.

According to Gurr (1970), society is frustrated and aggressive when deprived from its basic expectations. To Gurr, when there are changes within political, economic, and social systems, they are likely to predispose the human psyche to political violence. If people are deprived of their value expectations and value capabilities which are goods, services and conditions of life to which they believe they are rightfully entitled to, they are likely to respond to such situation in a more violent manner. If contestants in elections become frustrated because of their inability to win, they are likely to become aggressive with the least provocation.

2.2 Theories of Electoral Violence

Various theories of electoral violence exist. Notable among these theories include the Institutional Functionalism Theory of Electoral Violence and The Structural Theory of Electoral Violence.



2.2.1 Institutional Functionalism Theory of Electoral Violence

The theory of institutional-functionalism explains instability or delicateness of a country and the citizens' political participation. According to Huntington (1991), political disorder is more likely to occur in societies marked by high levels of political participation but with slow or weak processes of political institutionalization. To him, institutional-functionalism draws a direct correlation between fragile or weak states and the phenomenon of violence. Thus, violence is likely to erupt where the state fails to meet popular demands, leaving the masses in grinding poverty.. For example, a weak or fragile state would definitely have the problem of non-functioning state institutions that is supposed to protect human beings and property. Hence, weak institutional functionalism has a direct correlation between weak state and the eruption of violence especially when such violence coincides with competitive multiparty elections.

According to Nathan (2000) cited in Biegon (2009:6) in supporting Huntington added that, where underdevelopment is coupled with inequality, violence may occur as expression of anger, frustration and fear. Such violence is more real if the state lacks institutions for addressing grievances, and even more apparent in periods of elections that offer the possibility of changing the status quo. Vallings and Moreno (2001) cited in Biegon (2009), have asserted that fragility can occur when poverty or economic decline are combined with the presence of weak state institutions that cannot manage the very real grievances caused by, for example, inequitable distribution of resources or unequal access to formal institutions. Essentially, this means that in fragile states political institutions are not strong enough to manage effectively the natural conflicts that occur in society. This 'fragility' or weakness will be most evident at any time that



the state undergoes processes of economic, political and social change. When president Obama visited Ghana in 2009, he stated that elections alone do not promote democracy but building of strong and independent institutions.

The institutional functionalism theory emphasizes that violence could be triggered when there is breakdown of institutions such as the judicial system, law enforcement agencies and electoral commission that are mandated to address grievances and concerns of the people. In Ghana, election disputed cases are normally reported to the Electoral Commission (EC), the police, or the judicial service for redress. For example, in the 2008 general elections, the disputed parliamentary election results in the Wa East, Sissala East and Lawra constituencies were brought before the High Court in Wa for settlement. In a situation where these institutions fail to discharge their duties as expected, it could engender violence among the aggrieved parties.

2.2.2 The Structural Theory of Electoral Violence

The structure theory of violence suggests that society and politics are organised in a manner that generates conflict and the causal factor of electoral violence is the political economy of the state. According to Biegon (2009), where the state is organised in such a way that significant elements of the population are excluded from meaningfully participating in and benefiting from the states' economic and political life, such segments are bound at some point to resort to violence to reverse the effects of exclusion. In essence, such exclusion increases a state's level of fragility. This occurs in a state where there is discrimination and marginalization and manifestation of social stratification (where 'the haves not' are more than 'the haves'). Such condition creates social forces to seek redress through violent means.



Additionally, electoral violence may be ignited by a disputed election but its root causes may lie in historical marginalisation and exclusion. Again, where there is multiparty competitive elections between the 'included' and the 'excluded', the stakes of winning such an elections are definitely raised to a point that violence is a real outcome in the event of disappointment for either group. Vallings and Moreno (2001) emphasized that, the stakes are even raised higher where it is assumed that the likelihood that resources will be channeled to a particular group is directly related to whether the politician who controls those resources is from that group. In such a situation, those in power will seek to retain it at all cost including by foul means.

Conversely, if those outside power have long been excluded from mainstream state political power and economy, they will seek to attain it at all cost including violence. These situations normally arise when the electoral system is skewed towards the concept of winner takes all. Here the party that won the elections is constituted to form government, have control over the country's resources to rule the people while the defeated parties are left out of the governance system. This situation is what is happening in Ghana currently where the governance structure is organized in a way such that the party that win the general election forms the government at the expense of other political parties that contested the election creating the situation of the winner takes all. According to Sisk (2005), when parties are quite certain of loss or exclusion in an electoral contest, especially when they expect to be 'permanent minorities' (to lose not just once, but again and again), the certainty of outcomes is also a strong causal driver of violence. When a strongly insecure party or faction expects to be systematically excluded from political power, they may well turn to violence to either prevent their exclusion or to prevent the election process.



The institutional functionalism and structural theories above may explain why electoral violence is common among least developed countries in Africa and Asia. Most African countries have weak political institutions with high unemployment and poverty level. In a majority of these countries, development of political institutions lags behind social and economic change. Sisk observes that a common cause of election violence is that the stakes of winning and losing valued political posts in many situations, and especially in conditions of high scarcity and underdevelopment is incredibly high. By implication, in a community or a state where a section of the people feel that they are marginalized and excluded from participating in decision-making process, they may easily resort to violence to press home their demands. Lack of access to socio-economic and political resources which could enhance peoples' participation can fuel electoral violence. This normally happens when marginalised groups perceived that, they are systematically and structurally excluded from the benefits of the state and there is no possibility of overcoming such phenomenon.

2.3 Review of Conceptual Issues

2.3.1 Democracy

Democracy according to the Greek perspective means “government by the people. The word “democracy derives from the Greek word ‘demokratos’, which is combination of the words ‘demos’ a Greek word meaning ‘the people’, and ‘kratos’, designating “power” “strength” or “rule”. From the Greek perspective, democracy’ was understood as an idea resembling rule by the people or the actual and direct participation of all the citizens in public affairs. This was manifested through the assembly of Athenians community where the citizens participate in the decision making processes (Oquaye, 2004:59). According to Abraham Lincoln in his famous



Gettysburg Address, democracy means, “the government of the people, by the people, and for the people” The expression “government of the people means the power to rule is originated from the people, by the people means the rulers represent the governed that is the citizens. The governments’ legitimacy and power emanate from the people, the government is responsible to the people, the people guide government and the definition connotes direct democracy” (as in Oquaye, 2004:60). So from Abraham Lincoln’s definition, democracy means ruling in the interest and with the power of the citizen.

Diamond (1988) cited in Ademola (2009:105) sees the definition of democracy as involving not only a civilian constitutional multiparty regime with regular free and fair elections and universal suffrage, but organizational and informational pluralism; extensive civil liberties (freedom of expression, freedom of the press, freedom to form and join organizations); effective power for elected officials; and functional autonomy for legislative, executive and judicial organs of government.

It could be inferred that Diamond was referring to democracy as a system where the various institutions as indicated from above definitions work not only separately but also effectively. For democracy to thrive there should be the need for rules and regulations to be spelt out by the constitution of a country. Such rules and regulations are institutionally arranged to check not only the behaviours of legislative, judiciary, executive and governmental powers but the governed. Oquaye, (2004), opines that in the constitutional democracy, the constitution serves as a check on every exercise of power that affects the citizens. It means authority to govern is not licensed and cannot



be exercised with absolute discretion but rather such authority is governed by rules and that public officials are limited in the exercise of power.

The above explanations suggest that all public office holders are supposed to operate according to the laid down rules and regulations that take their roots from the national constitution. It must be noted that, today democracy has developed from its Athenians direct participation by the citizens to representative democracy where people are elected to occupy political offices as a result of increased population, specialization, and complexities in societies. Representative democracy is a form of governing in which people are ruled through their elected representatives in their countries. Representative democracy is a governing system where citizens participate in government by electing public officials to make decisions on their behalf. The elected officials are expected to represent the voters or the citizens' views and interests and to serve as the agents of citizens and to act for them Lowi and Goldman (1990). Representative democracy is facilitated through not just periodic elections but competitive free, fair, transparent and credible or incontrovertible electoral system in which the will of the voters are supreme.

2.4. Electoral System

Electoral system consists of rules, laws, rights, institutions, roles, responsibilities, processes, and formulas relevant to the preparation and conduct of elections and the declaration of results (AAEA, 2007). The electoral system is a crucial concept as it determines the 'rules of the game' under which elections are held. Such rules, importantly, determine strongly who will be included and excluded in governing



coalitions following electoral events. The electoral system spells out how votes are translated into seats in parliament and how the president is elected.

According to Reynolds et al. (2005), the electoral systems translate the votes cast in general elections into seats won by parties and candidates. The electoral system determines whether a country is practicing the concept of winner takes all or all inclusive. It is about the mathematical formulae used in allocation of seats either through the Plural Majority System, List Proportional, and Mixed system or through other systems. There are a number of factors which influence the choice of a particular formula of the electoral system. Reynolds et al argue that the choice of a particular system is essentially accidental, the result of an unusual combination of circumstances, of a passing trend, or of a quirk of history, with the impact of colonialism and the effects of influential neighbors often being especially strong. Ghana for instance practices first-past-the-post (simple majority) for parliamentary and absolute majority for presidential, bequeathed to the country by the British (colonial masters).

The electoral system consists of demarcation of electoral boundaries, registration of voters, exhibition of voters register, recruitment and training of temporary staff, filing of nomination, campaign, voter education, voting, counting and declaration of the final results. A very good and effective electoral system helps to determine whether the voter cast his/her votes for a party, a candidate or the voter expresses a single choice of a candidate or more choices in an election. According to Oquaye (2004), the method of selecting rulers by the free choice has necessitated a viable electoral system with a number of political parties from which the electorate can make a choice. A



very good electoral system helps to minimize the occurrence of violence associated with elections despite the existence of hidden social conflicts. If the purpose of election is to select leadership, then the best electoral system will be the most selective; the one that best provides for the electorate a qualitative choice of leaders. This means that where fraud and other malpractices prevail: or where “money politics” dictate who a leader should be, choking out the less wealthy and polluting the elective principle, then democracy falls into real danger.

The electoral system again, aids in the momentum of political change, encourage popular participation, and enable the emergence of legitimate representative who are capable of handling a wide range of needs and expectations, both immediate and in the future. It must also build understanding and trust not only among politicians and election administrators, but also among civil society organisations, among commentators, and above all among the citizens of a country undergoing democratic reforms. The design of electoral system must not only work under current situation, but also to accommodate future changes in attitudes and behaviour as electoral incentives change (Perelli cited in Reynolds, 2005:1).

It can be argued that elections are supposed to be used to consolidate democracy, good governance and a means of constructively managing differences. However, bad electoral system may end up in violence leading to loss of human lives, property, and retardation of economic development, marginalization and poverty.

2.5 Electoral Violence

When an election process is perceived as unfair or corrupt, its political legitimacy is compromised. This may motivate stakeholders involved to go outside the laid down



institutional norms to achieve their objectives which may spark the occurrence of electoral violence. Fischer (2002) defined electoral violence as “any random or organised act that seeks to determine, delay, or otherwise influence electoral processes through threat, verbal intimidation, hate speech, disinformation, physical assault, forced ‘protection’, blackmail, destruction of property or assassination. Here Fischer looked at electoral violence from two perspectives: electoral violence that emanate from organisers of the elections and the one which emanates from outside the environment of the election. On the perspective of electoral administrators, Fischer tried to look at the lapses that could affect the legitimacy of the leader elected while at the external environment, the eruption of physical violence as a result of politicians or people trying to win an election at all cost.

Meadow (2010:234) also defined electoral violence as acts that are used to harm, intimidate, exploit, disrupt, determine, hasten, delay, or reverse electoral processes or outcomes, and acts that occur between the registration of a voter and the inauguration of a political regime”. The above writers emphasized that, electoral violence are not only physical but also psychological in nature which may affect the voters confidence and the credibility of the elections results.

In the words of Olawale 2007: 133) electoral violence is “all forms of organized acts or threats – physical, psychological, and structural – aimed at intimidating, harming, blackmailing a political stakeholder before, during and after an election with a view to determining, delaying, or otherwise influencing an electoral process.” Electoral violence from Olawale’s point of view is that political violence that targets political opponents during electoral process. It aims at winning political competition or power



through violence, subverting the ends of the electoral and democratic process. Election violence occurs not just at election time, but in periods leading to and after elections, such as registration and counting of ballots.

From the definitions above, it can be inferred that electoral violence can be physical and coercive intimidation as well as psychological and the inducement of fears by one of the contending parties to gain an undue advantage over the rest in an electoral processes. Physical electoral violence manifests where harm is caused to anybody, premise, and materials either involved directly in the electoral processes or not. In the view of Mwagiru cited in Schwarts (2001:15) there is a political culture of thuggery that generally predisposes actors to engage in violence and intimidation during political contests. Within the context of the existing political system, the decay of political and social systems result in violence becoming the tool for settling political contests and managing political conflicts.

Physical electoral violence is characterised by the use of physical force on candidates, electoral officials, elections observers, security operatives, or any other persons before, during or after election. Physical forms of violence include rough handling, beating or flogging, inflicting other types of injuries and even election-related assassination Bombande (2010). For example, in Ghana the use of macho-men like the famous Azoka boys associated with the NDC, the Bamba boys also associated with NPP and their use of threat, inflammatory language, and any act that seems to affect the “will choice” of the electorate constitute electoral violence.

The structural type of electoral violence manifests more especially when there are instruments of political exclusion of some sections of society from public offices. In



the view of Bombande (2010:21), structural violence refers to “the creation of institutional or legal framework targeted at opponents or individuals either disenfranchise or keep them away from political relevance.” The legal and institutional frameworks indirectly work to exclude those groups of people from benefiting political offices.

2.6 Causes of Electoral Violence

The causes of electoral violence could be classified into two; namely the process and structural factors. The process as the name denotes means the violence that occurs during the electoral cycle. The process or internal factors could also be called the triggers of electoral violence because they go into the very nature of the entire electoral processes. Therefore, if the electoral processes or internal factors are not professionally handled, they could lead to the eruption of electoral violence since elections are by their very nature competitive of ideology and struggle for political post. Iff cited in UN Report (2010: 29), identified process factors that trigger electoral violence to include: contested and unfit legal frameworks for elections; ineffective and mistrusted dispute resolution mechanisms, lack of trust in electoral management bodies; technical problems, which as a consequence may favour particular political actors; hate speeches during election campaigns and mismanagement of appeals.

The critical roles played by elections management bodies in ensuring credible elections cannot be over emphasized. If the stakeholders in the electoral processes do not understand the work of the EMB, they tend to hold wrong suspicions against them. In the words of Bombande (2010), if the EMB is suspected of a lack of impartiality, the credibility of the electoral process is diminished and there are high



levels of violence when the results are announced. The occurrence of electoral violence in some cases is attributed to the work of the body responsible for the conduct of elections. This is because, stakeholders and the public do not understand the why and how the working environment of the EMB. Hence, both the government and opposition parties tend to accuse the EMB of being biased or partial towards each of them when decisions of EMB do not favour any at a point in time. The stakeholders therefore do not have faith and trust in the work, the outcome of the elections results from the EMB, and the ultimate is to resort to violence. For example in Tanzania, the President appoints all the Commissioners of the National Electoral Commission (NEC) for a period of five years. Article 74(1) provides that in the exercise of its functions, the NEC is not obliged to heed the advice or take instructions from any person or government department or political party. Moreover, the individual commission members are openly acknowledged in the country to be people of integrity and the Constitution requires that no commissioners belong to any political party, a ground on which they make an oath while pledging to work impartially. However, because the President is also the chairman of the ruling party, the commissioners are viewed by the opposition as being partisan and partial to the ruling party. Interestingly there are instances when the government and ruling party accuse the NEC of being in league with the opposition political parties.

According to Lipumba cited in Mwangi (2001:14), on November 13, 2000, “an attempt was made on the life of Mr. Masoud Mohammed Ally, a Commissioner with the Tanzania Electoral Commission when a hand grenade was thrown into his bedroom, which caused severe damage to his eyes. He had to be flown to South Africa for treatment”. The Tanzania experience shows that, EMB being assertive in



executing its constitutional mandates is likely to be accused either by the opposition or the ruling party of being impartial. So wrong perceptions formed against the EMB is a total recipe for electoral violence.

A common cause of election violence is the stakes of winning and losing valued political posts. This always takes place especially in conditions of high scarcity, poverty and inequality. When winning a state office is the key to livelihood not just for an individual, but for his or her entire clan, faction, or even ethnic group, parties and candidates often refuse to contemplate the consequences of failure. Studies of election related violence often highlight the perpetuation of highly personal or patronage politics or a system in which politicians are gang-like ‘bosses’ that control resources (such as access to jobs and income) and dispense public services such as housing, health care, or lucrative government contracts (UNDP 2009:43). In the words of Stewart (2001) cited in the UNDP report (2009:45), the stakes of elections are often seen as opportunities to engage in corruption and economic rent-seeking. This in turn leads to highly factionalized politics—often along religious, sectarian or ethnic lines, or along party-political divides where control of the state leads to the reinforcement of class divisions or along lines of social difference. The above view re-echoes the issues of exclusion, marginalisation and discrimination as basis of electoral violence as observed by some of the structural theories.

The certainty of the outcomes of elections can also generate electoral violence. According to Høglund (2004) cited in UNDP report (2009:12), when parties are quite certain of defeat or exclusion in an electoral contest, especially when they expect to be ‘permanent minorities’ (to lose not just once, but again and again due to patterns of identity voting), the certainty of outcomes is also a strong causal of violence. The post-election violence stemming from the controversial 2005 elections in Iraq seems



to fit this pattern. When a party or faction expects to be systematically excluded from political power (in the Iraq case, the erstwhile powerful Sunni communities, described below), they may well resort to violence to either prevent their exclusion or to prevent the election's success. Hoglund believes that, permanent minorities are not part of democratic process. The situation is more pronounced when the design of the electoral system is based on winner takes all concepts or a zero-sum game where the losers are excluded from forming government. The zero-sum game motivates political parties or candidates to the elections to go all out to win the elections even through dubious ways. However, it must be noted that, the minorities make government in power to be on its toes to rule effectively. Participating in governance should not be seen as only winning elections to constitute government, but a person or a party could be in minority as a result of numerical strength but could offer constructive suggestions.

Intimidation of voters through violence can be directed at specific individuals. At the national level, violence could occur in the form of perpetrators attempting to control social institutions that influence voter opinions, such as the media or civil society (UNDP, 2009:17). Contenders in the electoral system at times develop tactics of direct intimidation against voters in areas to reduce their participation in order to win an election. This in the process may engender violence. This tactics have become incentive to perpetrators because often the offenders are not sanctioned. The intimidation could be physical assault, use of threats, insults or anything that is capable of influencing the choice of voters to the advantage of others in elections.



The design of an electoral system could have a direct impact either by exacerbating or deescalating electoral violence. Bombande (2010) postulates that the extent to which a system is regarded as free and inclusive may determine the possibility of post-electoral conflict. Violence often occurs when elections are zero-sum-event and losers excluded from participating in governance. The concept of winner takes all is a product of the kind of electoral system a country opted for in their democratic dispensation. The concept gives incentives to the political party that has been able to meet certain threshold in an election to form the government (Hoglund, 2006). The process encourages contenders in the electoral system to win even including violent means.

Structure or the external factors are those existing socio-economic problems that serve as the remote causes of electoral violence. They are always underlying social issues in which elections take place and these factors may include existing community conflicts or violence. In the 2010 UN Report, Iff added that, elections do not take place in a vacuum. There is always an underlying social context in which elections take place and it may include; existing violence among ethnic, religious, organized crime, violence against women, terrorism, guerrilla fighting, tensions in society for instance latent conflicts including segregation, discrimination, and structural factors like unemployment, corruption, poverty, illiteracy. Tip (cited in the UN Report, 2010:42) stressed that if a particular 'group' being in power dominate access to resources and exclude other parties because it perceives itself as 'better' or 'cleverer' thereby creating a social gap of 'have' and 'have not', violent eruption are inevitable.



The organization of electoral processes in violent and volatile surroundings always entails risks for electoral actors, events and materials. These community conflicts or violence include ethnic, religious, organized crime, segregation, discrimination and marginalization. Electoral violence may also evolve from structural factors like unemployment, corruption, poverty. For instance, the 2007 electoral violence in Kenya was fuelled by deep ethnic divisions and years of economic frustration. The violence that rocked Kenya should be seen, perhaps more as a reaction to a history of exclusion and an earnest desire for a future of inclusion (Biegon, 2009:16).

In the words of Carothers (2002) cited in UNDP (2009: 5), countries in transition, which have experienced transitions from authoritarian or single-party rule to multiparty politics but which are considered to be partial, unconsolidated, façade, or gray-zone (mixed) systems may be especially prone to or vulnerable to conflict due to the uncertainties of transition that these societies experience. Beneficiaries of the older system of authoritative or one party regime find it difficult to shift multiparty democracy with fear of losing the elections and hence adopt various mechanisms including violence to resist any attempt directed to wrestle power.

The exploitation sentiments and politicization of existing social problems is another factor that is responsible for the eruption of electoral violence. Politicians try to influence and fuel already existing community problems with the aim of getting political favours during elections. Bekoe cited in Peace Brief (2010:6) has stated that politicians exploit sentiments of economic discrimination or dominance of one ethnic group by another. He indicated that in Kenya's Coast province, the 1997 parliamentary elections threatened to unseat the two representatives of the ruling



Kenya African National Union party as they faced opposition from non-indigenous voters in the constituency. Concurrently, the Coast's Digo people accused the non-indigenous of taking their jobs, educational opportunities and land. Exploiting these sentiments, politicians armed local groups to threaten the migrants, effectively driving them out. Approximately 130 migrants were killed and 100,000 were displaced. Bekoe further argued that the chieftaincy dispute between the Kusasis and Mamprusis in Ghana's Upper East region, which predates Ghana's independence, serves as an example. According to him, the National Democratic Congress and its political tradition were seen to side with the Kusasi's claims to chieftaincy and the traditional area, while the Mamprusis were validated by the New Patriotic Party and its political tradition.

Buttressing Bekoe's assertion, Boone (cited in Peace Brief, 2010:6), expressed that the tensions in Côte d'Ivoire over economic crises, nationalism and the unclear rights between indigenous and non-indigenous inhabitants in the country's south and southwest regions were exploited by politicians who fanned the fears of the indigenes'. Consequently, the non-indigenous people who comprise true foreigners, Muslims, and those with northern sounding names were often violently expelled from their lands and homes and subjected to harassment. The transformation of this conflict into one of citizenship and identity lies at the root of the violence following the 2000 elections and the attempted coup in 2002 by northern military personnel.

From the above discussion it can be argued that politicians tend to adopt contentious tactics to win elections when they realize that their fortune for winning the election is threatened. They tend to succeed in areas where the people are relatively ignorant,



illiterate and petted with high level of poverty and unemployment level. Countries with high levels of poverty, unemployment and illiteracy among the citizens can be said to be much prone to violence especially during elections.

Liberal democracies flourish on the notion of political tolerance and the culture of democratisation. The willingness of government to accommodate criticisms and divergent views help to sustain good governance and democracy. However, these democratic tenets or values do not exist in poor countries, autocratic regimes, and countries in democratic transitions. Bombande (2010) has emphasized that in most illiberal democracies, or high hybrid regimes, political intolerance and repression are rife. In the context of authoritarian regimes the strategic intent and practical consequences of violent acts are designed in many ways either to disrupt the elections altogether or to influence voting behaviour through threats or intimidation.

2.6.1 Internal and External Factors that Influence Electoral Violence

To understand clearly the factors responsible for electoral violence, Alihodzic cited in Iff (2011:32) has listed internal factors in order to reflect the chronology of the electoral process as well as the list of external factors distinguishing between existing forms of violence which can impact electoral processes and those factors that could potentially spark election-related violence.



Table 2.1. Analytical Framework of internal and external factors that influence electoral violence

Internal Factors-Triggers	External Factors-Systemic problems
<p>Electoral Legislation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Contested Electoral Law •Unfit electoral system •Lack of adequate administrative regulations <p>Planning and Implementation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Inadequate operational planning •Inadequate funding, financing and budgeting •Inadequate security arrangements •Inadequate timeline planning •Poor performance of the Electoral Management Bodies •Inadequate system for the resolution of electoral conflicts <p>Training and Education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Poor or no training for electoral officials •Poor or no training for political parties, civil society organizations and media •Poor or no training for law enforcement officials • Poor or no civic education • Poor or no voter information <p>Registration process</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Problematic voter registration •Problematic registration of political parties and independent candidates 	<p>Existing Violence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Intimidation/harassment •Kidnapping/extortion •Assassination/homicide •Gender based violence •Violence against property <p>Risk Factors for Violence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Security sector actors •Regional weak state presence and control •Neighboring violence spilling over borders •Poverty and socio-economic conditions •Increased unemployment •Increased ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic related tensions •Changes in power dynamics among actors •Violation of human rights •Sensitive processes involving fear and/or expectations •Arbitrary arrests and lack of due process •Impunity •Forced displacement •Presence of non-state armed actors •Organized crime •Access to small arms





<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Problematic accreditation of election observers <p>Electoral campaign</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited media access •Public incitement to violence through the media •Intimidation/violence against media •Public incitement to violence at political party rallies •Provocative and violent actions by political parties <p>Voting operations and election day</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Problems with provisional voter registers •Deficit/destruction/loss of sensitive and non-sensitive materials •Lack of transparency of special and external voting •Election Day problems •Problematic ballot and result tallying •Lost/destroyed tabulation forms •Fraud suspected <p>Election results</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Mishandling a final round of complaints and appeals •Delay in announcing the official results • Rejection of results 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Natural hazards •Unfit political system •Spoiler political parties and organizations •Lack of democratic culture •Manipulative media .Illiteracy .Marginalization .Discrimination
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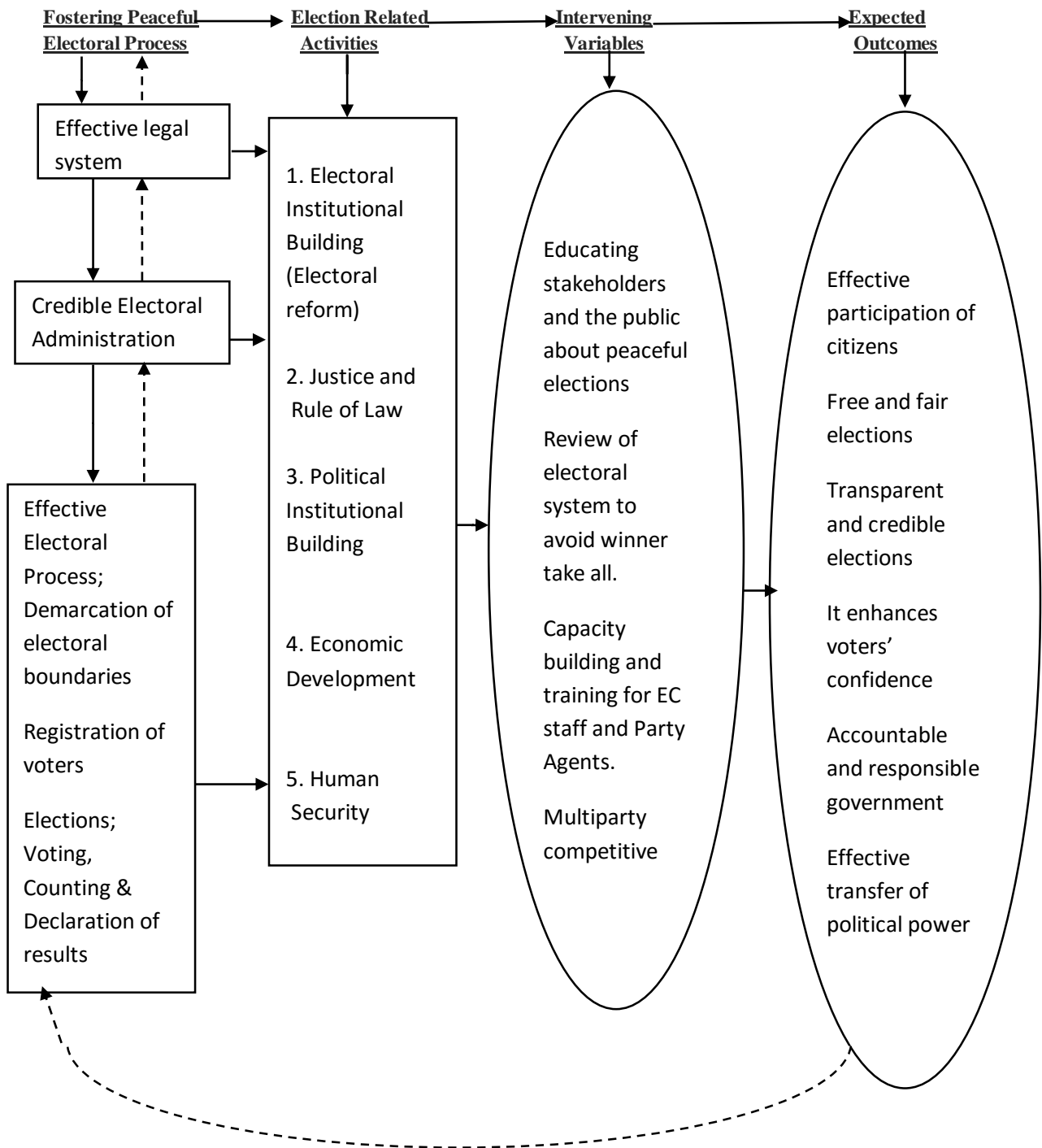
Source: Alihodzic, cited in Iff (2011:32)

The table above categorized the factors that are capable to erupt electoral violence into external (remote/exogenous) factors and internal (immediate/endogenous)

factors. Even though the external factors exist outside the electoral process, their effects on the escalating electoral violence cannot be underestimated. They become fertile grounds on which any simple flaw in the electoral process could trigger electoral violence. Hence the external and internal factors complement each other in the occurrence of electoral violence. According to Dimpho (2010), the factors that propel such violence are multifaceted, ranging from flawed or failed elections to structural issues such as poor governance and exclusionary political practices, to name but a few. In many cases, elections either have precipitated political disputes or have escalated simmering tensions to an outburst of conflict. Electoral violence may emanate from deficiencies in the electoral process itself as much as it may be stimulated or catalyzed by underlying social, political and economic cleavages or tensions. Hence, if stakeholders in the electoral process felt that they are cheated during elections coupled with the existence of the above structural problems, electoral violence could occur.



2.1 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK



Researcher's own construct July 2012



2.7. Conceptual Framework

The conceptual model of this study is anchored on four major dimensions: Fostering Peaceful Electoral Process, Electoral Related Activities, Intervening Variables and the Expected Outcome.

2.7.1. Fostering Peaceful Electoral Process

For democracy to flourish in fostering peaceful electoral process there should be effective legal system that spells out all the laws, rules and regulations governing a credible electoral administration. Effective legal system guides the key players in the electoral system and administration as to how to relate to each other to avoid the occurrence of violence. Effective legal systems will also enable the EMB to organize elections in an efficient and timely manner. The EMB must be independent from political and institutional control throughout the electoral cycle of activities. There should be mechanism to ensure that, those who qualified are given the opportunity to register in order to vote in elections. Political parties and candidates are also offered the opportunity to register legally and to operate and file for their candidates to contest elections without any impediment.

Credible and independent electoral administration is one of the surest ways of fostering peaceful elections. In every democratic system, there should be independent and credible election administrators who are impartial to all the stakeholders in their dealing. The composition of election administrators should not be a mixture of political party representatives who are seen to be aligned with any political party. In order to carry out their duties effectively, the composition of the administrators must be guaranteed by the constitution, they should have fixed term of office, and they



must be well motivated. They should be professional in performing their day-to-day electoral task. The administrators should be able to treat their stakeholders equally and fairly.

In fostering peaceful elections, there is the need for an effective electoral process, which defines in clear terms what activities need to take place at when, where, who participate in it, and how the activity is to be carried out. Activities involved in the electoral processes include demarcation of electoral boundaries, registration of qualified prospective voters, exhibition of provisional voters register, filing of nomination by candidates who would like to contest elections either sponsored by political parties or as independent candidates. Demarcation of electoral boundaries is a useful electoral activity though very complex and therefore needs careful planning, consultation, public sensitisation and education. Improper demarcation and undue influences could lead to the problem of gerrymandering. Gerrymandering is a process where demarcation of certain electoral boundaries may favour particular party and candidate unduly which leads to electoral violence. There should be procedure for the resolution of grievances, which may arise out of the demarcation of electoral boundaries. Hence, the above guidelines made it imperative for the electoral commission to undertake demarcation according to the law.

In order to have peaceful elections there is the need for credible, transparent and up-to-date voters register that contains all qualified registered voters. The voters register contains personal data of prospective voters. There should be a benchmark for those who are entitled to be included in the voters register and eligible to vote on any election. In order to promote peaceful elections, there must be proper mechanisms to



handle any registration challenge that might be raised against a voter who wanted to be included in the voter list during registration.

Another electoral process which helps in fostering peaceful elections is the filing of nomination. It is the process of issuing and receiving nomination forms to and from prospective candidates, who qualified to contest elections, within a period allowed for that purpose. In this process, the candidates who are interested to contest elections in whatever capacity have to approach the district or constituency offices of the electoral commission for the nomination forms, fill and return them to the appropriate destination offices. The completed forms are vetted to ensure that all the prospective candidates meet the requisite qualifications that include; nationality, residential status, honouring of tax obligations, age, and no legal prohibition from contesting elections. The vetting ensures that eligible candidates are allowed to contest the election in a constituency where they actually hail from. All these electoral processes identified can trigger electoral violence and they should be undertaken in an impartial, transparent and credible manner to avoid any perceived biases. By this, the stakeholders in the electoral processes are encouraged to accept the outcome of the elections results as the true reflections of the will of the people. In effect, an effective electoral process plays critical role in fostering peaceful elections.

Peace-building initiatives are vital in the prevention of electoral violence. Strong legal institutional and capacity building in every electoral administration is very important. So as to handle any electoral related dispute to the satisfaction of all stakeholders in the electoral system. These processes could help to channel deeply rooted social conflicts into institutional frameworks, thus making electoral processes less exposed



to external (exogenous) influences. When this is assured, the citizens in the country would not take the laws into their own hands by way of violently defending themselves. All societal conflicts like land disputes, chieftaincy disputes, tribal, and religious differences that normally serve as fertile grounds for the eruption of electoral violence could be settled amicably. The legal system should be independent, firm, fair, and transparent devoid of any corrupt practices so that decisions (judgment) taken on issues brought before them would be acceptable to all contended parties.

In fostering peaceful elections, the executive, legislature and the judiciary roles assigned to them by the constitution must be clearly spelt out. The citizens in the country must be given the necessary security by the government so that they can embark upon their legitimate functions without fear of any form. All forms of discrimination, social and political exclusion should be avoided.

Education of stakeholders and public awareness of the electoral processes in terms of programmes, projects and policies is an important intervening variable that could lead to violence-free elections. Prospective voters are educated not only on the need to take part in all the various stages but equally to obey the rules and regulations governing the electoral processes. In order to carry out peacefully elections, there is the need for training of temporary poll staff and party agents particularly by the EMB as well as the various parties contesting the elections. The training helps to educate the various categories of people on their specific roles during the main elections. The training ensures that no one interferes with the work of another throughout the elections. In tackling electoral violence, there is the need to analyze and review the electoral



system by EMB, judiciary, political parties, and other key stakeholders periodically to ensure that rules, regulations, and practices that seem to be contradictory are rectified.

The ultimate goal of every country's electoral system is to facilitate the process towards the consolidation of democracy. When all the three pillars of the conceptual framework that is fostering peaceful election process, useful elections activities, and the intervening variables are well carried out, the expected outcome would be effective participation of qualified citizens in all the electoral processes. It would also encourage all-inclusive participation by people. Registered voters would turn out in high numbers since they are assured of security and protection. The processes would enable the stakeholders and voters have high confidence in the electoral processes. It would again lead to the achievement of free and fair, transparent and credible elections. The government would invariably be accountable and responsible to the people. This would invariably promote periodic democratic competitive multi-party elections. It must be emphasized that, if the expected outcomes are unfavourable, it means that, there are problems with the legal system, the electoral administration is not credible, and activities in electoral system have not been properly done.



CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1.0 Research Design

A research design is the conceptual structure within which research would be conducted. Research design is a plan or blueprint of how you intend conducting the research (Mouton, 2001 cited in Sarantakos 2005). According to Sarantakos, (2005), it is the logical sequence in which the study is to be carried out, as well as the elements of the study. It includes methods of data collection and analysis and all administrative procedures that need to be considered for the study to be carried out without problems or delay. It is the complete scheme or programmes of the research which goes through the various steps one by one and describes adequately the activities to be undertaken in such steps.

Even though the research design adopted in this study was qualitative, quantitative tools were used to analyse socio-demographic backgrounds of the respondents. The study adopted the qualitative methodology because, it involved the perception and opinion of the people. The justification to lean more towards qualitative research was because qualitative research permits the researcher: to wear wider lens spectacles that enable him to see both context, specific issues and the phenomena as they exist and function within each individual community environment and in relation to other on-going phenomena (Bacho 2001). Focus group discussions and semi- structured interviews were adopted in gathering data in the three study areas.



3.1.1 Identification of Target Population

The target population for this study included political party executives, candidates of previous elections, youth leaders, chiefs/opinion leaders and staff of EC in the three constituencies namely Wa Central, Lawra, and Sissala East in the Upper West Region of Ghana. The study focuses on the above target population because of the critical roles they play in the electoral processes by shaping the opinion of the electorate during elections.

3.1.2 Sampling Techniques

Sampling in research means a process that a researcher passes to study part of a population which has the same attributes as the entire population. Sampling procedures in the words of Kish (1967) cited in Twumasi (2001)

denote all the stages and processes involved in reaching the respondents. The sampling techniques involved issues like “how wide coverage is acceptable? What type of respondents would be able to give answers to research questions? Will the selected groups of respondents be adequately representative of the community? What typical groups of respondents are available? Can we select a typical village or community? All these are relevant questions which come to mind when an investigator begins to select a sampling design”

Sampling procedure is whereby the targeted population is investigated by studying a small part of it namely a sample (Sarantakos, 2005). A sample which is fairly representative helps the researcher to make generalization or to draw inferences based on the study of the sample about the parameters of population from which the sample



is taken (Yin, 2003; Sarantakos, 2005). This study made use of both probability and non-probability sampling techniques to select the respondents.

3.1.3 Sampling of Constituencies

According to Kumekpor (2002), simple random sampling is a sampling technique in which each individual unit of the universe has the same chances of being included or excluded. The registered voter population size of Upper West was 328,834. The Upper West Region has nine (9) constituencies and the simple random sampling techniques were used to select three constituencies for study namely Wa Municipality, Sissala East and Lawra. Specifically, the lottery method of probability sampling was employed since there was a list of the constituencies. They were written on papers, folded and balloted; from which the constituencies used for the study were selected which were 11% of the registered voters in the three study localities that stood at 116,463 as at 2008 (Elections Report, 2008).

3.1.4 Sampling Units

The sampling unit of the study refers to the people that were included (Twumasi, 2001). Out of the three randomly chosen constituencies, the main targets were now selected purposively for the study, because of their critical involvement in the electoral process in the constituencies. These target groups of people were made up of the political party executives, candidates of parliamentary elections since 1992, leaders of youth groups in the political parties that contest elections, and staff of EC. However, chiefs, opinion leaders and community members, from the study areas were also selected on the basis of simple random sampling techniques.



Table 3.1 Compositions of sampling units

Sampling Units	Number of Respondents	Number of Constituency	Total
Party Executives	16	3	48
Candidates	8	3	24
Youth Leaders	8	3	24
Chiefs/Opinion Leaders	2	3	6
EC Staff	2	3	6
Community Members	2	3	6
Total	38	3	114

Source: Researcher's own construct

3.1.5 Sample Size

Sampling size refers to the total number of people that are involved in the study. In the words of Kumekpor (2002), sampling size refers to the number of sample units or units of analysis constituting a sample. Stated differently, the sample size is the selected number of the population to be studied. The total sample size of the study was 114 as captured by table 3.1. Thirty-eight (38) respondents were purposively selected from each of the three constituencies. The researcher was of the view that, these groups of respondents selected were in position to provide the information he was looking for.

3.2.0 Sources and Methods of Data Collection

Data are information a researcher collects either from primary or secondary sources out of which inferences and conclusion are drawn for analysis in a study. In determining the sources of data collection, the researcher must be mindful of the kind of people that would be involved as well as the sensitivity of the topic under



consideration. In research work, it is important to use various sources, tools and techniques for data collection. According to Twumasi (2005) using various methods to collect data will help the researcher to evaluate his data sources and to detect inconsistent answers. According to Blumer there is no protocol to be followed in the use of any procedures. The procedure should be adapted to its circumstances and guided by judgment of its propriety and fruitfulness (cited in Twumasi, 2005:30). Both primary and secondary data sources were used in the study with the view to enrich data. The primary sources of data collections used in the research were focus group discussions and in-depth interviews.

Focus group discussion is a deep discussion and interaction with group of people of the same background and ideas of a particular issue or event. The assumption here is that, the people selected would be in a position to give accurate account of the issues than resulting to any other method. Blumer (1970, cited in Twumasi 2005) observed that, a small number of such individuals brought together as a discussion and resource group is more valuable many times over than any representative sample. Such a group, discussing collectively their sphere of life and probing into it as they meet one another's disagreement will do more to lift the veils covering the sphere of life than any other device that we know of. The focus group discussions enabled the researcher to obtain information in a particular area of interest which could not be obtained by any other methodological procedures.

The composition of the focus group discussions in Wa Central, Sissala East and Lawra constituencies were as follow; one (1) executive member each of the four major political parties that contested the elections, two (2) candidates, each, two (2)



youth group leaders each of the four major political parties and one (1) staff each of the electoral commission who took active part in the elections as well as one (1) each of chiefs and community members.. Hence, eleven (11) respondents each constituted the FGD in each of the three (3) mentioned constituencies. Each FGD lasted for about 30 minutes in the three constituencies. Two research assistants were engaged as interpreters and recorders, they were from each of these communities and were guided by a discussion guide taking into consideration the research questions and objectives of the study. This enabled the researcher to gather the needed data.

In-depth interviewing is a qualitative research technique that involves conducting intensive individual interviews with a small number of respondents to explore their perspectives on a particular idea, programmes, or situation (Boyce and Palena 2006:21). In this method, the researcher probed deep into the area of concern. Pertinent and emerging issues, questions, discussions that needed further probe were investigated in this method. In the words of Boyce and Palena. (2006:21) in-depth interviews are useful when you want detailed information about a person's thought and behaviour or want to explore new issues in-depth. The composition of the respondents in in-depth interviews in Wa Central, Sissala East and Lawra constituencies were as follow; twelve (12) executive member each of the four major political parties that contested the elections, six (6) candidates, each, six (6) youth group leaders each of the four major political parties and one (1) staff each of the electoral commission who took active part in the elections as well as one (1) each of chiefs and community members. In all, eighty-one (81) respondents were involved in the in-depth interviews conducted in the three constituencies.



The study employed a research team of four persons to administer semi structured questionnaires. Semi-structured questions according to Twumasi (2001:55-56) are questions even though written down, permit the respondents freedom to give answers by freely expressing themselves as open-ended questions do. The investigator writes down the questions and expects the respondents to provide their own answers. This method gives flexibility in answering questions. These questionnaires were administered one-by-one on all the respondents and the responses written down as given by the respondents.

Secondary data as the name implies is the already processed and existing data. It is where a researcher examines, analysis and investigates information already gathered by other researchers or people. Relevant secondary data used in this study included documents, reports, books, journals, newspapers and internet sources. They provided additional information to supplement that of the primary data.

3.3 Techniques of Data Analysis

After the collection of data from the field, a thorough editing was undertaken to ensure accuracy, consistency and appropriateness. The editing involved checking accuracy and consistency of information on each questionnaire and in the field note book in relation to the objectives of the study. In this regard, a check on the responses of the respondents on electoral violence to determine whether their responses were in line with the research objectives set. Again the editing involved the coding of the data collected according to the themes such as the immediate, remote, effect, measures among others to deal with electoral violence having put them under the various thematic headings. To ensure visual appreciation of the study, data were presented in



the form of frequency figures, percentages, and charts. The tabulation of the data took care of gender, age, occupation, educational qualification, religion, and ethnic background. Descriptive tools like Microsoft Excel programme were used to analyze quantitative data such as ages, sex, and academic qualification of the respondents.

Analysis of data means a critical examination of materials in order to understand its relationship and to discover its trends (Twumasi, 2005). First and foremost, all data collected were coded according to themes and the objectives of the study such as the fundamental factors that trigger electoral violence, how electoral violence affect voter confidence in the electoral process, measures that Election Management Body (EMB) and stakeholders have in place to tackle electoral violence and the challenges that confront election management body and stakeholders in tackling electoral violence and how they address these challenges. The study compared the responses from the field to the various information gathered in the literature review on electoral violence in Ghana and other parts of the world. Themes, interpretations and views from the various focus group discussions and in-depth interviews were compared and contrasted. The rationale is to identify the pattern and factors responsible for the occurrence of the electoral violence in each locality. The content of the discussion were analysed by looking at the trends and patterns of responses by the respondents at the various focus group discussions in the three constituencies under study. Where there were inaccurate responses from respondents, a follow-up was carried out to ensure consistency and reliability.

Qualitative research data are cleaned by means of checking accuracy and consistency of information on each interview questionnaire in relation to the objectives of the



thesis. In this regards, a check on the responses of the people on electoral violence were in line with the research objectives set.

3.4 Reliability and Validity of Findings

In research study, when a researcher adopts the right procedure to find answers to questions, then we say there is validity. It is the extent to which a measurement technique measures what it purports to measure. That is the appropriateness and usefulness of the specific preferences (Schweigert, 1998 as cited in Kumekpor, 2002). Validity in research ensures that there is no conflicting information in the findings of a research. In addition, when a researcher adopts the quality measurement procedures that ensure accuracy then there is reliability. In the words of Joppe 2000 as cited in Gerhart (2004), reliability refers to the extent to which results are consistent over time and an accurate representation of the total population under study. If the results of a study can be reproduced under a similar methodology, then the research instrument is considered to be reliable. Validity on the other hand, involved the extent to which a measurement technique measures what it purports to measure. That is the appropriateness and usefulness of the specific inference Schweigert, 1998 as cited in Kumekpor, (2002). In other to ensure reliability and validity, qualitative approach as well was used to investigate issues. To ensure that data collected are valid and reliable, daily review of data collected from the field and validation of main findings were carried out to ensure that, areas with controversies were corrected. This was done through the daily checklist by looking at the responses given by the various respondents and participants in the in-depth interviews and the FGDs from the fields.



As a result of the sensitive nature of violence and for that matter, electoral violence in relation to the respondents, research ethics was developed between the researcher and the stakeholders such as the political party executives, candidates, opinion leaders, EC staff and youth group leaders in order to obtain concrete responses for credible research work. Considering the task involved in gathering data, four research assistants were engaged. The four research assistants were people who were knowledgeable about elections related violence. In order to obtain good results, four research assistants were properly trained in ethics of data collection. The researcher also disclosed to the respondents/participants the purpose of the data collection. Lastly, the respondents were assured of confidentiality of the responses they gave before the commencement of the in-depth interviews and FGD discussions



CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.0. Introduction

This chapter presents the data collected from the field and attempts made at their interpretation. The chapter highlights on the social and demographic characteristics (sex, age, marital status, education, occupation and frequency of voting) of the respondents. Furthermore, other responses that were gathered from the field were in relation to the causes, impact and measures to minimize electoral violence.

The gathered data were accordingly coded into various themes to reflect the objectives of the study. .

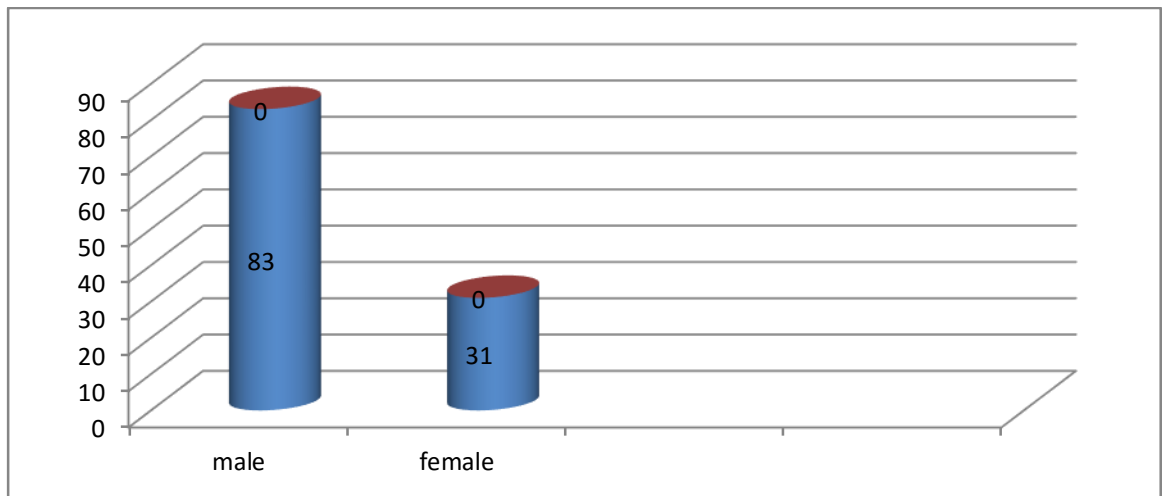
4.1 Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

4.1.1 Sex Distribution of Respondent

From figure 4.1, out of 114 respondents interviewed in relation to sex distribution, 47, (73.1%) were male while the remaining 31, (26.98%) were female. Ironically, the population of Ghana indicates that women are 51% more than men but when it comes to decision-making in political offices and playing key roles in society, women are not adequately represented. This data confirmed the notion that males play leadership roles more than females in either party politics or community leadership roles.



Figure 4.1: Sex distribution of respondents



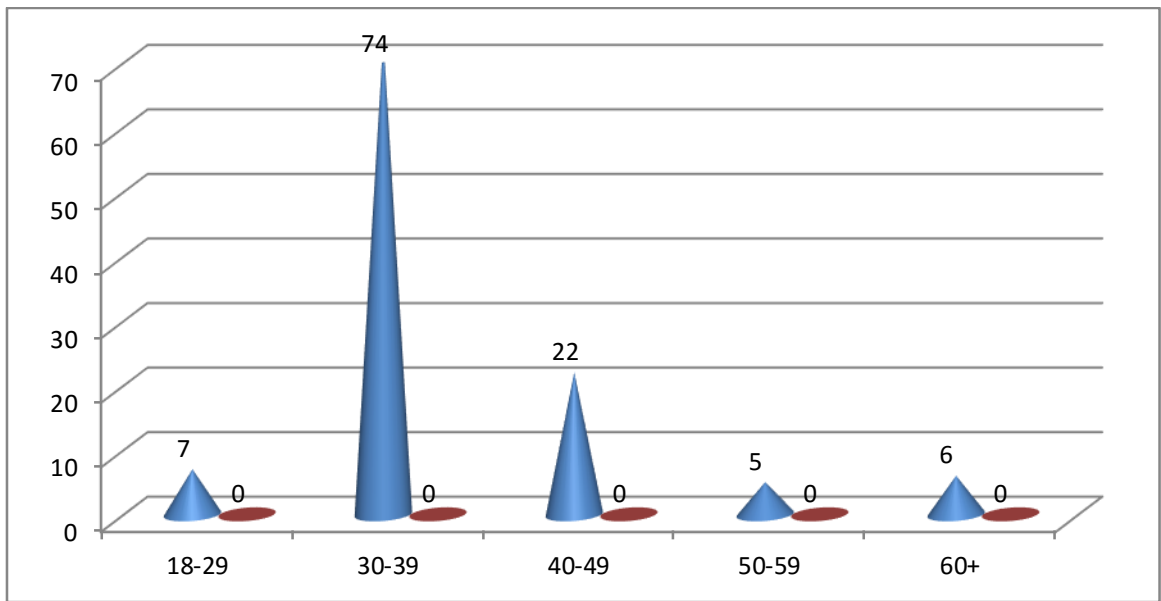
Source: Researcher's field work, June 2012.

4.1.2 Age Distribution of Respondents

One of the basic qualifications for a Ghanaian to register as a voter and to take part in decision-making process either nationally or locally is the attainment of a minimum age of 18. Therefore, one's age demonstrates his/her maturity in decision-making process. In the study, the ages of the respondents were ranged between 18-29 years, 30-39years, 40-49years, 50-59years, and 60 and above years as could be seen from figure 4.2 below.



Figure 4.2: Age distribution of respondents



Source: Researcher's field work, June 2012.

From the figure above, respondents below 30 and 60 years and above have the frequency of seven and six representing 6.2% respectively, while those respondents between 30-39 were 74 and constituted 60.9%. The age bracket of 40-49 with frequency of 22 was the second highest, and the age bracket of 50-59 with the frequency of five constituted the lowest in the age classification of the respondents.

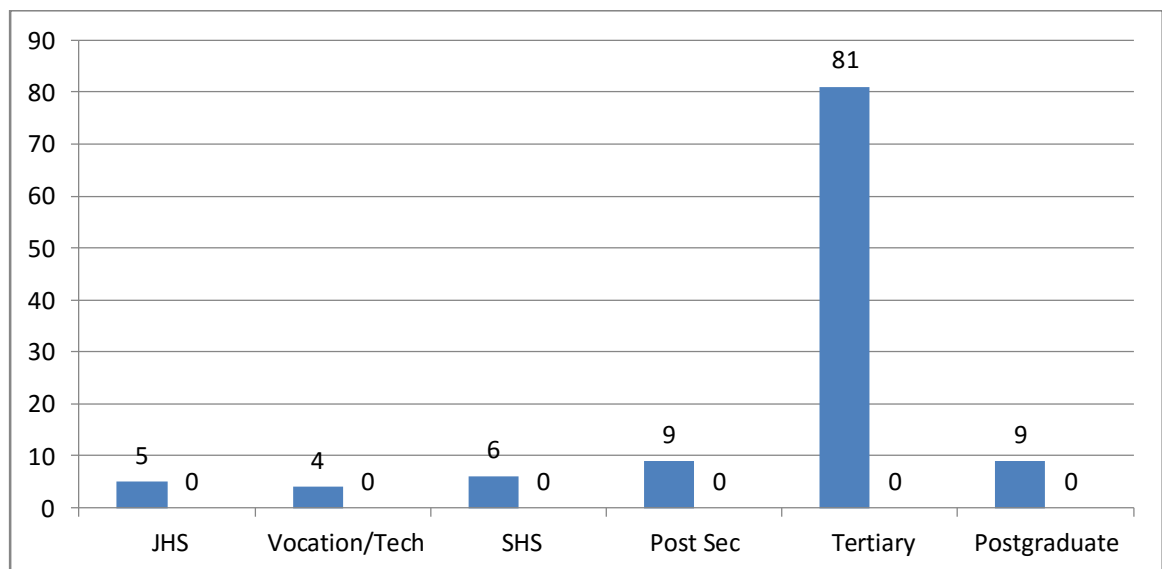
Summing up the ages below 30, and the ages bracket from 40 to 60 and above which is forty, representing 35.08%, one could see that they are far less than the respondents in the age bracket of 30-39 with a frequency of 74, representing 60.9%. The dominance of the youth confirmed the daily assertion that, the youth are the future leader.



4.1.3 Level of Formal Education of Respondents

From the figure below, the study analysed the level of formal education of respondents and the outcome is as follows; out of the 114 respondents, four, representing 3.1% had vocational/technical education, five respondents, representing 4.7% had junior high school education while 6.3% representing six respondents also had senior high school education. Respondents of post-secondary and post-graduate had frequency of nine each which represent 9.4% each. The highest frequency of the respondents is the tertiary level with 81 representing 67.1%.

Figure 4.3: Formal educational levels of respondents



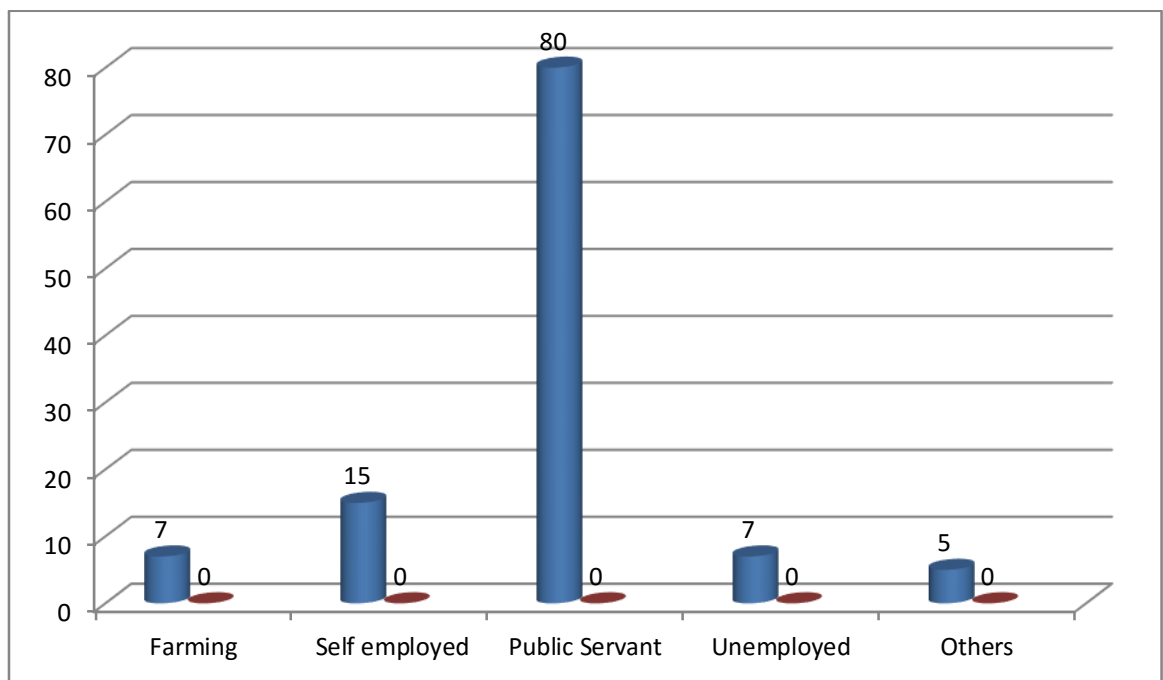
Source: Researcher's field work, June 2012.

In research, one's educational attainment is very important for critical analyses since it has a direct influence on the kind of contribution he/she makes on social issues in the society. Further analysis of the data indicated that, 65 of the 81 in the tertiary educational levels are public servants. It is interesting to note that, people with higher formal educational levels aspire for greater responsibility than those with lower



educational qualification. This confirms Dowse and Hughes (1972) assertion that “those who have attained some level of education are more likely to participate in politics and are even better able to transmit their interest and knowledge in politics to their children. Furthermore, the more informed and educated will make moves towards affiliating with political parties that they find appropriate due to educationally acquired attitudes” (Dowse and Hughes 1972: 261).

Figure 4.4: Occupational distributions of respondents



Source: Researcher's field work, June 2012.



4.1.4 Occupational Distribution of Respondents

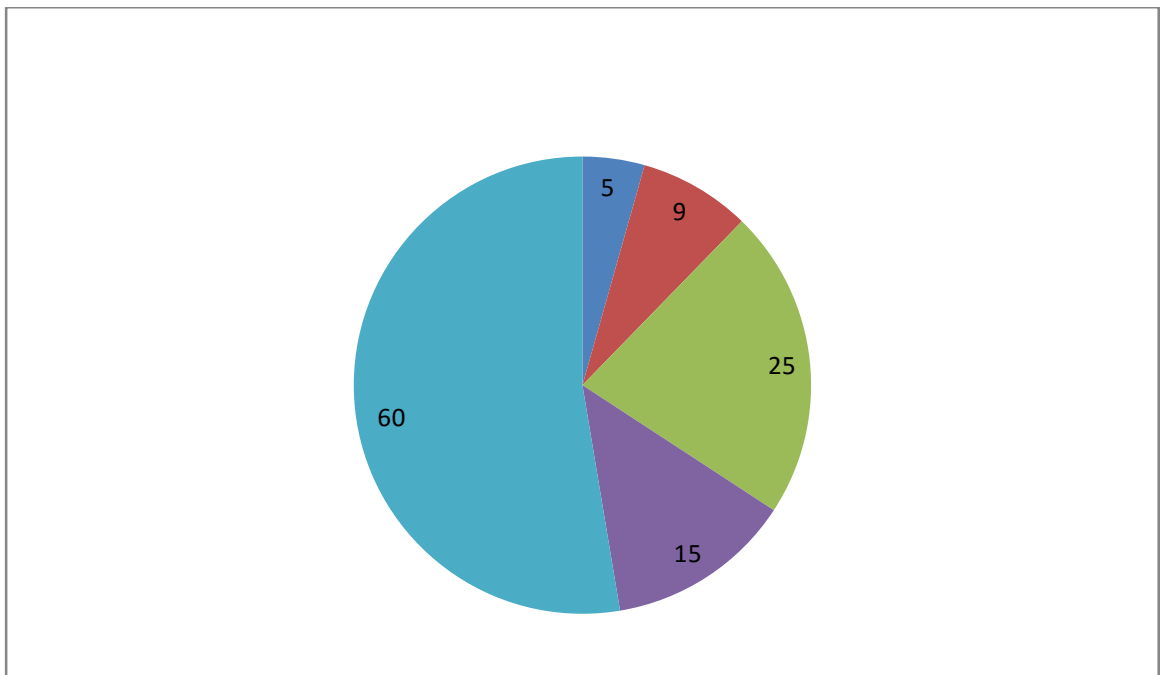
The occupation of people determines the kind of recognition accorded them in society. The analyses of the occupation of respondents in figure 4.6 above are as follows; Public servant had frequency of 80 with a percentage of 70.3, farming and unemployed had equal respondents of 7 each and with the percentage of 6.3%, self-employed had frequency of 15 with the percentage of 14% while respondents in the others who did not disclose their occupation were 5, representing 3.1%. The results above indicates that, majority of the respondents were gainfully employed, especially in the public sector. The results also revealed that, a total of 34 out of the 114 respondents, representing 33.9% comprising of farmers, self-employed, unemployed as well as others are least represented in political activities.

4.1.5 Number of Times Respondents Voted since 1992

The number of times a respondent voted since 1992 would go a long way to determine the experience and the knowledge in electoral activities. Out of 114 respondents, five representing 4% indicated that they have since 1992 voted only once, nine representing 8% of the respondents voted twice while 15 people representing 13% indicated having voted thrice since 1992. The number of respondents who voted four times since the beginning of the fourth republic was 25 (22%). Sixty of the respondents confirmed having voted in all the major elections, from 1992 to 2008. It is interesting to note that respondents with the highest frequency of 60 were mostly the matured male and female among the 114 interviewees. This is an indication that, these respondents are well vested in electoral activities when you take the period of their engagement in politics into consideration.



Figure 4.5: Number of times respondents voted since 1992



Source: Researcher's field work, June 2012.

4.2 The Immediate Causes of Electoral Violence

Ghana's elections since 1992 have been commended both domestically and internationally as one of the most outstanding among underdeveloped countries in the world. Additionally, the smooth conducts of these elections have contributed greatly to the consolidation of democracy and good governance. However, the outcome of these elections cannot be mentioned without violence. After conducting in-depth interviews and FGDs with study respondents on the causes of electoral violence from the three randomly selected constituencies in the Upper West region namely; Wa Central, Lawra, and the Sissala East constituencies the following factors were identified; misunderstanding during and after counting ballots, involvement of people in electoral malpractices and intimidation, polarization of existing societal conflicts,



the concept of winner takes all, the use of resources to influence the choice of voters, lack of transparency in the electoral processes, unnecessary jubilation, the use of provocative statement or language, misunderstanding and ignorance of the electoral laws and its application, involvement of electoral officials in electoral malpractices, and presented according to the constituencies below.

4. 2.1 Wa Central Constituency

Responses from both in-depth interview and FGD indicated that, misunderstanding during and after the counting of the ballots as one of the causes of electoral violence in the Wa Central Constituency. According to a respondent, “this takes place especially when supporters of candidates or political parties begin to engage in debate about their favorites’ possibility to win elections at all cost and when it turns otherwise they tend to engage in violence by accusing stakeholders in election management”. This normally happens when the results from one side of the constituency or the country seemed to favour one candidate especially where there are strongholds in the constituency or country. Participants stated during FGD that, “the supporters and the candidates perceived the officials or the Electoral Commission of manipulating or interchanging elections results from the polling stations to the collation centres”. They also added that, if the electoral commission is suspected of displaying partiality, the credibility of the electoral process is affected leading to high probabilities of violent occurring especially during and after the declaration of results.

Another factor respondents identified as responsible for the occurrence of electoral violence is the involvement of people in electoral malpractices and intimidation.



Respondents in the FGD indicated that due to the notion that elections are won by the number of votes a candidate or party obtains, people go to the extent of doing things which are illegal to the electoral system. A respondent said; “people do not consider fairness, transparency and credibility of the electoral processes and engage in all kinds of dubious electoral activities to cheat the system with the aim of winning the election at all cost resulting in electoral violence in the constituency”. Another respondent stated;

“politicians encourage the registration of foreigners or non-residents and minors especially in areas considered as their strongholds with the objective of winning elections”. Another participant at FGDs observed that, intimidation of voters through violence directed especially at politicians and individuals, as well as intimidating institutions like media, electoral commission, and civil society organization through control and influencing their work normally lead to violent situations. The effect of these malpractices is electoral violence leading to the destruction of property, loss of lives and disunity amongst families, communities and relatives in the constituency.

Furthermore, a common view expressed by the respondents in both in-depth interviews and focus group discussions was the polarization of existing societal conflicts. To them, politicians in their attempt to win elections at all cost, sometimes promise one-party to an existing conflict of solving the conflict or reversing their lost glory or asset back to them. By so doing, the promised party to the conflict would go all out to help the candidate or the party to win the elections which has the potential of fuelling or igniting the existing conflict.



Another notable cause of electoral violence that respondents in the Wa Central Constituency identified was the concept of winner takes all and political office benefits that politicians enjoy. This concept, winner takes all is also known as zero sum game because, after election, the party that wins the elections alone constitute and form government and the other political parties and candidates do not form part of it. According to a respondent; “the issue of one political party forming the government after winning an election at the expense of other contending parties puts Ghana on a time bomb waiting to explode one day”. Another respondent indicated that, “ the issue of winner takes all makes political parties during elections to do everything in their powers including foul means to win elections in Ghana which sometimes results in violence and loss of lives as happened in Tolon-Kumbungu and Tamale Central constituencies in the Northern region during the 2004 general elections.” The researcher is of the view that, the concept urges candidates and political parties to go all out to win elections in order to enjoy benefits associated with political office holders and damn the consequence hence the violence.

In response to a question to ascertain whether there were existing societal conflicts that serve as fertile grounds for the eruption of electoral violence during elections, respondents in the Wa Central Constituency confirmed that, there were existing chieftaincy conflict among the various gates to the enskinment of the Wa Paramount Chief, Religious conflicts among the Islamic religious groups was also mentioned as part of the fertile grounds for occurrence of electoral violence. According to a respondent in a face to face interview “politicians during elections capitalize on the chieftaincy and religious conflicts by supporting a faction which would enable them to win the elections at all cost.” This phenomenon does occur where candidates to the



elections promised to fight for their lost glory either in terms of chieftaincy or land disputes. To find out whether there have been any attempts to settle such conflicts, respondent said, attempts were made to solve the existing conflicts but they did not yield any result. A participant in an in-depth interview stated that, “outcomes have never been favourable since lasting solutions have not been found, because parties to the conflicts are not ready to compromise.”

In finding out what are the impact of electoral violence in the study area, a respondent in the Wa Central Constituency noted that, “electoral violence leads to insecurity of election officials, the candidates, voters, materials, equipment, undermining of the choice of electorates, and wrong candidates could be selected to represent the people.” Seventy-five percent of the respondents supported the assertions that, “it scares decent minded people who otherwise would have taken active part in governance. There are many people with good intentions to serve Ghana in various ways through politics with the aim of improving the living standard of the mass of people, but because of electoral violence, they are refusing to take part in it. Such people look at politics as a way of improving the lots of the people.” “The impacts of electoral violence are more negative than positive. It discourages people from partaking in the electoral processes. It brings disunity among the people, friends, families, and the communities that it occurred and retard democratic and economic development,” respondent stated in an in-depth interview in Wa Central Constituency.” In an answer to how electoral violence manifests, a respondent stated that, “It involves the use of arson that leads to death, murder, and maiming through gunshots, machetes and other deadly implements,” another respondent emphasized.



As regards measures to minimize the occurrence of electoral violence, the study respondents of Wa Central Constituency proposed the following solutions for the Electoral Commission to consider in the electoral processes. Among the measures were: fairness and transparency in their work, regular and effective use of interparty advisory committee meetings, and investigation of the background of staffs before engaging them.

One major issue that featured in the responses in the Wa Central Constituency is the issue of fairness and transparency. Accordingly, a respondent indicated that, “the officials of the electoral commission should be independent, fair, trustworthy and transparent in all their activities (counting and collation of elections results) with the stakeholders. The electoral commission should be non-partisan, unbiased, and fair in the application of the laws, rules and regulations uniformly to all the political parties in the electoral processes”. Another respondent in a FGD stressed that, “Electoral Commission should be fair and transparent in their work because, the political parties have invested huge resources into the elections with the aim of winning. Hence, they have high stakes in the electoral process. By this, the commission would be seen as creating equal level playing fields for all political parties and candidates to the elections and it would give meaning to the electoral commission’s mission of being independent, neutral, transparent and fair to all.” It was not surprising when the respondents emphasized that the electoral staff are fair and transparent.

Twenty-five out of the 29 respondents suggested that, the Electoral Commission should sustain and improve the interparty dialogue meetings with the stakeholders. In their views, instead of having such meetings during election period, it should rather be



held on monthly or at most quarterly to ensure constant interaction and flow of information among the stakeholders at the national, regional and of course the district levels. In the view of a respondent, “the dialogue would enable the stakeholders to examine the electoral system in other to strengthen areas that are weak in the conduct of elections. This meeting would enable the stakeholders to always be in readiness for any electoral task to be embarked upon by the electoral commission.” During the FGDs, participants also agreed with the views expressed by respondents in the interviews. The implication of the above is that, regular and constant meeting would help the stakeholders to express their displeasure which hitherto could have resulted into electoral violence.

Twenty-seven out of 29 respondents in the Wa Central Constituency supported the views of the politicians telling their supporters to leave polling stations after voting. A respondent mentioned that, “the political party executives should educate their members to leave the polling stations after voting since they have agents who represent the various political parties and candidates and they could come to observe the counting after voting is over.” In a focus group discussion in the Wa Central Constituency, a respondent suggested; “political party executives should educate their members to refrain from getting involved in electoral malpractices such as double or multiple registration, multiple voting, encouraging aliens to register when the laws of the country do not permit them to do so and they should not allow their children who are below 18 years to register.” In order to understand the genuine verdict of the electorate, the political parties should try to educate, organise capacity building workshops for their members to understand how the electoral system work’s. This would go a long way to remove the impression the supporters have on collation of



election results before declaration. The implication therefore is that, if political party executives educate their members on the above, the occurrence of electoral violence would reduce and there would be peace for development. Additionally, what the participants in FGDs in the Wa Central Constituency agreed on strongly was the need for the political party executives to organise capacity building workshops for their members especially their ‘foot-soldiers’ as well as their polling station executives and counting agents. Therefore, organising such workshops would sharpen the skills of their agents in respect of how the electoral system works. A respondent lamented that, “most of the electoral violence occur because the various agents of the political parties do not only understand how the electoral system works effectively but they are equally ignorant of the electoral laws and its applications.” Additionally, the respondents observed that in most cases, the agents of the political parties do not have formal education that could enable them to read and write. Hence they do not give proper written account to their parties or candidates.

During the focus group discussion in the Wa Central Constituency, the participants stated that since the 1996 elections to date, political parties have been adopting codes of conduct among themselves but they do not observe them. They restate that, “even though the codes are legally not enforceable, they should adhere to them. To the participants, political party executives write these codes and even sign them. The codes contain lots of practices that if the political party executives follow electoral violence could be minimised in the region.” Another respondent in an interview suggested that, “because the codes of conduct of the political parties are guiding principles not enforceable, the political parties do not observe them. The respondent



added that the code should be made legally binding so that anyone who flouts it would be held responsible.”

In order to understand how the electoral system works, the candidates to elections should be knowledgeable about electoral laws, rules and regulations governing the elections and issues of democracy. Twenty-four out of 29 respondents in the Wa Central Constituency stated that, it would be unfortunate for candidates not to have knowledge about how the electoral laws work. To them, all candidates for elections should have a fair knowledge of the electoral laws so that they could educate their followers well enough. It is not therefore, a surprise that majority of the members in parliament have legal background. Those who filed to contest elections to whatever positions should not be indecent and disrespectful people. They should be people who are honoured and respected in the societies they want to represent. It is in the light of the above that 80% of the respondents in the Wa Central Constituency stated that, candidates to elections should avoid the use of insulting languages during their campaigns, rallies, and radio discussions.

Another strategy to minimize the occurrence of electoral violence is for the candidates in elections to use well-informed people as members of their campaign team. They should undertake the recruitment, training, appointment of knowledgeable and qualified polling/counting agents. That is, those who understand the electoral processes, so that they could provide and give accurate and reliable reports from the various polling stations. The agents engaged by the candidates over the years, according to the respondents do not have any qualification and have little or no knowledge about activities that take place at polling stations. In FGDs a participant



stated that, unfortunately, most candidates to elections do not have enough resources to attract well-endowed agents who could effectively give good accounts of what transpired at the various polling stations. The above assertion confirmed the notion that only the party in power is able to get abled polling agents to recruit.

In identifying the role of the government in minimizing electoral violence, a respondent indicated in an in-depth interview that, “the roles of key institutions in the conduct of elections cannot be over emphasized. It is the sole responsibility of the government to resource all the key institutions responsible for the peaceful conduct of elections. Institutions like the Electoral Commission, National Commission on Civic Education, Information Services Department, the security services, and the judiciary play very important roles in the execution of electoral processes. Hence, if these institutions are weak and cannot perform their roles effectively, the result would be the occurrence of electoral violence.” In the views of the respondents, electoral violence occurs when poverty is on the increase and people are not getting employment, and there is no equitable distribution of resources to all. The implication of the above is that, when these institutions become very weak, they cannot function very well. They therefore need the resources to acquire the needed materials and equipment to train the work force effectively, educate the electorate on the processes, and equip the security agencies to protect lives and property before, during, and after elections.

The respondents in the Wa Central Constituency identified the issues of abuse of incumbency as one of the basis for the occurrence of electoral violence. According to a respondent, “abuse of incumbency is a situation where government in power



pretends to mobilize state resources in the name of commissioning new projects, cutting sod for new projects, purchasing vehicles and other logistics for state institutions and the use of the state media to its advantage. The respondents added that, these practices lead to cheating, manipulation and rigging of elections and the simplest avenue for other contestants is by mobilizing their supporters and sympathizers to react violently.” In the views of the respondents, any government in power should desist from activities that would seem to give more advantage to itself than other contestants. They added that, there should be a law to regulate how to commission new projects, when to cut sod for new projects, and when to resource state institutions before the electoral season approaches so that there would be equal level playing field for free and fair elections. The participants in FGDs also suggested that, there should be a time frame where actual electoral and political campaign activities should start so that there could be an equal start for all candidates.

In an effort to find out what role could the electorate play to minimize electoral violence, a participant in FGD stressed; “In ensuring that elections are free from violence, the electorate should be honest and tolerant to all political parties, candidates, and politicians who come to them to solicit for their votes during campaigns. The electorate should not allow themselves to be used by politicians to cause mayhem and tension among their ethnic groups in the name of winning their votes. The electorate should not discriminate against political parties and candidates who come to their communities and they should not be hostile to any party and friendly to others.” Another respondent also stated that, they should be friendly, accommodating and listen to all of their messages in their campaign tours. By so doing, the electorate would be in a position to make well-informed choices. The



implication of the above is that, they create friendly and peaceful atmosphere for all to coexist irrespective of the party affiliation.

In a face to face interview a respondent mentioned that, “the electorates should refrain from intimidating and dictating to the electoral officials when they are genuinely performing their roles religiously.” In a focus group discussion with the respondents in the Wa central constituency, another respondent stated that, “the politicians hide behind the electorate to involve in registering foreigners, encouraging them to register their children below 18 years, as well as multiple registration. However, if the officials object to the malpractices, the electorates try to intimidate them. Again, after the officials explain to them the rules and regulations governing the electoral process, the electorate, rather try to dictate to the officials who to register as a voter.” The implication of the above is that, the actions of the electorates do not demonstrate free, fair, credible and transparent elections and create avenues for rejection of election results and hence violence.

4.2.2 Lawra Constituency

During the FGD in the Lawra Constituency, a respondent indicated that, “Over jubilation over a party or candidate being declared by the electoral commission as the ultimate winner as well as teasing of the defeated candidates or parties is a fertile ground for electoral violence. This normally happens when the defeated candidate or party spent lots of resources with the hope and assurance that definitely they are going to win the elections”. Another respondent also stated that “a disappointed man is a frustrated and angry being, and with the least provocation in the form of teasing, he or she easily reacts with violence especially when the expected results, goals or objectives are not achieved”. This view of the respondent also suggested that, people



are motivated to attack others when they are least provoked and disappointed. This also happens when people are unable to achieve their goals or objectives, or they do not obtain the rewards they deserved.

In the views of the respondents, it is normal for party supporters to jubilate when the candidate or the party of their choice wins. However, the way and manner the jubilations are carried out infuriate the candidates or supporters of the defeated candidates or parties and the ultimate would be to incite their supporters to react in a violent form. The implication of the above is that, politicians use politics as their profession and putting all their hope, future and aspiration into the election by investing heavily into it.

In a focus group discussion in the Lawra Constituency, participants identified lack of transparency in the electoral processes as one of the factors responsible for the occurrence of electoral violence. In their view, this occurs when the stakeholders in the electoral system especially, the electoral commission is perceived not to be fair to all the players. Therefore, when stakeholders in an election perceive/identify lack of transparency in the processes, they accuse and attack managers of the elections with violence. The respondents identified electoral processes as the demarcation of electoral boundaries, registration of voters, exhibition of voters register, recruitment of temporary staff, the voting, counting and collation of election results.

Twenty-six out of 29 respondents emphasised that one of the factors responsible for the causes of electoral violence is the wanton distribution of money and other resources to influence the voters' choice during election. A respondent stated that, "the politicians do not only influence the voters in their strongholds, but the



strongholds of their opponents. When such a phenomenon happens, it frustrates the defeated candidates who then tend to use violence against their political opponent”. According to the respondents, this may also take place where fraud and other malpractices prevail especially where politicians use money to induce the voters to vote for them. The use of money and other resources to influence the voters’ choice normally affects the genuine and transparent choice of the people since free, fair, credible as well as incontrovertible elections are crucial for the survival of true democracy in any country. The result of the above is that, such practices do not promote healthy democracy and good governance in the region and the country as a whole. In addition, they held the views that, such practices only encourage those who are well resourced had the opportunity to be rulers at all times. Equally, those who are competent but do not have resources cannot be in a position to win substantial votes in any election to become leaders.

It was found out from both participants and respondents in both FGDs and in-depth interview that, there were existing societal conflicts like land, Islamic, and chieftaincy conflicts as identified in the Wa Central Constituency. According to a respondent in a face to face interview, “politicians during elections capitalize on the chieftaincy and religious disputes by way of supporting a section in other to win the electoral contest. Politicians equally meddled in the existing societal conflicts which escalate the spread of violence during elections.” The respondents in the Lawra Constituency restate that, attempts were made to find lasting solutions to them, but it did not yield any result. At the FGDs, a participant emphasized that, “the contenders are not ready to meet and to see each other as they have all taken entrenched positions.” The outcome is not



satisfactory as all take uncompromising positions since none of them is prepared to let go with their stands.

To find out what are the impacts of electoral violence, a respondent stated that “electoral violence leads to insecurity of the staff recruited for the conduct of elections, the candidates, voters, materials and equipment and this undermines the choice of electorates implying that wrong candidates could be selected to represent the people. it could also affect timely declaration of elections result and hence create uncertainties among the stakeholders.” Another respondent emphasized that, as a result of existing conflicts, there is no unity among the traditional rulers in the area.

With regard to development, a participant in a FGD stated categorically that, “electoral violence serves as disincentive to investors who would like to come to invest in our areas. It is because of violence that most of our areas lacked the development that could lead to the improvement of the living standard of our people.” The participants added that “because of electoral violence most of the electorates especially, the vulnerable do not want to take part in the electoral process, as a result only a handful of electorates are involved.” The implications from the above are that, the occurrences of electoral violence affect the credibility, transparency, and acceptability of election results. Again, the concept of free and fair elections as a yardstick of measuring elections could be compromised or affected. Electoral violence brings about lukewarm attitudes and voter apathy during elections. Violence in elections affect the choice of the voters, create credibility problems so losers to the elections do not accept the outcome and the stability of the government is at stake. It leads to rampant court cases, questioning the legitimacy of the government formed to



rule the country. From the above, one could realize that, electoral violence is not just about the choice and legitimacy of the elected candidates, but also socio-economic and developmental issues.

To determine how electoral violence manifest, the respondents indicated during in-depth interviews that “the manifestation of electoral violence takes the forms of verbal attack during arguments either on radio or on the street and physical violence or fighting between feuding factions. It could lead to the destructions of property belonging to the individuals especially those who held party posts or public office holders as well as property belong to the state.”

With measures to deal with the occurrence of electoral violence, respondents and participants in both in-depth interviews and focus group discussion among the 38 respondents in the Lawra Constituency, one major issue that cut across was that, the electoral commission should declare elections results in a timely manner to avoid suspicions and perceptions among the electorate. A respondent emphasised that, “delays in the declaration of results without explanations give room for people especially the political activists to think that the election results are being tempered with.” In this regard, the EMB should be able to address all issues that account for delay in the release of election results to avoid tension and violence. Additionally, the EMB should be time conscious and communicate in clear terms, the reasons for the delay in the declaration of any results. By this, the stakeholders would have confidence in the entire process.

The Lawra Constituency respondents also said that there should be fair and unbiased unilateral application of the electoral laws to all parties and candidates to elections. A



respondent added, “the fair application of the laws by the electoral commission would lead to fairness and trust in the staff of the electoral commission, and that would eventually lead to the development of voter confidence among the stakeholders in the electoral process”. The respondents stressed that the laws and regulations on registration of voters, elections and counting of votes should be applied to all without favour. To the respondents, fair applications of the laws, rules and regulations would enhance the transparency and credibility of the electoral commission.

In a face-to-face interview to find out what should the electoral commission do to minimize the occurrence of electoral violence, a respondent indicated that, “the electoral commission in collaboration with public education agencies like the National Commission on Civic Education (NCCE), the mass media, Information Service Department (ISD) etc. should ensure effective public education on electoral activities for maximum participation of the people”. In the views expressed by participants in a focus group discussion, “most electoral violence occurred out of the ignorance of the electorates and understanding of the electoral system. The electorates do not know that before election results are declared, all the polling station results in that constituency in the case of parliamentary elections, and all constituencies’ results in the case of presidential have to be collated. Hence, if there is effective collaboration between the NCCE, the media and ISD it would go a long way to minimise the electoral violence.

A respondent in an in-depth interview stated that, “the political party executives should tolerate divergent views and be honest in campaign activities devoid of insult. Political party executives mounting campaign platforms should not make derogative



statement about their opponents' policies and programmes". The responses to such comments create tension in the society and when it is not well managed, it could turn into violence. Hence, the political party executives are encouraged to exercise restraint, tolerate divergent views and concentrate on their campaign messages. Thirty four out of 38 respondents in both focus group discussion and in in-depth interviews noted that, for electoral violence to reduce or minimise, the political party executives should refrain from influencing the electorates with both monetary and material gifts as well as offering hard alcoholic liquor to the youth. According to the respondents, it is always the rich men who have money to give to the electorates to the disadvantage of those who do not have." This practice which is against the electoral processes, according to the respondents frustrates the less endowed candidates and the only way is to act violently. These phenomena are always encouraged by the party in power and it gives them upper hands in winning elections.

Eighty-five percent of the respondents in in-depth interviews observed that one of the root causes of electoral violence is the use of vulgar language when politicians mount campaign platforms. In respect of that, the respondents urged the political party executives to desist from the use of indecent language by calling people names, making unfounded allegation, inciting tribal/ethnic groups against one another, the use of party superiority against others and the use of the same religious affiliation as well as different religions affiliation to undo one another. Election is a game with only two options either win or loss. Owing to the aforementioned statement, respondents in the Lawra constituency re-iterated that, "candidates must be prepared to accept defeat as the case may be. A lost in an election is not the end for they could



win at other time”. It is unfortunate that people go to election to win at all cost with the die consequence of resulting in violence.

In a face to face interview, a respondent stated that, “the youth instead of them struggling to educate themselves for their future and engage in a fruitful enterprise, they rather decide to be following the politicians who are only interested in using them by offering of money in other to win elections.” Another respondent also revealed that, “if the assertion that the youth are the future leaders is true, then the youth should be engaged in enterprises that are more fruitful rather than relying on party leaders who may not be in positions to find solutions to their problems.” They should refuse to be used by the politicians to achieve their personal interest and stay out of polling stations during elections after voting for their candidates or parties. They should equally obey the rules and the regulations governing the electoral processes for peaceful elections. The youth should involve their time, energy and resources effectively in the acquisition of formal education or knowledge for their future progress. For it is much easier to get employment through formal education to make a meaningful life than without it. The political parties who want to use the youth, should make it a point to organise training workshops as a way of capacity building to acquire knowledge regarding how electoral activities are being carried out. One way by which electoral violence could be minimised is for the government to create the necessary avenues for job opportunities for the energetic but idle and vulnerable youth. In the view of a participant in FGDs “the devil finds work for idle hands. If the youth were engaged, the politicians would no longer use them to perpetrate electoral violence. Hence, all job creating institutions should be resourced by the government so that the idle youth could be effectively engaged.” In this regards



skills building institutions like the National Youth and Leadership Training Institute must be well resourced in order to equip the teeming youth to create their own jobs.

In response to any additional measures that could prevent the youth from engaging in electoral violence, a respondent in the Lawra Constituency stated that, “the youth should not support candidates or politicians who mount campaign platform to preach insults, use abusive languages, campaign on ethnocentrism and tribal discrimination to win elections at all cost.” The implication for the above is that, if the youth do not support them they will lose the elections, and it would serve as a punishment and deterrent to others. There would be decency and sanity in the entire electoral system which could promote peaceful coexistence.

According to a participant in a FGD, one surest way for candidates to elections to obtain accurate and reliable information is to equip their agents with knowledge. This could be achieved through training workshops or capacity building of the said agents. The training workshops would enable them to understand the concept of elections in relation to how votes are cast, counted and collated before the winner is declared. A respondent in an interview added that, well organised capacity building workshops could empower the agents to question officials to election about any malpractices detected. Additionally, the candidates to elections should not only be interested in engaging knowledgeable agents, but an agent who would be loyal, credible and reliable to the candidate.

A respondent mentioned that, “the electorates have the right to celebrate when their party or candidate wins, but not to tease the defeated parties or candidates and or



supporters and sympathizers. At times, the supporters of the winning party over jubilant and tease to the annoyances of the defeated parties who are frustrated. Their ultimate response would be to react in a violent way especially, when there is allegation of malpractices on the part of the winning party or candidates.” Hence the electorate should celebrate in moderation so that there would be peace, unity and stability for development and the consolidation of democracy.

4.2.3. Sissala East Constituency

Another issue that emerged during the data collection stage was the use of provocative and insulting language by politicians against not only each other but their parents and extended family. “The involvement of parents and extended family in African context makes it easy for the spread of violence. The use of provocative statements or language in the form of abusing one another verbally especially during rallies and on radio discussions, wrongful allegations being leveled against one another, as well as physically attacking each other because of elections related activities is a breeding ground of electoral violence in this constituency” a respondent stated this in an in-depth interview at Sissala East Constituency.

According to participants in a focus group discussion, one of the reasons for electoral violence is the misunderstanding and ignorance of electoral laws and its application in the electoral processes. According to a respondent in a face-to-face interview, “most of the electorates are illiterates because they do not understand why foreigners they have engaged to look after their cattle were not allowed to register so that they could vote”. Another respondent indicated that, “the temporary staff engaged by the electoral commission to undertake major electoral task do not understand the



technical nature of the laws and their applications”. A participant in FGDs also added that, “because of the illiteracy level of the electorate, they do not know the existence of the laws and do not understand how the laws governing electoral processes work, for instance, the laws banning the registration of foreigners, as well as the minors from registration to vote during elections”. The implication of the above is that, most the electorates act ignorantly about the existence and application of the laws restraining aliens and minors from registering as voters.

Respondents during an in-depth interview indicated that, one of the causes of electoral violence was displaying of electoral bias on the part of officials in charge of the electoral activities. A respondent during the face-to-face interview indicated that, “some of the temporary staff hired by the electoral commission to undertake various electoral exercises are politicians who displayed their biases to favour their political parties. The respondents emphasized that, the officials do not apply the electoral laws fairly among the candidates and parties in the electoral process”. The respondents added that “the officials almost all the time do not request and inspect documents of people alleged to be aliens, those below 18 years before allowing them to go through the process of registration especially areas they consider as their strongholds in the electoral system”. The above scenarios in the words of participants in FGD create the impression that, indeed the electoral commission is a bias institution against a particular group of candidates. The effect of the above is that, the electoral staffs compromised on their neutrality, impartiality, and clearly displayed bias which have created conditions that could lead to the annoyance of aggrieved parties for the occurrence of electoral violence.



To find out whether there were existing societal conflicts that could serve as fertile grounds that could trigger of electoral violence, responses from the respondents were unanimous confirmation. They made mention of religious differences, conflicts, land ownership conflicts, ethnic or tribal conflicts (strangers and indigenous differences), chieftaincy conflict concerning who qualifies to be enskined as a chief, existing individual or family conflicts and interpersonal conflicts. In a focus group discussion in the Sissala East constituency, the participants stressed that, one of the reasons why violence occurred in elections is the ethnic issues being pushed into it by contesting candidates in order to win the elections. According to the respondents, the contesting candidates promised them to restore their past glory if they win the elections. These promises normally whip up the enthusiasm of the people who go all out to ensure that the candidates win the elections amidst violence.

To establish from the respondents whether any step has been taken to settle the existing conflicts, a respondent pointed out that ‘the solution initially lead to subsiding then later recurring with disagreement especially during electoral arguments.’ Another respondent in the Sissala East emphasized that, “ethnic conflicts like any identified conflicts are very complex and difficult to deal with.” With regards to the impacts of electoral violence, a respondent in a in-depth interview stated that, it is negative. Why would one want to vote if voting or elections would give room for the promotion of ethnic sentiments and division in a hitherto united society.” Like the respondents in the Lawra Constituency, the Sissala East respondents also stated that, the manifestation of electoral violence takes the forms of verbal attack during arguments either on radio or on the street and physical fighting between various groups involved. It could be the destructions of property belonging to the individuals especially those who held party posts or public office holders as well as property



owned by politicians or the state. The respondents in the Sissala East Constituency identified the perpetrators as supporter of political parties, (the so called foot soldiers), the die-hard supporters, and the youth groups, hired macho men, and political party leaders. With regards to the victims in the electoral violence, the respondents identified the following; electoral commission officials both permanent and temporary, the youth groups, leaders of the various political parties, the vulnerable groups like women, children, the aged, and the physically challenged and of course the general public.

As regard solutions to electoral violence, the respondents stated that, the EMB should be fair in the discharge of its duties to stakeholders in the electoral processes. According to the respondents, the attitudes of electoral officials in dealing with key stakeholders give room for suspicions. The respondents added that the officials are not transparent; they do not equally apply the rules governing the elections equitably and always favour the party that they belong to. The respondents advocate for strict adherence to electoral laws and they should not take sides. They should be seen as neutral and trusted people in the electoral process whose activities are above suspicions. By so doing the losers to elections would not hesitate to accept the outcome of the elections results in good faith.

In focus group discussion, the participants indicated that for the Electoral Commission to get credible temporary staff to carry out their activities, proper investigations must be carried out on them about their political activism. According to a respondent in an in-depth interview, “some of the temporary staffs are political activists and trying to use the opportunities to cheat in the electoral processes to the advantages of their



parties or candidates which always create confusion that lead to violence in the electoral processes. Therefore, proper and due diligent investigations should be carried out during the recruitment and appointment of the staff of the electoral commission before engaging them.” The effect is that, the measures identified above when carried out, could avoid the perceptions of cheating and bias against the political parties in the electoral processes. It would also help to raise the confidence levels of all the stakeholders especially the political parties in the electoral process and minimize electoral violence.

Political party executives should build consensus on issues that have to do with electoral activities ranging from national to the constituency levels. For example the use of civil and polite language during campaign periods, as well as adherence to campaign timetable drew in collaboration with the security personnel. To the respondents, at times the political party executives draw up campaign timetable but failed to go by it. The consequence of this is that, there will be the likelihood of clashing with other parties with their supporters and hence the eruption of violence. A participant at a FGD emphasized that; they should campaign devoid of insults and lies against their political opponents. Making sure that political party executives exposed their supporters and members who go contrary to issues they have agreed not to be involved in.

As part of measures that could help to minimize the eruption of electoral violence, a respondent in an in-depth interview stated; “A candidate should be made responsible for actions and inactions that come from his/her followers.” According to the respondent, most candidates try to run away from the irresponsible behaviour of their



supporters who would like to create unnecessary tension in their communities. When the candidates of such agents are held accountable, they ensure that he/she recruits well behaved agents who would not lead them into problems.

It emerged from the FGD that the participants identified that, one major activity that the youth engaged in which, normally escalates electoral violence is causing destructions to opponents' property. Against the aforementioned phenomena, a respondent in the Sissala East Constituency stated that "the youth should restraint themselves from destroying property at the least provocation in support of political parties or candidates. The youth do not only cause destruction to public or government property, but properties belonging to the individuals and organisations that have any political affiliations." In the words of another respondent in an in-depth interview at the Sissala East Constituency, "if the youth cause destruction to property today, what would they be seeking to inherit when they become the future leaders as the saying goes". The respondent admonished that, "the youth should follow laid down procedures as well as rules and regulations pertaining to the elections." Hence, abiding by rules and regulations are therefore the only way to ensure that they would be credible elections devoid of violence.

The respondents in the Sissala East equally identified the following measures that the government could use to minimise the occurrence of electoral violence as it is the case in the Wa central and Lawra Constituencies. A respondent stated that, the government should avoid abuse of incumbency by creating equal access to the state media for other parties in the elections. The government should resource the key institutions to the elections so that they could not only carry out their constitutional mandate or task



effectively but also on time. In FGDs, a participant made the point that, the government should remain neutral and allow all state institutions in charge to carry out their roles and mandates dispassionately and not to interfere as far as the electoral activities are concerned. The government should assist the political parties to the elections so that they could recruit and train their credible agents and take care of them.”

In response to a question about the role of the electorate in violence free elections, all the participants in the Sissala East focus group discussion reiterated that, the electorate should avoid being influenced and induced to engage in multiple registrations, and multiple voting. A participant at FGD stressed that, “the electorates should avoid the use of fake ballot papers as well as accepting more than one ballot papers in making their choice in any elections. Again, the electorate should not tolerate political parties or candidates that are not development oriented, but pursue divisiveness and tribal agenda”. The implication of the above is that the electorates believe that in election, it is the numbers that count so they indulge in those malpractices which do not instill good moral practices among the people in order to win regardless of the cost in terms of violence.

Comparing the findings from the three study constituencies, the following were revealed as triggers or immediate factors responsible for the occurrence of electoral violence. While the respondents in the Wa Central Constituency identified misunderstanding during and after the count of the ballots, the respondents in the Sissala East Constituency identified misunderstanding in relation to electoral laws and their applications.



Again, the respondents in the Sissala East and Wa Central Constituencies identified the electorate's involvement in electoral malpractices and intimidation. The implication is that if the electorates are not checked, there would not be fairness and credibility in the outcome of the elections. Furthermore, the respondents in the Sissala East, Wa Central, and Lawra Constituencies identified the officials' involvement in malpractices like registration of minors, foreigners or non-residents during registration, showing of electoral biases, snatching of ballot boxes, breaking of electoral laws, rules and regulations by stakeholders in the electoral processes and lack of transparency as a common factor. Hence, one could observe that, not only the electoral officials alone that indulge in electoral malpractices but the electorate also do.

The respondents in the Wa Central Constituency identified the concept of winner takes all. The concept, according to the respondents, serves as motivation for contestants in the electoral race to go all out to win the elections at all cost. However, respondents in the Lawra Constituency also stated unnecessary jubilation leading to teasing of losing candidates/parties by the supporters of winning candidates or parties which make defeated supporters react in violent ways, as well as the use of resources to influence the choice of voters. In the Sissala East Constituency it was revealed that, the use of provocative languages or statements such as the abusive languages and insults put voters away from taking part in the voting process,

With reference to covert conflicts or remote factors that could serve as fertile grounds for the eruption of violence during elections, respondents identified land, chieftaincy, religious, and ethnic or tribal conflicts if not well managed could lead to the outbreak of electoral violence. The findings therefore established that, in all the study areas, at



least there is existing societal violence as was the case cited by Bekoe in Peace Brief (2010:6) on Kenya's 2007 election violence as well as chieftaincy conflicts between the Mamprusi and the Kusasi in the Upper East Region of Ghana.

This study identified perpetrators of electoral violence to be political office aspirants, supporters of political parties, party leaders, youth groups and macho men. The victims of electoral violence the study observed were women, children, aged, electoral staff as well as the public. The study noted that there were hidden conflicts that served as fertile grounds for the eruption of electoral violence. In the manifestations of the electoral violence, Wa Central and Lawra Constituencies identified physical destruction to property, loss of lives, use of threats and insults. Abusive languages and snatching of ballot boxes were however identified by the Sissala East Constituency respondents.

To minimize the occurrence of electoral violence, the respondents in the three constituencies identified fairness on the part of the electoral commission to its stakeholders while Wa Central and Lawra Constituencies also identified that the political parties organize training and capacity building for their agents and members, eschew the use of abusive language, and engage of their members on voter education. Furthermore, respondents from Wa Central and Sissala East Constituencies noted that to minimize electoral violence, the government must avoid abuse of incumbency to ensure equal level playing fields for all. The respondents are of the views that, abuse of incumbency do not create equal level playing grounds for all the contestants in the electoral race.



The findings in the Wa Central Constituency revealed that, there should be regular and effective use of interparty advisory committee meetings among the stakeholders, candidates and political party executives should adhere to the political party codes of conduct, they should be knowledgeable about electoral laws, recruit and train knowledgeable but loyal party agents, the government should resource key electoral institutions, the electorates should accommodate all candidates and abstain from intimidation, and the electoral commission should investigate the background of staffs before engaging them.

In the Lawra Constituency, the respondents observed that, the electoral commission should ensure timely declaration of election results, candidates should tolerate divergent views, abstain from inciting the electorate, accept the outcome of election results, and the supporters should abstain from over jubilation.

The respondents in the Sissala East Constituency noted that, the electoral commission should investigate the background of temporary appointees properly, candidates should build consensus on issues of common interest in the elections, candidates should be held responsible for the actions of their followers, the youth should restraint from causing destruction to property, and the electorate should not involve themselves in electoral malpractices.

From the above one could observe that, there were common factors both triggers and remote that cut across the three study areas responsible for the occurrence of electoral violence, manifestation and measures to deal with them. However, there are separate



ones in each study area which also account for the violence, their manifestation and measures that could be put in place to avoid them.

4.2.4 Summary of the Main findings from the Three Constituencies

The study examined the nature of electoral violence in the Upper West region with particular reference to three (3) Constituencies namely, Wa Central, Lawra, and Sissala East Constituencies. The data collected and analysed, established respondents' basic knowledge in what constituted electoral violence. The study revealed that, elections by their nature are not violent but the attitudes of the players in the electoral processes make them violent. The investigation revealed the experience of respondents in electoral violence in the region. The study identified the factors responsible for electoral violence in the study area. These factors included the following; misunderstanding of the electoral processes, the use of provocative languages or statements such as the abusive languages and insults, the involvement of malpractices like registration of minors, foreigners or non-resident, showing of electoral biases, snatching of ballot boxes, breaking of electoral laws, rules and regulations by stakeholders in the electoral processes. Over jubilation and teasing of losing candidates/parties by the supporters of winning candidates or parties and the polarization of the existing societal conflicts by politicians.

This study identified perpetrators of electoral violence to be political office aspirants, supporters of political parties, party leaders, youth groups and macho men. The victims of electoral violence the study observed were women, children, aged, electoral staff as well as the public. The study noted that there were hidden conflicts that served as fertile grounds for the eruption of electoral violence. The factors for hidden



conflicts were identified as chieftaincy, tribal conflicts, land disputes and religious differences

Attempts were made to resolve the conflicts but there were no amicable solutions, because the parties took entrenched positions and were not ready to compromise.

The study established the manifestations of the electoral violence in the form of physical destruction to property, loss of lives, the use of threats, insults and abusive languages, and snatching of ballot boxes. Electoral violence discourages people from taking part in the electoral processes, it affects the development of democratic culture and good governance, and it again affects the credibility of the election results, promotes political agitations, and creates disunity in the communities, among family and society. The study noted that, electoral violence affect the legitimacy of government formed and made governance difficult, with the aggrieved parties developing lukewarm attitudes towards the government in power.

This study identified timely declaration of election results, public education, institutionalization of IPAC meetings, recruitment of competent and knowledgeable temporary staff and resourcing of key institutions in the electoral process as some of the measures that the major stakeholders; the electoral commission, leaders of the various political parties to the elections, candidates contesting elections, youth groups, the government and the electorate should take to minimise or eliminate electoral violence in the study areas in particular and Ghana as a whole.



CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This study examined electoral violence in the Upper West region with particular reference to three constituencies: Wa Central, Sissala East and Lawra. The objectives of this study included an examination of the immediate causes and nature of electoral violence and their implication to fostering voter confidence in the Upper West region, identifying hidden conflicts that could serve as fertile grounds for eruption of electoral violence as well as how electoral violence affect voter confidence in the electoral process. This chapter presents the major findings, discussion, conclusion and recommendations

5.1 Discussion

The study identified both internal and external factors to be responsible for electoral violence in the study areas. The internal factors are also called the immediate factors. Some of these factors include: misunderstanding during and after the counting of the ballots, engagement of electoral officials and the electorate in electoral malpractices, concept of winner takes all, unnecessary or over jubilation, lack of transparency in the electoral process, the use of provocative statements or languages, and misunderstanding and ignorance of electoral laws and regulations. Other internal factors are the use of resources to Influence the choice of voters, covertly or existing societal conflicts such as land disputes, tribal disputes, religious disputes and chieftaincy disputes which serve as fertile grounds for the eruption of electoral



violence. The impact, manifestations, perpetrators and victims of electoral violence, and measures to tackle the occurrence of electoral violence were all identified.

5.1.1 Immediate Causes of Electoral Violence

The findings of the study revealed the crosscutting word misunderstanding as one of the factors that account for occurrence of electoral violence. The first is about misunderstandings that ensue during and after the counting of the ballots. Candidates' agents hold the view that, once their candidates are winning in particular areas in the electoral constituency, the likelihood is that ultimately they would be the winners. Such supporters forget that, each candidate has a strong-hold where he or she could maximize votes. The situation becomes more complex where politicians put in all their trust and resources but it turned out to be otherwise. This normally happens especially when supporters of a candidate or party begin to engage themselves in debate about their candidates' chances of winning the election at all cost and when he/she turned out to be otherwise. The study revealed that in the process of debate about why their candidate did not win such debates could degenerate into violence by attacking the officials engaged by the electoral commission. Hence, this finding buttresses the point made by Bombande (2010), that, if the EMB is suspected of lack of impartiality, the credibility of the electoral process is diminished and there are high levels of violence when the results are announced. Example, Sakai polling station, in the Sissala East Constituency, supporters of the various political parties used abusive and provocative languages that affected one another and in the processes led to violence.



The second is the misunderstanding and ignorance of the electoral laws and regulations identified by the study as one of the factors responsible for occurrence of electoral violence. The study noted that, the electorates and the supporters of various political parties or candidates do not understand how electoral laws are at all the stages leading to the declaration of results. For example, the laws on citizens' qualifications to register as voters with regards to their ages and nationality status. The political party supporters believe that, everybody in their community must be registered to vote and when officials insist that they do not qualify, it creates confusions which ultimately lead to violence. The misunderstanding is as a result of ignorance of the laws, rules and regulations which are caused by lack of voter awareness and high level of illiteracy among the people in the communities.

The study also identified engagement of electoral officials and electorate in electoral malpractices (cheating). For example, multiple registrations, the involvement of foreigners or people who are non-resident of Boli in the Wa central constituency and people below 18 years were encouraged by contesting candidates or parties to register to vote. Also, the issuance of fake ballot papers to party supporters to vote in order to get more votes so that the party would be declared the winner. If perpetrators involved in the malpractices are found and care is not taken by the security officials and they are ruthlessly beaten, that could lead to violent situations. Multiple ballot papers are issued to voters by polling staff recruited by the electoral commission to supporters of political parties or candidates the polling staff also support.

Again, the finding also revealed snatching of ballot boxes from the polling stations and replacing them with different ballot boxes stuffed with already thumb printed ballot papers in favour of a candidate or political party by macho men recruited by



such parties or candidates. Also, disregard for electoral laws, rules and regulations to win the election create avenues for the eruption of electoral violence. The findings revealed that, the officials in charge of the poll do not treat the candidates or political parties who are the key stakeholders equally. This study gathered that officials recruited by the electoral commission to man the polls on the Election Day give undue advantages to parties they support in order to win the elections.

This study identified the concept of winner takes all as another reason that accounts for the occurrence of electoral violence in the study areas. The finding discovered that, the concept urges candidates and political parties to go all out to win elections at all cost in order to enjoy benefits associated with political office holders despite the consequences hence the violence. The finding affirmed the view held by Biegon (2009:7) that, the concept promotes violence “essentially, where an election becomes a contest between the ‘included’ and the ‘excluded’, the stakes of winning such an election are definitely raised to a point that violence is a real outcome in the event of disappointment for either group. The stakes are even raised higher where it is assumed that the likelihood that resources will be channeled to a particular group is directly related to whether the politician who controls those resources is from that group. Sisk (2005:67) stated that, “when parties are quite certain of loss or exclusion in an electoral contest, especially when they expect to be ‘permanent minorities’ the certainty of outcomes is also a strong causal driver of violence. When a strongly insecure party or faction expects to be systematically excluded from political power, they may well turn to violence to either prevent their exclusion or to prevent the election process”. The concept makes electoral violence more pronounced in countries where there are high levels of structural imbalances among the haves and



the have not as Iff cited in the UN Report (2010: 7) added that, elections do not take place in a vacuum. There is always an underlying social context in which elections take place and it may include; existing violence among ethnic, religious, organized crime, violence against women, terrorism, guerrilla fighting, tensions in society for instance latent conflicts including segregation, discrimination, and structural factors like unemployment, corruption, poverty, illiteracy.” Therefore in a country where there is so much structured imbalances of exclusion that discriminate against the haves and the have nots, the occurrence of electoral violence is more pronounced as the cases in African continent like Kenya and Ivory Coast. In such a situation, those in power will seek to retain it at all cost including by foul means. The effect of the concept is that, it makes it imperative for politicians to win elections at all cost to the detriment of peace

Another factor responsible for the causes of electoral violence is the wanton distribution of money and other resources to influence the voters’ choice during election. The study noted that,” the politicians do not only influence the voters in their strongholds, but the strongholds of their opponents. When such a phenomenon happens, it frustrates the defeated candidates who then tend to use violence against their political opponent”. The view was corroborated by Diego (2002:110) Frustration Aggressive Drive Theories of Violence when he stated that “people are driven to attack others when they are frustrated or disappointed, when they are unable to reach their goals/ objectives set to achieve, or they do not obtain the rewards they expect”. Oquaye, (2004:69) also observed: “Where fraud and other malpractices prevail: or where “money politics” dictate who a leader should be, choking out the less wealthy and polluting the elective principle, democracy falls into real danger. This problem



has bedeviled several developing countries in recent times. Genuine, free, fair, credible as well as incontrovertible elections are crucial for the survival of true democracy in any country.” The results of such practices do not promote healthy democracy and good governance in the region and the country as a whole. In addition, they held the views that, such practices only encourage those who are well resourced the opportunity to be rulers at all the time. Equally, those who are competent but do not have resources could not be at a position to win substantial votes in any election to become leaders.

Unnecessary or over jubilation on the part of winning party supporters cause electoral violence. In the views of the respondents in the Lawra constituency, party supporters have the right to rejoice when their party or candidates win the elections. They added that, the supporters sometimes over jubilate and try to tease the disappointed or losing party supporters who are demoralized and frustrated which can spark violence leading to the destruction of lives and property. The above view was confirmed by Muro-Ruiz’s (2002:110) when he stated that, “people are driven to attack others when they are least frustrated or disappointed: when they are unable to reach their goals/objectives set to achieve, or they do not obtain the rewards they expect”. The study identified that, people take politics as their profession and bank their hope on it and whenever they are defeated, they lost their temper hence they act violently. The study observed that, unnecessary or over jubilation are the product of the concept of winner takes all. Because the winning candidate or party knows that the resources of the country would be entrusted in their government and hence they would also gain from it more than the defeated candidates or parties.



Lack of transparent electoral process has been identified as another factor responsible for the occurrence of electoral violence. The study revealed that, all stakeholders to the elections must be treated fairly and openly in all the electoral activities. In other words, whenever the stakeholders realized lack of transparency on the part of the EMB to elections, it gives room for mistrust, doubt and ultimately the affected parties tend to react violently. In the words of Agyeman-Duah (2005) the New Patriotic Party (NPP) boycotted the parliamentary election that was held on 2nd December 1992 as a result of lack of transparency, intimidations with impunity, impersonation and alleged manipulation of election results by the National Democratic Congress (NDC). This led to the famous publication of “The Stolen Verdict” by the NPP led by Prof. Albert Adu Boahen. There was “loud protestations and some un-orchestrated isolated incidents of violence by its supporters, in which the NPP simply chronicled what is alleged to be the electoral infractions. Fischer (2002:7) stated that “when an electoral process is perceived as unfair, unresponsive, or corrupt, its political legitimacy is compromised and stakeholders are motivated to go outside of the established institutional norms to achieve their objectives.” The implications of the above is that, key players especially the politicians take politics as their professions and put all their trust, resources, energy, will, and even hope in it. So if the EMB does not live up to expectation, the disappointed stakeholders could go out of the norms to fight for their rights which always result into electoral violence.

The study noted that, the use of provocative statements or languages in the form of abusing or insulting each other during the candidates’ campaign exercises are responsible for the eruption of electoral violence. The study identified in the Sissala East constituency that, candidates instead of engaging in issues based campaign, they rather resort to attacking each other by abusing and insulting each other. When people



are abused, they become annoyed and frustrated and their reactions are violent in character. In order to have peaceful elections, all the stakeholders to the elections especially candidates and their supporters must avoid the use of provocative and abusive languages.

All the above factors identified and corroborated by experts are the internal factors which go to the actual conduct of the elections. However, if the key actors in the electoral system have not handled the processes professionally, it could lead to electoral violence more especially when the politicians try to mingle in the existing societal conflicts in their attempt to win the elections at all cost.

5.1.2 Covert Conflicts as Fertile Ground for Eruption of Electoral Violence

This study observed that, electoral violence could occur by their nature or various electoral activities only or through existing social conflicts in the various communities. The study discovered that, there are existing social conflicts in the areas of religious difference, land ownership conflicts, ethnic or tribal conflicts, chieftaincy conflicts, etc.

The findings of the study actually corroborated with what Iff (2011) stated in the 2010 UN report; that elections do not take place in a vacuum. There is always an underlying social context in which elections take place and it may include; existing violence among ethnic, religious, organized crime, violence against women, terrorism, guerrilla fighting, tensions in society for instance latent conflicts including segregation, discrimination, and structural factors like unemployment, corruption, poverty, illiteracy. The study further observed that if there are existing conflicts which



have not been solved, aggrieved actors in the electoral system could capitalize on it to cause violence.

On the other hand, the study argued that, the occurrence of electoral violence could not be traced or attributed to the existing or covert factors alone but the occurrence of electoral violence as a result of the administration of the process or internal factors. The study sought to find out whether any attempt has been made to find solutions to the problems. It was established that several attempts have been made to solve the existing conflicts but the outcome has not been successful as all parties to the conflicts have taken entrenched positions. The study noted that, politicization of exiting polarized societal or communities' conflicts in the name of winning their sympathy for votes during elections. It has been revealed in the study that politicians try to influence and manipulate the existing social issues affecting the people with the hope of convincing them to vote for them. They promise the affected contestants in the conflicts with high expectations and they also go all out to ensure that their candidate win the election by indulging in all kinds of electoral malpractices. The findings, were confirmed by the view expressed by Bekoe cited in Peace brief (2010:4) when she stated that, Politicians exploit sentiments of economic discrimination or dominance of one ethnic group by another. In Kenya's Coast Province, the 1997 parliamentary elections threatened to unseat the two representatives of the ruling Kenya African National Union party as they faced opposition from non-indigenous voters in the constituency. Concurrently, the Coast's Digo people accused the non-indigenous of taking their jobs, educational opportunities and land. Exploiting these sentiments, politicians armed local groups to threaten the migrants, effectively driving them out. Approximately 130 migrants were killed and 100,000 were displaced.



Furthermore, Boone also cited in Peace Brief (2010:6) argues that, tension in Côte d'Ivoire over economic crises, nationalism and the unclear rights between indigenous and non-indigenous inhabitants in the country's south and southwest regions were exploited by politicians who fanned the fears of the indigenous. Consequently, the non-indigenous who comprise true foreigners, Muslims, and those with northern sounding names were often violently expelled from their lands and homes and subjected to harassment. The transformation of this conflict into one of citizenship and identity lies at the root of the violence following the 2000 elections and the attempted coup in 2002 by northern military personnel.

Again, as Bekoe identified chieftaincy disputes as another existing social conflict in the Northern Ghana between the Kusasi and the Mamprusis, the respondents also identified chieftaincy in the study areas as contributory factor towards the occurrence of electoral violence. She said, "the chieftaincy dispute between the Kusasis and Mamprusis in Ghana's Upper East Region, which predates Ghana's independence, serves as an example. According to her, the National Democratic Congress and its political tradition were seen to side with the Kusasi's claims to chieftaincy in the traditional area, while the Mamprusis were validated by the New Patriotic Party and its political tradition." In effect, the study corroborated with the above views expressed by respondents and experts. It means that, the occurrence of electoral violence in Kenya and Côte d'Ivoire as a result of existing social conflicts could equally occur in the study areas or other part of Ghana. The study is of the view that, if politicians in the electoral system try to use the existing societal conflicts to influence the voters which could polarize the communities, violence is bound to



occur. Therefore, chieftaincy, tribal, religious, and land issues are the heartbeat of the people which must be handled with great circumspection especially when elections are approaching.

5.1.3 Manifestations and Impacts of Electoral Violence

The manifestations of electoral violence as the study gathered ranges from physical violence, causing of destructions to public and private property, and death. According to Aning (2009), most acts of electoral violence in the country are perpetrated through open confrontations, death threats, mob action, intimidation, molestations, abductions, lynching and murder. Properties worth millions of Ghanaian cedis owned by political parties and their supporters as well as government property got vandalised by disgruntled party supporters and elements of unscrupulous political opponents. The trend of the electoral violence is very complex as it manifests when least expected.

For example, prior to the 2000 general election, an argument between two young men resulted in one of them being stabbed to death in Tamale Central Constituency. In the Ashanti Region, the 2000 elections campaign security guard of NDC candidate, the then Vice President John Evans Atta Mills beat some youth for hooting at it (Agyemang-Duah, 2005). At Bawku in the Upper East Region, on and around 7th December 2000, supporters of rival political parties were locked in bloody conflict.

Psychologically, electoral violence takes the form of using treats, insults, and prevention of people from exercising their franchise and snatching of ballot boxes. Electoral violence has negative impact on the outcome of elections results. It does not encourage people with good intention to contribute towards national development



through politics to take part. Because of electoral violence, the electorates do not have their free will to make their legitimate choice during elections. At Asutuare, violence between supporters of the NPP and NDC led to the injury of 30 persons (GT, 2001 cited in Dzodzi et al 2004:28).

In 2004 and 2008, there were incidences of electoral violence, which resulted in loss of lives, injuries, burning and destruction of property. For instance, the Electoral Commission Offices including ballot boxes that contained ballot papers at Pru District in the Brong Ahafo Region and at Tain District general elections respectively were burnt. Pockets of electoral violence were witnessed around the country in all the elections conducted in Ghana. The 2004 Presidential results were declared without five constituencies' results. According to the Chairman of the Electoral Commission, Dr. Kwadwo Afari-Gyan, because of acts of vandalism which occurred in certain constituencies after the 7th December, 2004 balloting, the results in those constituencies were slow in arriving at the head office for collation (Elections Report, 2004). Again, the study observed that, electoral violence bring disunity among families, communities and lead to progress of development and hence the living standard of the people is affected.

5.1.4 Measures Aimed at Electoral Violence

This study identified the major stakeholders in the electoral processes as the electoral commission, political party executives, candidates, youth, government, electorate, and the critical role they could play to minimise or eliminate electoral violence.

One of the key stakeholders in the electoral processes is the electoral commission. The study stressed that, being the main institution around which the elections revolve;



they should be fair, firm, transparent and credible to all other stakeholders in the electoral system. Respondents in the findings argued that, in order for the other stakeholders to have trust and confidence in them, they should demonstrate high level of neutrality by creating equal level playing grounds to all. In addition, the electoral commission should not be seen as favouring a candidate or political party". By so doing, the study believes that all the stakeholders would have the confidence in them and accept the outcome of the election.

Delay in the declaration and release of elections results create anxiety, suspicion and tension and if not well managed could result in violence. The study is of the view that, the undue delay in the release of elections results create the impression that the electoral commission intentionally delayed in order to manipulate the results in favour of one candidate or party. In this regard, the study suggested that, there should be timely declaration of election results to avoid all doubts and perception of the electoral commission. For the electoral commission to maintain its values, the finding suggested that, there should be all year round dialogue with stakeholders and not just during electoral exercise time. In this regard, the study suggested that, the electoral commission should endeavour to institutionalize regular IPAC meetings at various levels as ways of sharing knowledge and consensus building on electoral issues to minimise any perception that could degenerate into violence. Furthermore, holding of IPAC meetings should not be limited to electioneering time only, but off elections times should be included.

Effective and active participation in the electoral processes do not only ensure transparency, but also create confidence in the electoral system for not only the



stakeholders, but also the electorate. In this regard, the study suggests that, the electoral commission should collaborate with other public educational institutions to educate the electorate for their massive and active participation. The study again, stated that, a mere pasting of posters and playing of jingles during electoral exercise do not encourage meaningful participation. To ensure meaningful participation by all stakeholders, there should be mini durbars in all the communities to educate and explain the various activities involved in the electoral processes to the electorate so that they could equally ask questions bordering their mind to prevent them from indulging in any electoral malpractices.

On the issues of engagement of temporary staffs, the study noted that, since the strength of the permanent staff of the electoral commission is inadequate, they should develop various measures to ensure that, they get the right caliber of staffs to administer electoral activities at the various stages. The electoral commission should be meticulous in the recruitment and selection of both temporary staff into its operations. A critical background check to ensure that qualified people are picked to undertake the necessary task. The background checks of the temporary staffs should deal with their political neutrality, academic qualification, any past electoral experience, competency, etc. The findings again revealed that, some of the temporary staffs engaged by the electoral commission are not properly educated formally and as such they are not assertive during any electoral task. This study established that since such staffs are not assertive they could be easily manipulated by politicians and community people to be involved in electoral malpractices such as multiple registration, registration of minors and foreigners.



Political parties are other stakeholders the study also identified. They play very important key roles in the electoral processes and among them which the study observed are to educate, organize workshops to train, and capacity building for their supporters, sympathizers to understand how the laws governing elections operate. As a result of the roles they play, they create much enthusiasm for the electorate to take part in the electoral activities very effectively. The study observed that, in every election, the political parties come out with code of conduct. However, the codes are not binding and not enforceable if any member of the political parties goes contrarily to them. Again political parties should not only adhere to, but also make their code of conduct legally enforceable with punitive measures that could serve as deterrents to others.

Another revelation that emerged from the study is the influence of the electorate with monetary and materials things to win their votes. The respondents at FGDs said that, apart from corrupting, it is an affront to the electoral processes. The respondents added that not all candidates and political parties would be in a position to afford. Hence the practices do not create equal level playing field to all. The political parties should therefore refrain from inducing electorate and the youth with money, alcohol and other elements to vote for them.

In other to minimize electoral violence, the study agrees with finding that candidates to the election should not only be concerned with their understanding of the electoral processes, but that of their agents. This is because candidates cannot be at all polling stations at the same time whiles the electoral activities are going on. Candidates to elections should not be only knowledgeable, but recruit agents who are equally



knowledgeable about the electoral processes and can give up to date reports on happening at the various activity centers. The study observed that, candidates should engage agents who are loyal and understand what happen in the electoral processes. The study emphasized that most of the electoral violence occur because the candidates do not recruit agents who are knowledgeable and loyal to them and do not give good and accurate reports about the outcome of the elections. In addition, candidates should desist from the use of insults and abusive language and concentrate on developmental issues geared towards the improvement of the people's standard of living.

The youth as the future leaders, should not be educated academically but be involved in productive enterprises that could enable them to make meaningful life. They should not allow themselves to be used by political parties to cause confusion in the electoral processes. The study observed that, the youth should try to obey the laid down rules and regulations governing elections and not to take the law into their own hands by causing damage to public and private property.

The study corroborated with the finding that, Government should not only provide resources, but ensure early and timely release of the needed resources. The timely release of the resources would enable the key stakeholders in the electoral process to undertake their respective roles effectively. These various institutions like Electoral Commission, National Commission on Civic Education and security agencies in the electoral processes could equally plan and prepare ahead of time for early start of their activities.



The study identified that, the abuse of incumbency creates tensions, suspicion and unfair grounds for eruption of violence. The government in power always gets the attention of the media than the other candidates especially when election date itself is approaching. Therefore any government in power during elections should desist from the abuse of incumbency, and ensure that there is equal level playing field to all other contesting parties or candidates in the electoral race. The government should provide all the needed logistics for security agencies to undertake their lawful and legitimate responsibilities towards incident free elections. Make resources available to all contesting political parties to undertake training of their agents at the various polling stations. The courts and legal institutions should not only be equipped, but they must be trusted so that people or stakeholders have confidence in them. They should expedite action on all electoral disputes that might arise during the electoral processes to avoid unnecessary suspicions and bias which might lead to occurrence of electoral violence.

Effective and active participation in the electoral processes do not only ensure transparency, but also create confidence in the electoral system for not only the stakeholders, but the international donors. The electorate in the electoral process must be educated on their civic responsibilities for their utmost involvement. They should not discriminate against any political party or candidate on any ground, but they should accept all of them during their campaign tour to ensure fairness in the electoral processes. The electorate should not be seen as dictating to and influencing the work of electoral officials when they come to their communities. The study observed and emphasized that, electorate allowed themselves to be used by the politicians to indulge in electoral ‘malpractices like multiple voting and accepting of fake ballot



papers to favour a candidate or political party which create tension, suspicion that could result in violence in their communities.

5.2 Conclusion and Recommendations

This study has established that there are both immediate and remote factors that account for the eruption of electoral violence in the study areas. The immediate factors are also termed as the process or endogenous factors. The process or endogenous factors are the activities that take place concerning the actual electoral work. They include demarcation of electoral boundaries, registration of voters, exhibition of voters' register, filing of nomination to contest election, campaign process by the contesting candidates, casting of votes, counting and announcing of votes at the polling stations, collations, and final declaration of election results. The above activities are the main steps taken to arrive at the final winner of an election and these must be systematically followed. The study emphasized that, if the EMB does not carry out such activities professionally to the satisfaction of stakeholders, any infraction in the above steps alone could lead to the eruption of electoral violence considering the resources, time, hope, and energy the key stakeholders put into it.

The study noted that, there are remote or exogenous factors that already exist in the communities which could serve as fertile grounds for eruption of electoral violence in case any of the process factors above are not followed or there are electoral malpractices that affect the outcome of the elections. The remote or exogenous factors are also called the external factors because they do not go into the actual activities



leading to the elections. They are community or societal problems which solutions have not been found to. These societal or external factors are identified as chieftaincy disputes, land disputes, tribal or ethnic disputes, religious differences, as well as unemployment, discrimination against sections, marginalization, poverty, and illiteracy.

The study concludes that if there are external or existing societal problems and the EMB is able to act professionally, electoral violence might not occur. This is because it might be difficult for the defeated candidate or party to find grounds to base their grievances on. However, if there are rampant external factors and with little malpractices involved in the processes to the elections, electoral violence is bound to occur.

The study recommends that the supporters of various political parties should not only be effectively and properly educated with the support from Civil Society Organization to intensify voter education on the counting and collation of votes, but how to cast votes well to reduce the number of rejected ballots. With this, the supporters would be in a position to know especially when the counting does not favour their candidate or party who were hitherto leading in the first instance. Most of the times the supporters tend to accuse the electoral officials for manipulating or changing the election results in favour of their opponent.

There is the need for politicians to desist from politicizing existing societal conflicts that they are not capable of solving. In this regard, the institutions judicial and other law enforcement agencies that are in-charge of settling conflicts in the society should be strengthened to handle them. The government should empower the legitimate legal



institutions to settle all pending societal conflicts like chieftaincy, land ownership, tribal and religious conflicts so that politicians would not capitalize on them and they would not serve as fertile ground for eruption of electoral violence.

The government should not only adequately resource the Electoral Commission and National Commission on Civic Education who are the major institutions involved in educating the public on the electoral processes effectively, but the resources should be timely so that they could take up their legal responsibilities seriously. Again, these institutions should adhere to their legal roles assigned to them by law and perform their roles effectively and efficiently.

The study recommends that there should be critical look at the current electoral system where only the winning party members form and constitute government. In this regard, the concept of winner takes all should be reviewed to allow other members of the defeated parties be part of the governing processes of the country. If this concept of all-inclusive government is adopted, it would minimise the politicians' crave to win elections at all cost to the detriment of the country. The above measures would enable the other defeated parties to feel that they are all part of the governance process.

The political parties in collaboration with their candidates in the electoral processes should endeavor to recruit agents who are well educated and understand how the electoral processes operate as well as how the rules governing the elections are applied. Most of the time, the agents of political parties or candidates display lack of electoral knowledge and are not able to give an accurate account on what happened at



the various polling stations and at the collation centers. These create impressions in the minds of party executives that their parties were being cheated and that was why they did not win the elections. This normally leads to confusion and therefore eruption of electoral violence in the study areas. Hence, the various political parties to elections should not only endeavour to recruit agents who are very loyal and well vested in electoral process, but train them effectively before sending them to the polling stations and the collation centres.

Conducting credible, transparent, free and fair elections is a shared responsibility among all the stakeholders and not only just for the EMB. The entire electoral processes involve a number of activities before the actual elections and the key players in the electoral process must be made aware since each of them has roles to play to ensure violence free elections.



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APPENDIX A

In-Depth Interview Guide

This questionnaire aims to solicit your views on the topic, Electoral Violence in contemporary Ghana, with particular reference to the Upper West Region of Ghana. Your response and cooperation would contribute the democratic consolidation in Ghana. It is a study aiming at the award of Master of Philosophy Degree in Development Studies.

You are assured of total confidentiality in all responses that you give.

Thank You

A. General information

Interviewer's name.....

No. of questionnaire.....

Interview date.....

Constituency.....

1. Demographic background

I. Sex

II. Age.....

III. Marital status.....

2. Status in the constituency



Political party executive

Candidate

Chief/Opinion leader

EC staff

Political party youth executive

Community member

3. Occupation

Farming

Public/civil servant

Self employed

Unemployed

4. Academic qualification

JHS

Vocational / Technical

SHS

Post-secondary

Tertiary level

5. Number of time voted since 1992

One



Two

Three

Forth

Fifth

Causes of electoral violence in your constituency

6. Are elections by nature violence based activities?

Yes

No

Give reasons

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.....
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.....

7. In your view, could you tell me what is electoral violence?

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8. Have you ever experienced/witnessed or heard of electoral violence before?

Yes.....

No.....



9. What are the factors or causes of electoral violence in your constituency?

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10. Who are the perpetrators in the electoral violence in your constituency?

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11. Who are the victims in the electoral violence?

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Identification of covert conflicts as a fertile ground for electoral violence.

12. In your constituency, are there any covert conflicts that trigger the eruption of electoral violence?

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13. What factors in your opinion, responsible for covert conflict in your constituency?

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14. Was there any attempt to solve such covert conflict?

Yes.....

No.....

15. If yes, what has been the outcome?

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16. If no, why no attempt towards resolving the hidden conflict in your constituency?



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Manifestations and impact of electoral violence

17. In your view, what form does electoral violence takes?

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18. What impact does electoral violence have on fostering voter confidence among the electorate?

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Measures to eliminate or minimise electoral violence



19. What measures should the following stakeholders take to minimize or eliminate the occurrence of electoral violence in your constituency?

a. EC

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b. Political party executives

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c. Candidates.....

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d. Youth groups

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e. Government.....

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f. Electorate

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20. Do you have any advice or recommendation for the stakeholders to eliminate violence in the electoral processes?

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APPENDIX B

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION FRAMEWORK.

This focus group discussion guide aims to solicit your views on the topic, Electoral Violence in contemporary Ghana, with particular reference to the Upper West Region of Ghana. Your contributions would help in the democratic consolidation in Ghana. It is a study aiming at the award of Master of Philosophy Degree in Development Studies.

You are assured of total confidentiality in all responses that you give.

Thank You

1. Causes of electoral violence

- ❖ Identify the factors that contribute to electoral violence in your constituency.
- ❖ What level of electoral activity that attract electoral violence and why?
- ❖ Who are the perpetrators of electoral violence?
- ❖ Which people are the victims of electoral violence?

2. Identification of covert conflicts as a fertile ground.

- ❖ Have there been covert conflicts in your constituency that create fertile ground for eruption of electoral violence?
- ❖ Have there been any attempt solve the covert conflicts before?
- ❖ Yes or
- ❖ No
- ❖ If yes, what has been the outcome?



3. Forms or manifestations and impact of electoral violence

- ❖ What are the manifestations of electoral violence in your constituency?
- ❖ From your point of view, how does electoral violence affect in fostering voter confidence in your constituency?

4. Measures to eliminate or minimise electoral violence

- ❖ Who are the key stakeholders in the electoral processes?
- ❖ Is it possible for the stakeholders to eliminate or minimise violence in electoral processes in Ghana?
- ❖ If yes, how?
- ❖ If no, why? Give reasons to that effect.
- ❖ What role could they play in eliminating or minimizing electoral violence?

5. Any other views or recommendations on electoral violence which has not been captured?

Thank you very much for your time.

