

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

PARTICIPATION OF CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS IN LOCAL LEVEL
GOVERNANCE IN TWIFO HEMANG LOWER DENKYIRA DISTRICT

KOFI ASARE

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GOVERNANCE IN TWIFO HEMANG LOWER DENKYIRA DISTRICT

BY

KOFI ASARE

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DECLARATION

Candidate's Declaration

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

Candidate's Name: Kofi Asare

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

Supervisor's Declaration

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of the dissertation were supervised in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of dissertation laid down by the University of Cape Coast.

Supervisor's Name: Dr. Francis Enu-Kwesi

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

ABSTRACT

Ghana's local government system is premised on citizen's participation at the local level. Since the enactment of the Local Government Law in 1993, governance structures and systems have been put in place to grant greater autonomy and administrative capacity to local governments, without a commensurate enhancement in the capacity and quality of participation of citizens at the local level. Apart from examining the nature and organisation of civil society organisations, the study focuses on the experience of civil society's engagement with the current structures and processes of governance, highlighting the levels, forms and the effectiveness of the existing institutional framework for the participation of civil society organisations in local level governance.

A qualitative method was employed to gather data through focus group discussions and interviews with members of civil society organisations and key informants at the Twifo Hemang Lower Denkyira District Assembly in the Central Region. A focus group discussion guide and an interview schedule were developed to elicit responses from members of civil society organisations and 10 key informants from the District Assembly.

The study concluded that the existing institutional, legal and policy framework for civil society participation in decision making at the local level is ineffective in promoting participation and recommends a stronger and mandatory policy guideline that compels the District Assembly to involve local civil society organisations in political, social and economic decision making at the local level. It also emphasises the need for civil society re-organisation and orientation to enhance their capacity to appreciate governance and participate accordingly.

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DEDICATION

To all my family, especially Mercy Gyampo and Esther Gyampo.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background to the study

Local government is the closest tie of government to the people. In a unitary system, power is shared between the central government and local government, whereas in a federal system power is shared between federal-state and local governments (Cheema, 2005). Local government is seen as more democratic since it increases the scope for citizenship participation in the government of their locality through decentralisation, a concept and practice which has become quite common in Africa over the past two decades (Antwi-Boasiako, 2010).

Decentralisation requires the restructuring or reorganisation of authority so that there is a system of co-responsibility between institutions of governance at the central, regional and local levels according to the principle of subsidiarity, thus increasing the overall quality and effectiveness of the system of governance, while increasing the authority and capacities of sub-national levels (Cheema, 2005). It is expected to contribute to key elements of good governance, such as increasing people's opportunities for participation in economic, social and political decisions; assisting in developing people's capacities; and enhancing government responsiveness, transparency and accountability (Smoke, Gomez & Peterson, 2007).

Since the 1980s most African countries have started a transfer of power, resources and responsibilities to their sub national governments (World Bank, 2009). In 1988, Ghana embarked on a major programme of local government reform and decentralisation, the thrust of which has been to promote popular participation by shifting the processes of governance from command to consultation, and by devolving power, competence, resources and means to district levels as a means of improving the quality of governance and ultimately, the well being of local communities and citizens (Antwi-Boasiako, 2009).

Ghana's decentralisation policy devolves central authority to the district level by fusing government agencies in any region or district into one administrative unit, through the process of institutional integration, manpower absorption, composite budgeting and provision of funds for the decentralised services (Ahwoi, 2010). It also assigns functions and responsibilities to the various levels of government from central to local governments, with central government undertaking planning, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes whereas regions, through the Regional Co-ordinating Units coordinate development policy management and implementation which is the direct responsibility of District Assemblies (Antwi-Boasiako 2010).

One of the essential pre-requisites in development policy management is the practice of participatory decision making, implementation and monitoring at the local level where development is administered (NDPC, 2005). This is in view of the fact that, local citizens know best what the local needs and issues are and engaging them in the decision-making process serves to educate both citizens and policy-makers about the various facets of a

particular decision or issue from a variety of perspectives (Beresford & Hoban, 2005).

Engaging citizens in decision-making makes the implementation of a decision or policy more likely, since it is easier for local government to successfully implement a policy or plan once the citizenry are on board (World Bank, 2009). Finally, engaging the citizenry in monitoring also helps to create transparency, build accountability and confidence between public officials and the citizenry, since the citizenry is informed on issues relating to resource allocation and utilisation, as well as challenges in resource availability (Ahmad & Brosio, 2009).

Ghana's decentralisation framework accordingly, imbibes participatory methodologies in development policy management and implementation at the local level by promoting civil society participation in development decision making, implementation and monitoring (NDPC, 2005). This is guaranteed by article 240 (2) (e) of the 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana, which states that, "to ensure the accountability of local government authorities, people in particular local government areas shall, as far as practicable, be afforded the opportunity to participate effectively in their governance" (Antwi-Boasiako, 2010) .

Furthermore, the Local Government Act, 1993 (Act 462) and the National Development Planning Systems Act, 1994 (Act 480) are two fundamental laws shaping decentralisation in Ghana (Offei-Aboagye, 2000). They both recognise the fundamental role of civil society organisations in decision making, implementation and monitoring at the district and community levels by providing a legal framework for economic, political and

social engagement between government, civil society and the private sector in the governance process (NDPC, 2005).

The constitutional and legal provisions mandating civil society involvement in decision making, implementation and monitoring at the local level necessitated the emergence of local and international civil society organisations in the mid 1990's with the aim of mobilising grassroots support to create space and participate in decision making at the local level (USAID, 2003). Notable platforms used by civil society organisations to participate in local level governance include direct provision of social services (especially education and health), participation in district performance review meetings, district planning sessions, budget and tax hearings and scarcely, monitoring of particular policies and projects (World Bank, 2008)

Worthy of mention however, is the apparent ambiguity in legal provisions for the participation of civil society organisations in local level governance, a situation that has necessitated the discretionary and adhoc interpretation and application of provisions that seek to promote the participation of civil society organisations in governance, especially decision making, at the District Assembly (Da Rocha, 2002). Notable areas of ambiguity includes; the lack of clarity on the role, nature of, and mechanisms for the participation of civil society organisations in the economic, social and political decision making at the District Assembly, as well as in the monitoring of projects, policies and expenditures of the District Assembly (Ahwoi, 2010).

Whereas international civil society organisations, especially non-governmental organisations, have been highly successful in using

development planning and decision making platforms of the District Assemblies to positively influence the development agenda, very little could be said of local civil society organisations (SADC, 2003). Local civil society organisations are rarely involved in key decisions of the District Assembly, but are very much involved in their implementation due to the resource and grassroots support base which most local civil society organisations at the district and community level command (SEND, 2007)

Problem statement

Civil society organisations are required by law to play significant roles in the development and governance process especially at the local level through the National Development Planning Systems Act, 1994 (Act 480) which mandates civil society organisations to participate in development planning, decision making and in the implementation of government policies and plans, with the aim of improving the livelihoods of the local people (NDPC, 2005). Such policies include policies aimed at developing sustainable livelihoods and providing access to social services, notably education, health and potable water (SEND, 2007).

Civil society organisations in Twifo Hemang Lower Denkyira District compliment government's efforts to improve the livelihood of inhabitants in the district by providing labour and equipment support towards the construction of social infrastructural projects and providing social welfare support for the under privileged in the district (GAIT, 2004). This includes the construction of forty (40) classroom blocks and sixty-four (64) bore holes by World Vision, an international civil society organisation, with the support of

local communities between 1998 and 2005, a move which has culminated in providing basic education to some twelve thousand, four hundred (12,400) children and potable water to forty seven thousand (47,000) inhabitants in the district (World Vision, 2006).

Social welfare and charity also remains at the heart of the mandate and operations of civil society organisations, as it remains highly manifested in their financial and material donations and support to institutions that harbour the vulnerable and needy in society; hospitals and orphanages (Lewis, 2002). At the community level, The occasional donation of medical equipment to the Twifo Praso Government Hospital and Mokwa Health Post is indicative of the role civil society organisations play in supporting the welfare of society's vulnerable and needy (Action for Rural Education, 2005).

Through interventions like the Grassroots Economic Literacy and Advocacy project that was implemented in the district between 2002 and 2004, Action for Rural Education, a local civil society organisation, was able to mobilise the local oil palm industry in Twifo Hemang Lower Denkyira District to constitute economic groups which enabled them to secure capital, credit and technology to enhance their productivity (SADC, 2005). This among others has accounted for the increase in the number of cooperatives and economic units in the agricultural industry in the district, thereby enhancing their access to credit and farm technology from agriculture sector duty bearers and the private sector (SEND, 2007).

This notwithstanding, civil society organisations have been rarely involved in decision making and policy engagements with local government in the district (USAID, 2005). The situation is not different in their participation

in economic, fiscal and budgetary decision making at the District Assembly, a situation established in the report of a survey conducted by the Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation which identified among others that, less than 0.5 percent of the citizenry in the district had knowledge of Ghana's economic blueprint, notably the Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy 11 and the processes for fiscal and budgetary decision making at the district level (SADC, 2005).

Some studies attribute the weak participation of local civil society organisations in decision making and policy engagements at the local level to their limited capacity to adequately provide policy alternatives, demand accountability, advocate transparency, and appreciate key development and planning themes, processes and methodologies, as well as analyse and strategise on development issues in the right context (NDPC, 2005). This may be exacerbated by the lack of political will by most District Assemblies to grant them the required space to participate, ostensibly to prevent transparency (SEND, 2007). This research will therefore focus on the current forms and levels of participation of civil society organisations in local level governance in the Twifo Hemang Lower Denkyira District.

Objectives of the study

The main objective of the study was to examine the participation of civil society organisations in political and social governance in Twifo Hemang Lower Denkyira District. Specifically, the study sought to:

- a. Describe the activities of the various civil society organisations in the district.

- b. Examine the institutional framework available for the participation of civil society organisations in decision making, implementation and monitoring in the district.
- c. Assess the awareness of civil society organisations of government policies and plans.
- d. Examine the nature of the participation of civil society organisations in governance.
- e. Recommend strategies for strengthening the participation of civil society organisations in governance in the district.

Research questions

In pursuit of the research objectives, the research sought answers to the following questions:

- a. What are the activities of civil society organisations in the Twifo Hemang Lower Denkyira District?
- b. What are the institutional frameworks available for the participation of civil society organisations in decision making, implementation and monitoring?
- c. To what extent are civil society organisations aware of government policies and plans?
- d. How are civil society organisations involved in decision making at district level?

Scope of the study

This study was restricted to the participation of occupational associations, faith based organisations and traditional authorities in economic governance in the district. The scope of issues covered in assessing their participation in governance included their participation in development decision making, development planning, implementation, monitoring and review sessions of the District Assembly. In assessing civil society awareness levels, the study also restricted itself to assessing civil society organisations based on five national policies-National Youth Employment Programme, National Health Insurance Scheme, Ghana School Feeding Programme, the Capitation Grant and the District Assembly Common Fund.

Significance of the study

The study is of significance in the following ways; firstly, it constitutes a guide to Metropolitans, Municipals and Districts Assemblies in Ghana. This is because institutional frameworks for civil society organisations' participation in decision making, implementation and monitoring are outlined in this study. Secondly, the study informs these Assemblies on the need to involve local civil society organisations in their activities. Finally, the findings of this study contribute to the body of knowledge.

Organisation of the study

This study is organised into five chapters. The first chapter serves as the introduction and it deals with the background to the study, statement of the problem, objectives of the study and four research questions the study is

expected to answer. Additionally, the chapter discusses the scope and significance of the study. The second chapter contains a review of literature related to the study. These are in relation to decentralisation, participation and civil society. The chapter ends with a conclusion of the literature reviewed. The third chapter discusses the methodology adopted. These are; research design, population, sample and sampling procedure and the instrument.

The fourth chapter presents the analysis and discussions of the data. It deals with analysis on the participation of local civil society organisations in local level governance. The fifth chapter, which is the final chapter of the study, sums up the results and findings of the study. The chapter states the recommendations based on the findings. Suggestions for further research are also included in this chapter.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Introduction:

This chapter summarises the concept of governance and the history of the concept of civil society. It elaborates on various perspectives on civil society within a global context, with a focus on the different cases of civil society and their participation in local governance.

Governance

Governance is a very broad concept, and operates at every level, such as household, village, municipality, nation, region or globe. It has been defined as the exercise of political, economic and administrative authority to manage a nation's affair (Nzongola-Ntalaja, 2003). It comprises the mechanisms, processes and institutions through which collective decisions are made and implemented, citizens, groups and communities pursue their visions, articulate their interests, exercise their legal rights, meet their obligations and mediate their differences (World Bank, 2009).

Governance is the process whereby a society makes important decisions, determines whom they involve, and how they render account (Graham, Amos & Plumptre, 2003). It is not the political apparatus of state but the interactions and relationship existing between citizens and how the state manages available resources to satisfy the public good (Tilly, 2007). In this context, governance can be viewed as the traditions and the institutions

by which authority in a country is exercised for the common good (World Bank, 2008).

Governance could be compared to the management, supply, and delivery of political goods to citizens of a nation-state, whereby political goods are various, and they include human security, rule of law, political and civil freedoms, medical and health care, schools and education or regulating the sharing of the environmental commons (Besancon, 2003). The practice of governance is also ruled by community values and informal traditions. It also comprises complex mechanisms, processes, relationships, and institutions through which citizens and groups articulate their interests, exercise their rights and obligations, and mediate their differences (Cheema, 2007).

Due to the inherent diversity in national traditions and public cultures, there exist many definitions of governance in the literature, but it is possible to isolate just three main types of governance. First, political or public governance, whose authority is the State, government or public sector, relates to the process by which a society organises its affairs and manages itself. The public sector could be defined as activities that are undertaken with public funds, whether within or outside of core government, and whether those funds represent a direct transfer or are provided in the form of an implicit (Nzongola-Ntalaja, 2003).

Second, economic governance, whose authority is the private sector, relates to the policies, the processes or organisational mechanisms that are necessary to produce and distribute services and goods. Third, social governance, whose authority is the civil society, including citizens and non-profit organisations, relates to a system of values and beliefs that are necessary

for social behaviours to happen and for public decisions to be taken guarantee (Manning et al., 2006).

In the past two decades, the emphasis within the development community has been on how to make governance effective, paving the way for the introduction of 'good governance' in development discourse globally (World Bank, 2008). Similarly, Leadbeater (2008) sees governance as irrelevant, unless it is effective in providing the social, economic and political aspirations of the people. The concept of governance is effective when it is exhibits the following characteristics; participation, transparency, equity, empowering, and accountability (Ahwoi, 2010).

These qualities, especially accountability, must be embedded in any governance system for it to be effective and efficient in meeting the social, economic and political needs and aspirations of the people (Da Rocha, 2002). This is in view of the fact that, the basis for equity, transparency, participation and empowerment is to ensure accountable governance. Accountable governance provides that, laws and policies are developed and implemented in the supreme interest and with the necessary scrutiny of the citizenry, thereby ensuring there is value for money in governance (Friedman, 2004).

Worldwide, it is acknowledged by governance and development practitioners that, of the two major forms of governance, centralised and decentralised governance, the latter bear's resemblance and exhibits the attributes of 'good governance' as defined by the United Nations (Manning et al., 2006). The widely held view has been that decentralisation is the closest middle-road between centralism and anarchy and involves the transfer of

authority and responsibility between the central and sub-national institutions of governance (Crawford, 2004).

Built on foundations of participatory governance, decentralisation is a process which should ultimately lead to local governance, where local people at the grassroots have the power to determine how their resources should be managed by participating in decisions that affect their wellbeing (Knierzinger, 2009). Although experience suggests that decentralisation is no guarantee of good governance, many believe that decentralizing governance from the centre to the regions, districts, local communities etc. is more conducive to good governance (World Bank, 2009).

Concerns regarding central administrative capacity, fiscal constraints and the limited accountability at all levels of government have led African Countries, including Ghana to place increased emphasis on the importance of decentralisation and developing capacity for effective local governance (USAID, 2003). The other supporting argument for decentralisation is the need for improved government effectiveness in the delivery of goods and services, the promotion of revenue collection, enhanced popular participation as a means of making the public sector more accountable, and empowering people previously excluded from decision-making (Antwi-Boasiako, 2009).

As a result of these motivations, the past two decades have seen efforts at installing various forms of decentralised systems of development management as part of major public sector management reforms in Africa (World Bank, 2008). The forms of decentralisation in these countries have ranged from those that are comprehensive in scope and are designed to transfer development planning and management responsibilities, as well as

revenue collection authority to local units of government, to those that are more narrowly conceived, just delegating, deconcentrating or divesting administrative authority among subsidiary or counterpart units (Ahwoi, 2010)

Irrespective of the type of decentralisation being practiced, there exists some form of participatory governance through the involvement of the local units in either decision making or implementation (Ayee, 2000). The observation by Ayee regarding the cross-cutting nature of participatory governance in decentralised or local governance adds to the debate that, the very basis for any form of local governance is to achieve development through participation (Crawford 2004).

Like that of other African countries, Ghana's local government system is built on the foundations of participatory governance and premised on the effective participation of representative assemblies, private sector, vulnerable groups, donors and organised civil society to achieve its development (Crawford, 2004). District Assemblies avail themselves a role for a combination of these stakeholders in their priority setting, policy making, resource allocation and programme implementation (Antwi-Boasiako, 2010). Through the intermediation of these stakeholders, participatory interactions are channelled in pursuit of development.

Among the major stakeholders mentioned above, civil society organisations are gradually emerging as the effective pressure group that is capable of serving the dual role of collaborating with and facilitating the government sector in the development management process, and yet constituting a watchdog for diligence of the governance function (Appiagyei-Atua, 2002). With its specific focus on social welfare and accountability, civil

society organisations are positioned to augment governments' capacity to develop people-centred policies, design and formulate realistic programmes and actions, implement development activities and monitor the employment of public resources to ensure accountability (Edward, 2009).

Civil society in historical context

Major European philosophers such as Aristotle and Rousseau articulated a notion of civil society as being synonymous with the state or political society. "Civil" was seen as the opposite of the state of "nature" and also of "uncivilised" forms of government, such as despotism. Civil society, according to this conception, expresses the growth of civilisation to the point where society has become "civilised" (Putnam, 2007). In the second half of the eighteenth century, however, a major shift in conceptualising civil society was introduced by writers such as Adam Ferguson and Thomas Paine, among others. According to Glasius et al., (2008), this period marked an era where the concept of civil society was slowly developed that differentiated it from the state, endowing civil society with its own forms and principles.

Under this penumbra, thinkers conceptualised the relationship between civil society and the state in somewhat different ways. A survey of civil society literature makes it clear that civil society as a concept contains elements that are diverse, complex, and above all, contentious. Some of the literature even questions whether this fuzziness explains the popularity of civil society, in that it can be all things to all people (Glasius et al., 2008). That is why there is no commonly agreed upon definition of civil society, beyond the basic idea of civil society being an arena of voluntary, uncoerced collective

action around shared interests, purposes, and values (Edwards, 2009). John Locke, for example, was the first modern philosopher to stress that civil society should be understood as a body in its own right, separate from the state.

Locke, according to Alexander (2006), reiterates his description of civil society as a united body of individuals under the power of an executive that protects their property and well being, and designs legislation to govern their behaviour. Thus the commonwealth combines the legislative power to make laws and the executive power to enforce laws, with the public's support. Locke sees the state as an absolute monarchy that places no common authority over all; thus, by investing the authority in one person, the entire system suffers. Since the monarch can impinge on people's property and welfare without fear of retribution, the people lack the comfort, protection, and incentive to contribute to the good of the commonwealth but owe absolute allegiance to the state. According to him, it is only the legislature and judiciary that can act to balance the power of the monarchy, and not civil society (Putnam, 2007).

In Charles de Montesquieu's model of the separation of powers, he distinguished between political society as one regulating the relations between citizens and government, and civil society as regulating the relations between citizens. This presented a far less sharp contrast from Locke's views on civil society by stressing a balance between central authority and societal networks, in which the central authority must be controlled by the rule of law and limited by the countervailing power of independent organisations and networks that operate inside and outside the political structure, rather than depending on

only the judiciary and legislature to leverage the balance of power (Alexander, 2006).

Friedrich Hegel viewed civil society as the historical product of economic modernization and not as a natural expression of freedom (Putnam, 2007). For Hegel, civil society comprised a huge variety of actors, including the market economy, social classes (including the bourgeoisie), corporations, intellectuals, and civil servants—essentially all societal actors not directly dependent on the state apparatus. Hegel emphasised that civil society actors were not always in harmony but rather are in conflict, as the burghers followed mainly selfish interests. Therefore, in Hegel's view, civil society must be controlled by a strong state that is supposed to act in the universal interest of the population (Hall & Trentmann, 2008).

Karl Marx always insisted that civil society develops only with the bourgeoisie, and he defined the concept as comprising the entire material interactions among individuals at a particular evolutionary stage of the productive forces (Abe, 2005). As with Hegel, Marx's definition accommodates a huge diversity of actors, including the economy and the market. In contrast to Hegel, however, Marx states that civil society is the base of the capitalist domination model, regulating and subordinating the state, which thus becomes an institution of the dominant class. To put it in Marxist terms, civil society is the structural base, and the state belongs to the superstructure that ensures capitalist domination by force (Hall, 2005).

It is worth emphasising that, Marx and Hegel hold contrasting views on civil society on the grounds that, whereas the former believes the state can never function independently of civil society under capitalism, the latter holds

argues that, the creation of civil society in itself is an achievement of the modern state, and that peoples participation in the activities of organised civil society is to protect their power and property in a capitalist world (Abe, 2005). Contrary to Marx, Hegel further argues that, the interventions of the state can effectively address the contradictions in civil society (Putnam, 2007).

The exclusive link between civil society and capitalist development was questioned by Tilly (2007). Tilly emphasises that the modernisation of the idea of civil society, and the separation of civil society from the state, were primarily political developments rather than being economic in nature. This view was driven by the fear of state despotism, something that led political thinkers and many non-entrepreneurial groups to develop civil society as a different counteracting entity. These people and groups were critical as well to capitalist development, and many feared the inequalities caused by the growth of commodity production.

Jürgen Habermas focused on the role that civil society should play within the communication process in the public sphere and saw communication as a social act that plays a decisive role in social action (Batiwala & Brown, 2006). Bataliwa and Brown posit that legitimacy and consensus on political decisions are provided through open communication, that is, by the unbiased debate of social actors. In this understanding, the political system i.e. the state, government, and political society needs the articulation of interests in the public space to put different concerns on the political agenda. Usually, established institutions, such as political parties, would perform this articulation. However, it cannot be left entirely to institutions alone, argues Edwards (2009), as political parties and parliaments

need to get informed public opinion beyond the established power structures. Therefore, the ability to organise as civil society is needed particularly by marginalized groups as a means to articulate their interests.

From this overview, it can be seen that major shifts in how civil society is conceptualised have taken place over time. This includes the change from equating civil society with the state itself toward viewing the two as opposing forces, as well as the change from a purely economic understanding of civil society to a noneconomic, political understanding. Such variations notwithstanding, can identify some common ground for understanding the structure and positioning of civil society within society at large.

Although not driven purely by private or economic interests, they are nonetheless viewed as autonomously organised, interacting within the public sphere (Croissant, Restivo, & Bauchspies, 2008). Civil society is seen as different from both the state and the political sphere due to the fact that civil society is making political demands toward the state and others, but is not running as politicians and parties do for political office in government. Thus, civil society is formally and legally independent from state or political society, but it is oriented toward and interacts closely with the state, the political sector, and the economic sector (Thompson, 2008).

Composition of civil society

To clarify who belongs to civil society, Putnam (2007) sees it helpful to consider the processes of articulation and negotiation of political interests within society. According to Putnam, various intermediaries act as connectors between the private sphere, which comprise of ordinary citizens who are only

occasionally directly involved in politics, and the political-administrative system. Intermediaries-including political parties, associations, social movements, and the media-establish contact and feedback among these distant spheres. And among these intermediaries, only associational and social movements belong to civil society. Specifically, The World Bank (2008) categorises civil society organisations into international civil society organisations, community based and national /regional civil society organisations.

The term ‘non- governmental organisation’ is broad and ambiguous as it covers a range of organisations within civil society, from political action groups to sports clubs, but are largely organisations whose mission is to support the development of society, with no profit motive (Lewis, 2002). All non-governmental organisations can be regarded as civil society organizations though not all civil society organizations are non-governmental organisations (Keane, 2003). The World Bank also sees non- governmental organisations as private organisations that pursue activities to relieve suffering, promote the interests of the poor, protect the environment, provide basic social services, and/or undertake community development without a profit motive (World Bank, 2009).

Leadbeater (2008) argues that, the not for profit feature of non-governmental organisations does not necessarily mean the act of not making any profit but rather, having a non-distribution of profit policy that prevents officers or directors of non- governmental organisations from distributing their net earnings amongst themselves. However, non-governmental organisations do have the ability to distribute their “profits” to employees in the form of perquisites such as higher wages, shorter hours, or better offices and conditions of work, a practice which puts into contest, the not for profit

attributes of non-governmental organisations, irrespective of their type (Edward, 2010).

Non-governmental organisations are often categorised by two variables; level of operation and nature of work. Non-governmental organisations are international, national or local when categorised according to their level of operations, with the international ones usually having a bigger financial portfolio and working in any country, other than where it is originally registered or working in more than one country (Keane, 2003). National non-governmental organisations operate in more than one administrative province of a country, whereas local organisations work within a particular district or community (Cox, 2010). Where local non-governmental organisations work only in a particular community, they are usually referred to as community based organisations, and these includes clubs and associations (Edward, 2010)

Guan (2004) distinguishes between non-governmental organisations engaged in advocacy and service delivery. Those involved in advocacy engage policy makers to influence public policy in favour of the needs of the vulnerable and poor, ensure accountability in development and also influence people's behaviors and attitudes in favour of development initiatives at the community level (Friedman, 2004). At the community level, direct service delivery interventions of non-governmental organisations include provision of social infrastructure, especially the building and operation of schools, hospitals, orphanages and the distribution of gifts in kind (World Vision, 2006). A major ally of non-governmental organisations is the media, which in itself may be non-governmental, public and/or not-for-profit (Putnam, 2007).

The media's role is even more contentious. Some scholars and practitioners see media as part of civil society, whereas others see media as executing a different role in society (Van Tongeren, Break, Hellena, & Vernoeven, 2008). Others contend that the media may be part of civil society when their mission is to pursue social development and ownership is private but apolitical, whereas political media houses do not necessarily represent civil society interests (Cox, 2010).

Albrow & Glasius, (2007) argue that the media does not belong to civil society because the mass media comprise professional organisations and not voluntary ones, thus belonging to the economic sphere. Additionally, the role attributed to the media in a democratic environment requires them to report comprehensively and impartially without serving specific interests (Putnam, 2007). Thus, a free and pluralistic media have a role on their own with their task being to enable public debate, and representing public interests that are held by civil society organisations (Van Tongeren et al., 2008). Yet, some media might not consider these to be limitations, and they are better viewed as part of the state or political society, like state or party media, or as part of advocacy/communication strategies of specific organisations (Leadbeater, 2008).

In contrast, people working in the media sector like journalists and publishers can form their own associations, which then act as civil society, similar to any other association (Albrow & Glasius, 2007). Media fulfilling their public task might support civil society in its endeavour to confront the state, as this usually involves opening further access to the public sphere (Edward, 2009). While the media as a whole are generally not considered to

be part of civil society, the above considerations can be condensed into the following definition: Civil society is a sphere of voluntary action that is distinct from the state, political, private, and economic spheres, keeping in mind that in practice the boundaries between these sectors are often complex and blurred. It consists of a large and diverse set of voluntary organisations competing with each other and oriented to specific interests (Cox, 2010).

Thus, civil society is independent from the state and the political sphere, but it is oriented toward and interacts closely with them (Putnam, 2007). Civil society has been debated in very different contexts. This includes civil society's role in the political transition toward democracy in different regions of the world as well as development and international cooperation. In the ensuing sections of this review, the main strands of these debates shall be examined, with a central feature on civil society in a global context.

Civil society in Europe

Civil society has been an almost purely Western concept, historically tied to the political emancipation of citizens from former feudalistic ties, monarchies, and the state during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (Lewis, 2002). Other notions of civil society barely surface in the international debate about civil society. As a result, there is still much debate over whether Western concepts of civil society are transferable to non-Western countries or other historical contexts with different levels of democracy and economic structures (Leadbeater, 2008).

In its early phase, civil society in Western Europe was driven by economic and academic elites who demanded civil and human rights, as well

as political participation (Keane, 2003). In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, civil society widened its areas of activity and potential and new actors entered civil society which included the social movements of the working class, farmers, and churches who not only engaged in social welfare but also articulated political and societal claims (Alexander, 2006). The third phase of civil society began with the emergence of new social movements in the 1960s, such as women's liberation and student movements which considerably expanded the range and scope of civil society activities (Edwards, 2009).

Most countries in Eastern Europe faced a threefold transition: the political transformation from dictatorship to democracy, the economic transformation from a state to a market economy, and sometimes the state transformation due to the disintegration of the Soviet Union (Keane, 2003). Eastern Europe's transition drew much interest, mainly from European researchers and practitioners the result of which numerous case studies showed that, in most countries, civil society played a major role in overcoming authoritarian regimes and establishing democratic structures (Cheema, 2005). Leighninger (2006) opines that civil society plays different roles in various transition phases. According to Leighninger, civil society's success seems contingent on many factors, such as its strength and its capacity to fulfil the right functions at the right time and the incorporation of democratic procedures in its own structure and organisation, especially after immediate system change.

A rich debate emerged in the 1990s regarding the performance of major social institutions, including representative government, and its relation

to political culture and civil society. Robert Putnam, according to Leighninger (2006), sees social capital, comprising social networks, a rich associational life, along with the associated norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness, as the core element of civil society. This affirms that the characteristics of civil society and civic life affect the health of democracy and the performance of social institutions (Lewis, 2007). Putnam's (2007) research argues that there exists a tremendous decline of social capital in the United States. Putnam's work has since spurred considerable research on various forms of social capital and its conduciveness to democracy.

Civil society in Latin America

In Latin America, the concept of civil society gained importance mainly in the fight against military dictatorship at the end of the 1960s. Countries like Brazil, Argentina, Chile, Ecuador and Venezuela were involved in bitter struggles between civil society and military dictatorships in the quest for recognition and 'people's power' (Pinkney, 2003). Pinkney saw civil society's role as very limited, stating that civil society in Latin America extended to greater resistance to authoritarianism but failed to develop a major role for itself once democracy had been restored. Similarly, Birle (2007) presumes that social movements and loose groupings are suitable for resisting dictatorship but less so for the mundane processes of sustaining democracy.

Birle, Costa and Nitschack (2008) however, described a high diversity of civil society organisations, based on his analysis of the development of civil society in five Latin American countries under military dictatorship and in the recovering of democracy. They identified various types of civil society

according to the main focus of action-the anti-authoritarian and neo-liberal civil society. The anti-authoritarian civil society consisted of groups fostering the protection of human rights and tolerance and facilitated nonviolent resistance to military regimes in Latin America whereas the neo-liberal focused on individual freedom and were part of neoliberal deregulation and privatisation development strategies (Hall & Trentmann, 2008).

Neo-liberalism also stressed that private initiatives need to be liberated from all sorts of ties and supports, mainly originating from private business (Hall, 2005). Other social movements were greatly skeptical of established political parties and favoured an entirely new egalitarian and participative order (Putnam, 2007). Birle et al., (2008) also highlighted the fact that, despite military dictatorship, a reduced civil society could and did still survive since hardships under dictatorships provoked the engagement of groups that normally would not engage as civil society. Even after democratic systems were reinstalled, a growing pluralism in civil society developed, countering earlier assumptions that civil society would diminish once democracy was established (Hall & Trentmann, 2008).

Civil society in Asia

In Asia, the organisation of civil society has been far less discussed. This could be due in part to the presence of authoritarian regimes throughout Asian history (Alagappa, 2004). Alagappa further argues that, Asian values are unique, thereby making the Western concept of civil society less applicable in Asia. Civil society organisations in Asia are highly diverse in their composition, resources, and goals. Although a rise of civil society

organisations in Asia became noticeable during the 1980s, a closer look at the history demonstrates that, in many Asian countries, communal networks existed even during pre-colonial times (Babajanian, 2005).

Under colonial regimes, civil society organised mostly along lines of ethnicity and religion; hence the philanthropic engagement by Buddhist groups in Myanmar, Christian groups in the Philippines, and Muslim groups in Indonesia and Malaysia (Guan, 2004). The role of the church also remained central to the development of community-based organisations at the local level in the Philippines, Indonesia, and Thailand. Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, civil society in Southeast Asia gradually organised in opposition to colonial and repressive regimes (Batliwala & Brown, 2006).

Since then an exposure to democracy and modernity within many Southeast Asian countries penetrated the structures of family, religion, community, cultural association, caste, and class and introduced a model of association based on rational will (Schak & Hudson, 2004). The effects of this paradigm shift have been diverse throughout Asia. In some cases (Nepal, India, China), the historical asymmetries that accumulated along lines of class, gender, and caste led civil society projects to focus on initiating social dialogue and expressing the grievances of marginalised constituencies (Chandhoke & Priyadavshi, 2007).

In Central Asia and the Caucasus, in contrast, civil society involvement was similar to the Eastern European model. Thus, the emergence of civil society became linked to the empowerment of dissident opposition movements to counter suppressive regimes in Central Asia and the Caucasus (Alagappa, 2004). In addition, civil society organisations based on the communal concept

of informal ties amongst clans, families, neighbourhoods or neo-patrimonial structures continued to exist, an example of which is the church of Georgia and Armenia, which continues to play an important role in helping nurture those ties (Babajanian, 2005).

One caution, however, is that religion also has the potential to create more tensions between the state and civil society actors (Guan, 2004). A common strand among countries in Asia is that civil society is still not protected, as the state continues to be the central, and often the most repressive, actor in the region (Schak & Hudson, 2004). Political and economic interests steered democratisation toward a type of social organisation that placed state institutions, special interest groups, and economic sectors into a single associated sphere (Chandhoke & Priyadavshi, 2007).

Civil society in Africa

The main question in Africa and other regions in the global south is whether the concept of civil society is applicable in the geographical context. It must be understood that conditions for Western-type civil society e.g., a self-confident urban citizenship that has already gained some autonomy from state structures are mostly absent in Africa (Bratton, 1994). Among the varying positions within the literature, one states that due to colonial rule which facilitated the fostering of a small urban elite in African cities and oppressed a large majority of the population by leaving them as subjects of traditional rulers in rural areas, Africa knows only traditional associations but

has no space for a civil society that aims at participatory governance (Lewis, 2007).

Lewis (2002) doubts whether these kinds of independent organisations can be sustained in Africa without the support of government or foreign donors. He is sceptical as to whether the Western participatory model of competing interests in the public sphere can really be institutionalised in Africa today. Pinkney (2005) sees politics in Africa as being dominated by neo-patrimonial relations in whom state officials have no need to respond to citizens' concerns but distribute resources to their often ethnically organised clients. According to Pinkney, some concepts exclude specific "uncivil" organisations, such as ethnic and religious associations, that are important to political struggles in Africa.

A second viewpoint sees little problem in applying the concept of civil society to Africa and considers almost all existing non-state actors as civil society. Lewis (2007) sees a role, albeit a limited, for civil society—at least for the transition period from authoritarian to more democratic rule. He identified circumstances that have yielded various configurations of civil society and resulted in different roles in the democratization process, as shown by the cases of Kenya and Zambia in the 1990s. Cox (2010) similarly argues that, the transition to democratic rule will be successful even when middleclass organisations like teachers, entrepreneurs, state employees, church leaders and lawyers leave the regime, join protests, and elaborate a shared vision for an alternative regime.

A third viewpoint straddles the middle, stressing the need to adapt the concept of civil society to Africa (Lewis, 2002). Lewis views Africa's civil

society is seen as different from Western conceptualisations, but also as having executed similar functions, albeit in a rudimentary way. It then becomes necessary to look at various organisations such as traditional authorities and occupational associations, which were not acknowledged as civil society but already worked in traditional society as controllers of traditional government and facilitators of social and economic solidarity and development (Antwi-Boasiako & Okyere, 2009).

In Ghana for instance, occupational associations are regarded as facilitators of economic development and producers of social and economic prosperity (Nkrumah, 2000). According to Nkrumah, their presence in a nation denotes the possibility of economic and social development on the basis of self help thereby helping reduce an over dependence of the state. Occupational associations, like non-governmental organisations are a major factor in of social development, and are major producers of various forms of social capital such as mutual trusts and reciprocal obligations (Appiagyei-Atua, 2002).

Civil society organisations across all continents compare to each other on grounds of their history and objective. They share a common history of origin since they are a product of civil struggles during the post independence, which have always been the liberation struggles of pre and post independence periods of the countries on the respective continents (Pinkney, 2003). On the similarity in objective, the history of civil society organizations across all continents portrays a unilateral focus on pursuing civil liberties and fundamental freedoms of the citizenry, either under pre independent or colonial rule or post independent military or civilian dictatorships (Keane, 2003).

Civil society organizations globally have been significantly autonomous of the state in their pursuit of the public's interest, but these similarities do not reflect in a uniform strategy or mode of organisation (Lewis, 2007).

In Asia, civil society organisations are built on religion, ethnicity and tribe, while in Africa, traditional authorities, occupational associations, trade unions, pressure groups and religious groups have dominated the traditional civil society sphere in the last century (Birle, 2007). Civil society organisations in Latin America and Europe have also comprised of working class social movements including students, with very insignificant elements of religion, ethnicity family or culture taking the centre stage in organising civil society (Chandhoke & Priyadavshi, 2007). It is however worthy of mention that, with the exception of Asia, contemporary organisation of civil society in the past two decades has been dominated by local and international non-governmental organisations pursuing the same objective of social and economic liberties and freedoms (Edward, 2009).

Barriers to civil society participation in governance

Many authors assess the impact of Africa's civil society on democratisation as very limited, because it has been fragmented and because links between civil society organisations, including social self-help groups and urban intellectuals, and the formal political system are sometimes weak (Lewis, 2002). However, there are some success stories of strong relationship between civil society and the political system by way of their participation in active political and socio-economic governance in rural Ghana (USAID,

2003). But this has not been without issues, notably elite dominance, Crawford (2004) observes.

Even though there are no legal or political barriers to participation in democratic governance, argues Oquaye (2001), there exist problematic economic, social and cultural barriers which eventually become the basis for informal exclusion through poverty, illiteracy and rural isolation. Oquaye's argument is in line with Crawford's (2004) opinion that, the problems of elite control are familiar in representative democracies, and dominance by local elites is common in decentralisation studies, with rural poverty and economic inequalities presenting strong obstacles to political equality and the more equal distribution of influence among different social groups.

Ayee (2000) identified the lack of formal mechanisms to channel civil society input into local government decision-making and local development planning. While conceding that, decentralisation has not been able to wholly whip up the enthusiasm of the ordinary people in Ghana, Antwi-Boasiako, (2010) wondered whether the lack of enthusiasm is due to cultural reasons relating to traditional values and a respect for authority that diminishes the degree of participation in local decision-making or is as a result of lack of commitment to genuine devolution and democratic decentralisation by central government, making local participation less than meaningful. Quite related to culture and tradition is the issue of gender.

Offei-Aboagye's (2000) study into gender participation in local government in Ghana concludes that women made up only five per cent of elected members. She observes that, the numbers of women Assembly

members were increased somewhat by the central government directive in 1998 that at least 30 percent of appointed members should be women, however, it is noted that women appointees rarely exceeded this minimum. This is corroborated by the Ghana News Agency. In its report of the District Assembly elections of 2010, only 6.7 percent of elected Assembly members were females, with 8 percent of Parliamentarians being women (GNA, 2010).

Limited female representation and participation in political, economic and social has a negative effect on the allocation of resources, and the direction of decision making in favour of their concerns (World Bank, 2008). The World Bank sees two factors as responsible for the low female representation and participation, and these are economic and cultural reasons factors. Cultural factors include women's multiple roles as wives, mothers, workers and community activists as well as the gender gap in education, which is an outcome of deeper- seated cultural beliefs (Action Aid, 2010).

Gender stereotypes of men's and women's roles are also of cultural origin, and include the widely held perception that political activity is indecent for women (Offei -Aboagye, 2000). Essentially the political arena is seen by many men and women as a sole preserve for men, with many husbands reluctant to have their women either participate actively in the group's activities or in the public eye while economic factors relate to a lack of access to the funds required for campaigning, especially on an individual, non-partisan basis (USAID, 2003).

Economically, women constitute a vulnerable group in Sub-Saharan Africa because of the effect of deeply rooted cultural beliefs and practices

that affect the girl's access to equal opportunities in education and career advancement (Rabie & Thompson, (2000). The limitation in economic power reduces the ability of women to raise funds and fund their political campaigns (Stokes, 2005). In fact, very few are able to succeed, alongside their economically advantaged male counterparts who are highly favoured by culture and society, to be the beneficiaries of quality education and socio-economic opportunities (Action Aid Ghana, 2010).

Crawford (2004) observes that, despite these barriers to female participation, there are on-going interventions worldwide which show promise to make a significant impact in enhancing women participation in democratic local governance. In Ghana, such interventions include the provision of logistics and funds to support women who decide to contest for elected offices, and discounted filling fees for female aspirants who contest for elected positions within their political parties or at the national level (GNA, 2010).

Conclusion

This literature reviewed touched on the history, concepts perspectives and the various continental contexts of civil society in relation to their engagement in the political governance and social development. It reveal that civil society exist either as associational, civil society as a public sphere or as an alternative government providing options in development policy. Unlike Europe, America and Asia and Latin America where civil society is built upon political and economic sphere in society, the organisation of civil society in Africa is largely built along lines of

traditional governance, due to the limited level of education and citizen's enlightenment in governance.

However, the proliferation of non-governmental organisations on the continent in the past two decades has generated some level of citizen's capacity to appreciate governance and participate in political and economic governance at the local and national levels. Strengthening civil society participation in governance in Africa may require a strategic and sustained approach to reducing elite dominance and gender exclusion, two key affronts to civil society participation in governance in Africa, by promoting equitable access to quality education, political gender mainstreaming and affirmative action in support of the minority interests in governance-women (especially rural women), the poor, and uneducated.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter discusses the procedure through which the study was conducted. It entails the description of the study area, study design, the population of the study, the sample and the sampling procedure, the instrument for data collection, data collection procedure, field work and data processing and analysis.

Study area

Located 80 Kilometres north of Cape coast, Twifo Hemang Lower Denkyira District is one of the 17 districts in the Central Region of the Republic of Ghana. It shares boundaries with six other districts namely, Mpohor Wassa East to the west, Assin south to the East, Upper Denkyira to the North, Abura Asebu -Kwamankese to the South-East, Komenda -Edina-Eguafo-Abriem district to the South West and Cape Coast Municipal Assembly to the south. With Twifo Praso as its administrative and political capital, the district is home to two constituencies, Ati Mokwa constituency and Hemang constituency. It has a population of 105,000 and a total of 1,510 settlements, with ten zonal councils, four town councils and four paramunicipalities, namely; Hemang, Jukwa, Mokwa and Mampong (World Vision, 2005).

The Twifo Hemang Lower Denkyira District has thirty-two registered civil society organisations with a membership of about 1,500 people, four traditional paramountcies and five local government service officials in the district (GAIT, 2004). Based on their mode of operation, civil society organisations in the district can be into faith based organisations, traditional authority, occupational associations and non-governmental organisations. Civil society organisations are engaged in social service delivery, charity, governance, occupational and spiritual support activities in the district (World Vision, 2007). The four traditional paramountcies are Hemang, Jukwa, Twifo and Mokwa traditional areas. Out of the 62 assembly members in the Twifo Hemang Lower Denkyira District, 42 are elected and 20 appointed by the president.

Study design.

The study is qualitative and uses a descriptive design to examine the nature of the participation of civil society organisations in governance in the Twifo Hemang Lower Denkyira District. According to Rugg and Petre (2007), descriptive research is used to obtain information concerning the current status of the phenomena to describe what exists with respect to variables or conditions in a situation. The methods involved range from the survey which describes the status quo, the correlation study which investigates the relationship between variables, to developmental studies which seek to determine changes over time. It involves an identification and definition of the problem and the collection, analysis and interpretation of data to draw conclusions.

In this direction the study described the activities of the various civil society organisations in the district, examined the institutional framework available for civil society participation in decision making, implementation and monitoring in the district, assessed civil society awareness of government policies and plans and examined the forms of civil society participation in governance.

Population

The study population comprised the total number of 32 registered civil society organisations in the Twifo Hemang Lower Denkyira district. It also consisted of staff of the District Assembly and Assembly members in the Twifo Hemang Lower Denkyira district. The staff of the District Assembly and Assembly members served as key informants in order to provide specific information relating to the involvement of civil society organisations in development and policy decision making, implementation and monitoring at the District Assembly within the framework of the local government system.

Sample size

The study constituted focus groups and interviewed key informants. Focus groups were employed to provide respondents with the benefit of having the comfort to talk to the interviewer and each other without fear while benefitting from the group dynamics in responding to issues related to the group rather than the individual (Richardson & Rabiee, 2001). Key informants from the District Assembly were also interviewed with the view that, they held key positions that mandated them to facilitate the engagement of civil society organisations in the governance process.

The focus groups included ten members (comprising five executives and five ordinary members) of the following ten civil society organisations in Twifo Hemang Lower Denkyira District: Ghana Association of Hairdressers and Beauticians, Hemang co-operative Carpenters Association, Cocoa Farmers Association, Ghana National Tailors and Dressmakers Association, Al Sunna Muslim council, Ghana Private Road Transport Union, Ati Mokwa Traditional Council, Ahmadiya Muslim Council, the Local Council of Churches and the Twifo Traditional Council.

The key informants also comprised four staff of the District Assembly and six Assembly members. Their expert opinions were sought to enrich the quality of the study. This was due to the to the fact that, they held positions that were central in facilitating the participation of civil society organisations in the governance process at the District Assembly and were better positioned to provide some useful insights into the functioning of the legal framework for the participation of civil society organisations in development policy decision making, implementation and monitoring at the District Assembly.

Sampling methods

Koul (2001) emphasises the need for a researcher to select a sample from which he wishes to seek information, using appropriate sampling techniques. The sampling method used for this study was convenience sampling. This was employed because, even though there were 32 registered civil society organisations, only the conveniently sampled 10 were active local civil society organisations. Additionally, it was necessary to have a mix of opinions from the leaders and members of civil society as well as from the

gender perspective, and this necessitated the selection of 2 females in the membership of the focus groups.

Whereas the four District Assembly staff were purposively selected to ensure that research questions on the local government institutional and policy framework, receive the appropriate responses from key District Assembly staff, the six Assembly members were also conveniently sampled for two reasons; first, to ensure that respondents were experienced Assembly members and not new one's that had just been elected in the 2010 District Assembly elections, and secondly, to ensure that the views of female Assembly members were factored into the study.

Instrument

Two different instruments were employed for the research and these are an interview guide and focus group discussion guide. An interview guide was employed for the six Assembly members and four District Assembly staff due to the convenience in asking follow-up questions that are beneficial to such a study. The interview guide was categorised into three different sections (from section A to C). The first section (A) represented the activities of the various civil society organisations in the district. The second section (B) examined the institutional framework available for civil society participation in decision making, with the third (Section C) examining the forms of civil society participation in governance.

Focus group discussions were organised for the ten civil society organisations in the district used for the study. This was through a convenience sampling of registered civil society organisations in the district.

The groups were constituted in two ways, depending on the gender composition. For female only and female dominated groups like the Ghana Hairdressers and Beauticians Association and the Ghana National Tailors and Dressmakers Association, five leaders and five members were willing to participate in the discussions were sampled.

For male only and male dominated civil society organisations like the Ghana Private Road Transport Union and the Twifo and Ati Mokwa Traditional Councils, where five leaders, three male and two female members were conveniently sampled based on their acceptance to participate in the discussions. The mix of civil society organisations leaders and members was also intended to ensure balanced opinions on their participation in, and appreciation of governance and policy issues in Twifo Hemang Lower Denkyira District.

The focus group discussions were equally fashioned to elicit responses from respondents pertaining to the objectives and nature of their civil society organisations activities, institutional framework for civil society participation in Twifo Hemang Lower Denkyira District, the civil society organisations awareness of government policies and plans, and the forms of civil society participation in social, economic and political activities in the district. Issues relating to elite dominance in governance were also captured in the focus group discussion guide.

Ethics

The major ethical issue encountered was confidentiality of the respondents. This was an issue because, some traditional authorities were

reluctant to express their opinions during the focus group discussions, due to the relationship that existed between themselves and the District Chief Executive. This was however, ensured by encouraging participants in the focus group discussion not to use names or identifiable titles in addressing others during the recording of the proceedings. Informed consent was sought verbally before each interview or focus group discussion. The researcher finally omitted respondent's identity from the interview guide and aggregated the results at the district level.

Field Work

Two research assistants were trained prior to the data collection exercise in order to assist the researcher. The researcher booked appointments with the civil society organisations and had separate meetings with them at the conference room of the District Assembly. The interview sessions with key informants at the District Assembly took place between the 3rd and 26th of March 2011 while the focus group discussions for civil society organisations were organised from the 8th to 12th March 2011 at the conference room of World Vision in Twifo Praso.

Field challenges

A major source of bias was that of using convenience sampling which rendered extrapolations quite appropriate. This is because, the fact that one was selected to participate in the discussions based on gender may not necessarily mean their opinions reflected that of the entire organisation. Again, delay in access to key informants at the District Assembly and

Assembly members also posed a hindrance by delaying the data collection period by two weeks. An example is a female Assembly member who resided in Mirekukrom, a community remotely located 40 Kilometres from Twifo Praso, the district capital. Due to the lack of any communication network or facility in Mirekukrom, it took the data collector three visits, travelling on a motor cycle, to finally secure an interview with her.

Data Analysis

The focus group discussions were scribed and also recorded on tape. The taped versions were used to triangulate and ensure accuracy of the notes taken during the focus group discussion. This was done by comparing the responses recorded by note takers during the discussions to the transcripts of the recorded discussions. Interviews with key informants at the District Assembly were also recorded on tape and scribed. Transcripts of interviews were also used as a back-up to ensure accuracy in analysing responses from key informant interviews.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Introduction`

This chapter contains analysis of responses to questions on the various issues that were investigated under the objectives of the study. The main objectives were to examine the activities of the various civil society organisations in the district, examine the institutional framework available for the participation of civil society organisations in decision making, assess awareness levels of civil society organisations on key government policies and plans and examine the nature of civil society participation in local level governance in Twifo Hemang Lower Denkyira District. In all, Four (4) Key informants at the District Assembly and six Assembly members were interviewed while ten civil society organisations (involving 5 executives and 5 members each) participated in focus group discussions.

The analyses of the results were conducted in two phases. Under phase one, the civil society organisation's were categorised into three namely traditional authority represented by the Twifo and Ati Mokwa Traditional Councils, faith based organisations represented by the Ahmadiya, Al Sunna and the Local Council of Churches, and finally the occupational associations which comprises the Ghana Association of Hairdressers and Beauticians, Hemang co-operative Carpenters Association, Cocoa Farmers Association, Ghana National Tailors and Dressmakers Association and the Ghana Private Road Transport Union . The analyses of responses of the civil society organisations during the focus group discussions were therefore categorised

and presented accordingly. Phase two presents the analyses of responses from key informants at the Twifo Hemang Lower Denkyira District Assembly. They comprised key staff and Assembly members in the District Assembly.

The basis for categorisation of the civil society organisations was the level of homogeneity in membership and similarity in their broad visions. Whereas the Twifo and Ati Mokwa Traditional Councils comprised traditional authorities with a common vision of being good custodians of the land, intermediaries between inhabitants of their land and the ancestors and providing quality traditional governance to their people, the members of the Ahmadiya, Al Sunna and Local Council of Churches were motivated by religion and faith, and pursued human welfare in the name of God. Occupational associations had a common identity by being professional groups with a common aim of advancing the fortunes of their respective professions.

Activities of civil society organisations

The first objective of the study was focused on the activities of the civil society organisations in the district and how they relate to governance. It is however, important to contextualise the activities of civil society organisations within their key objectives or broad mandate. Civil society organisations exist in furtherance of a certain aim and objectives. The focus group discussions revealed that traditional authorities had similar traditional governance objectives of providing leadership and guidance for the inhabitants and indigenes of their paramountcy. From this, they derive the secondary mandate of acting as custodians of their land and as intermediaries between

the ancestors and the inhabitants of their land. In pursuit of their mandate as traditional governors and custodians of the land, the Twifo and Ati Mokwa Traditional authorities perform traditional governance activities which are largely arbitratve, legislative and ceremonial.

Traditional authorities made and enforce laws that are consistent with the wider legal jurisprudence in Ghana. Traditional authorities confirmed that, they usually consulted the district magistrate to ensure that their decrees were lawful and legitimate. Among the categories of laws they made and enforced were civil laws, which comprised laws related to family, marriage, morals and citizenship responsibilities; economic laws which covered land ownership and lease, the ownership of economic property, especially farms; and cultural laws which related to the observance of cultural norms and taboos in society. Fines varied from a bottle of local whisky and a sheep to an amount not exceeding GHC 1,000 a sheep and bottle of local whisky, depending on the nature and gravity of the offence. It must be emphasised that the legislative and arbitratve activities of traditional authorities were performed in consultation with the council of elders in each paramountcy.

Explaining the process of legislation, a traditional authority respondent remarked that, in 2007, when his community wanted to compel all children of school going age to enrol in school, the Traditional Council met the entire community to decide on the penal measures, which included the imposition of a fine comprising a sheep and a bottle of local whisky on the father of any child found loitering in the community or farm during school hours. After the endorsement of the by-law by the community, a script of the by-law was

submitted to the district magistrate for approval, to ensure the by-law were legitimate and within the confines of the laws of Ghana.

Ceremonial functions performed by traditional authorities in the Twifo Hemang Lower Denkyira District included presiding over social and cultural events like funerals rites, marriage rites, and festivals at the community level. At the District Assembly however, traditional authorities wielded enormous power, by virtue of their ownership of all lands in Twifo Hemang Lower Denkyira District. District Chief Executives consulted traditional authorities on decisions related to the location of physical infrastructure projects in the district. These include schools, market structures, and roads among others. In November 2010, the Ati-Mokwa Traditional Council was consulted by the District Chief Executive and officials of the works department prior to the commencement of renovation works on the river Pra bridge.

According to traditional authorities, they played key roles in the designation of infrastructural project sites and release of land to local government for the purpose of undertaking social and economic infrastructural projects including schools, hospitals, post offices and police station and market stalls. They also lobbied for development projects on behalf of their paramountcies. The Twifo Praso post office for instance, is situated on a parcel of land which was donated by the Twifo Traditional Council in 1996. This is in consonance with Appiaagyei-Atua's (2002) assertion on the role of traditional authorities and occupational associations as facilitators of economic development and producers of social and economic capital and development.

Responses from interviews with key informants at the District Assembly on the activities of civil society organisations were indicative of the

fact that traditional authorities were key actors in the governance and development process in Twifo Hemang Lower Denkyira District. As custodians of the land, traditional authorities made laws that were applicable within their geo-political areas, and enforced them in pursuit of social order. They also released land for developmental projects and acted as arbiters in the resolution of disputes in their communities, since the district had only one court with no permanent magistrate.

Apart from influencing development decisions in favour of their communities, traditional authorities, according to a key informant, participated directly in providing funds towards the construction of schools and in support of education in general. Another example is the Chief of Pewodie, who after constructing the Pewodie Basic School, granted fee free scholarships to all children who enrolled at the Pewodie Basic School from 2002 until the Capitation Grant policy was introduced in 2005. This finding confirms Lewis' (2002) opinions on the role of traditional authorities in social development.

Quite contrary to the claim by Appagyei-Atua (2002), on the despotic attitudes of some chiefs in Ghana, and the lack of their interest in development issues, Lewis (2002) observes that, in the performance of their roles as ceremonial representatives of the people, most traditional leaders may have been autocratic but are influential advocates for social development. According to Lewis, traditional authorities have been very influential facilitators of social and economic solidarity and development in many African countries.

Faith based organisations like the Ahmadiya Muslim Council, Al Sunna Muslim Council and the Local Council of Churches had a common

mandate to promote the spiritual development of their members and society in general. They were also involved in the membership contributions in support of the needy within their membership and society at large, occasional clean-up exercises in public places in support of sanitation and the organisation of social events and gatherings like picnics, to encourage socialisation and provide counselling and mentoring services to their members.

The focus group discussions also unearthed perhaps the most important activity of all three faith based organisations, which was spiritual development of their members and society. This was done through spiritual counselling, teaching and mentoring. Faith based organisations organized public prayers for peace and prosperity in the district. According to the discussants of the three faith based organisations, they were less involved in physical activities, unlike other associations, since their core mandate was a spiritual one to ensure spiritual growth and protection for society.

In line with the above, the Ahmadiya and Al-Sunna council organised prayers for their members on a daily basis and also during the Eid-ul-Fitr and Eid-ul Adha religious festivals. Even though Eid-ul-Fitr and Eid-ul Adha are spiritual activities, the sharing of gifts among amongst their fellow Muslims and Christians plays a key role in promoting good neighbourliness and peaceful coexistence-two key good governance requirements. This confirms the view held by Babajanian (2005) who believed that religious groups played an important role in helping to nurse informal ties within society. However religion has been the basis of most sectarian conflicts which have threatened the peace of most countries in the Middle East and Asia (Cox, 2100).

Apart from being spiritual or religious associations, faith based organisations had social welfare related activities. Through their donations, members in need of financial support benefitted from a token from the leadership. Faith based organisations also made generous donations in cash or equipment to the Twifo Praso Government Hospital on an annual basis, especially during the New Year. The focus group discussions also revealed that the Local Council of Churches for instance donated ten hospital beds to the Twifo Praso Government Hospital in January 2011, as part of its support for quality health delivery in Twifo Hemang Lower Denkyira District. The Al-sunna Muslim Council also donated food stuffs to the village of hope orphanage in Jukwa after the 2010 Eid-ul-Fitr spiritual festival.

Focus group discussions portrayed faith based organisations as agents and facilitators of peace. During festive seasons like Christmas, Easter, Eid-ul-Fitr and Eid-ul Adha, faith based organisations organised picnics where members in society had opportunity to mix with each other, exchange gifts and interact amongst themselves. A common feature of such annual social events was the organisation of clean-up exercises in public places, especially the Twifo Praso Government Hospital, the Mokwa Hospital, street gutters and drains. Apart from such gatherings serving the purpose of cementing the bond of society, and strengthening solidarity and promoting peaceful co-existence, they also contributed to the environmental governance of the Twifo Hemang Lower Denkyira District.

Key informants opined that faith based organisations were generally perceived as the spiritual leaders in the district, and engaged in activities that were supportive of personal and communal development. According to the

interviews with key informants, faith based organisations apart from their usual daily and weekly worship and prayer activities operated schools in the district. As many as four members of the Local Council of Churches (Presbyterian, Methodist, Anglican and the Adventist churches) operated a total of 16 public basic schools , with the Ahmadiya council also operating two Islamic basic schools in the district (World Vision, 2007).

Putnam (2007) corroborates the above through his observation that, since the last three decades of the 20th century, Christian missions have been involved directly or indirectly in providing social and economic development services for the vulnerable and marginalised in society in the geographical south, especially Africa, which is relatively under developed with extreme incidence of poverty and disease. According to Putnam, Christian missions provided medical and infrastructural support for social services, including building schools, hospitals, bore-holes and in-kind donations like food, cloth and shoes to the poor in society. These actions were usually spearheaded by religious based organisations like the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, the Catholic Church and World Vision International.

Five out of the ten civil society organisations sampled for the study were occupational associations comprising the Ghana Association of Hairdressers and Beauticians, Hemang Cooperative Carpenters Association, Cocoa Farmers Association, Ghana Tailors and Dressmakers Association and the Ghana Private Road Transport Union. Unlike the faith based organisations, the focus group discussion revealed that the activities of occupational associations were dominated by advocacy, and to a lesser extent, service delivery. The leadership of occupational associations were involved in policy

discussions with the District Assembly which were periodically convened by the District Planning and Coordinating Unit.

A major activity of occupational associations was their engagement with District Assembly in the negotiation of fees, taxes and credit facilities for their members on a periodic basis. This was by virtue of the fact that District Assemblies possessed rating functions, and by extension, the right to determine the amount of taxes and fees to be paid by all business units in the district. In the exercise of such mandate, the Twifo Hemang Lower Denkyira District Assembly usually consulted key stakeholders in the business sector, which included the occupational associations.

Perhaps the priority given to engagements with the District Assembly as a key activity of occupational associations was borne out of the benefit factor, since a successful tax or fees negotiation benefitted the entire membership of occupational associations. It was noted however, that even though advocacy engagements with the District Assembly was not a formal activity or event, but rather a process of formal and informal interface engagements between the core leadership of occupational associations and that of the District Assembly, it was still regarded as a major activity of the occupational associations.

Access to credit is a major challenge that confronts small businesses in the Twifo Hemang Lower Denkyira District. Consequently, it happens to be one of the key objectives of occupational associations. The availability of credit facilities to the membership of occupational associations, to enable them commence or expand their businesses was a key factor underpinning their existence. Focus group discussions with occupational associations revealed

that the informal nature of business, coupled with the largely undeveloped business environment and financial sector necessitated an over reliance on statutory credit through the National Board for Small Scale Industries and the District Assembly.

To assess credit however, the leadership of occupational associations negotiated for and secured credit on behalf of their members monitored the use of the credit facility and ensured the re-payment of credit facilities. This was done by developing and submitting group proposals and negotiating funding with the National Board for Small Scale Industries and other funding agencies in the district. In 2007, the Cocoa Farmers Association negotiated a group loan for 80 of their members from the Twifo Rural Bank in Agona. The loan was repaid through direct deductions from members cocoa sales during the cocoa seasons in 2008, 2009 and 2010, an arrangement that was facilitated by the leadership of the Cocoa Farmers Association and the respective cocoa marketing companies and the group members. Another dominant advocacy activity of occupational associations is the issue of land.

Focus group discussions with the Cocoa Farmers Association also revealed that land was a very important factor of production, especially for occupational associations involved in agriculture. The land administration system in Ghana and the Twifo Hemang Lower Denkyira District entrusted the ownership of lands into the hands of traditional authority. To ensure the release of arable land, civil society organisations like Cocoa Farmers Association engaged traditional authorities within their farm jurisdiction on issues related to the settlement of lease arrangements, management of farmlands and any other land litigation issues. The discussants also mentioned

other engagement with district agriculture directorate to secure farm inputs, including fertilisers and pesticides for their membership and cocoa purchasing companies over the weighting, pricing and storage of cocoa beans. The above notwithstanding, occupational associations were also involved in direct service delivery activities which included social welfare.

Notable service delivery activities included the provision of social welfare support by way of financial and equipment donations to education and health institutions, communities and needy persons within and without the membership of occupational associations. The Ghana Private Road Transport Union, Hemang Carpenters and Ghana Hairdressers and Beauticians Association for instance conducted annual clean-up and blood donation exercises at the Twifo Praso Hospital, while the Cocoa Farmers Association supported the building of school infrastructure, an example of which was the renovation of the Twifo Agona Junior High School in July, 2010 and the construction of a bore hole at Somnyamekodur, a major cocoa producing community. Also in Hemang, the Carpenters Association provided free labour towards the renovation of the community centre.

The focus group discussions also comprised issues related to in-group membership welfare, which was one of the key objects of every occupational association. In times of financial distress, members applied for support from their welfare fund, after which a repayment was made at a zero interest. It was further disclosed that occupational associations made voluntary monetary contributions in support of any member who was sick or bereaved. In the case of the Ghana Private Road Transport Union and Ghana Hairdressers and Beauticians Association, an amount of GHC 200 was donated to a member

who lost a close relative (father, mother, child, brother, sister). Apart from donations to members, occupational associations also provided training to enhance the capacity of members and non-members.

One of the key objects of occupational associations was to provide technical support to society, by developing manpower through apprenticeship. The focus group discussion revealed that the Ghana Hairdressers and Beauticians Association had the largest number of 640 apprentices in the district. Apprentices learned the skills and techniques in the occupation for a two year term and served a one-year mandatory houseman ship. The Hemang Carpenters Association claimed that due to the absence of a technical training institution in the district, they were the champions of youth and manpower development in the area of carpentry. By so doing, members of occupational associations provided training for the youth.

The role of occupational associations in providing skills for entrepreneurship and youth development is acknowledged by Appiagyei-Atua (2002) in his study of indigenous civil society in Africa where he observes that occupational associations are regarded as facilitators of economic development and providers of social and economic prosperity. According to Appiagyei-Atua, their presence in a nation denotes the possibility of economic and social development activities on the basis of self help with the aim of helping to reduce the over dependence on the state for economic capital. Appiagyei-Atua also saw occupational associations as major providers of various forms of social capital such as mutual trusts and reciprocal obligations.

Institutional framework for civil society participation in governance

Governance is administered by a political authority within an institutional framework which usually provides the system, structures and functions of the respective stakeholders in the governance process. Assessing citizen's knowledge and utilisation of the institutional framework provides a foundation for analysing the interest and participation of citizens in governance process. This is because, without adequate knowledge of the framework guaranteeing citizen's participation in the governance process, there cannot be any citizen efforts towards participation (Treisman, 2007). The research consequently set out to examine the institutional and policy framework for civil society organisations to participate in governance and how they were functioning.

The opinions of civil society organisations on the existing institutional framework were similar. All civil society organisations were legally mandated to register first with the District Assembly, detailing their objects of association, nature of business and membership and trustees. Additionally, civil society organisations whose objects of association were philanthropic and social welfare oriented, had to register also with the Department of Social Welfare, while those whose objects were occupational were required to register with the Department of Co-operatives. The key informants at the District Assembly complained that, even though there were over eighty civil society organisations in the district, only forty percent had registered with the District Assembly.

Once civil society organisations were registered, they qualified to be invited to participate in key activities of the District Assembly including the

budget hearing and fee fixing. Civil society organisations were also of the view that, there were no formal policy frameworks that facilitated the participation of civil society organisations in decision making at the District Assembly. The decision regarding who to involve in decision making depended on the level of influence and affiliation of the leadership of civil society organisations to the political authority. This finding is similar to Edward's (2009) views on civil society organisations involvement in decision making where he observed that, in the few instances where civil society organisations were allowed to take part in decision making, it was based on executive discretion rather than an institutional function.

It came to light during the focus group discussions with members of the Ghana Private Road Transport Union that some influential civil society organisations were invited to participate in decision making at the District Assembly, while the Ghana Private Road Transport Union, like other local civil society organisations were excluded. This they perceived was because they did not have an influential income portfolio and were not recognised as significant contributors to the District Assemblies budget.

The key informants at the District Assembly confirmed this claim, but justified the inclusion of organisations like World Vision in all key development and policy decision making on grounds of their capacity. According to them, apart from the fact that international organisations like world vision supported the District Assembly with over GHC 400,000 in 2009, they also provided alternative policy advice and technical support in development planning, monitoring and financing, which made them a vital partner in development in the Twifo Hemang Lower Denkyira District.

Traditional authorities confirmed during the focus group discussions that, they were consulted on major policy decisions at the District Assembly, such as decisions relating to fees, fines and infrastructural projects, and further stressed on the relevance of their involvement to the successful implementation of policies and projects. According to them, as custodians of the land, they released land for projects and provided a public engagement platform through their durbars, for the District Assembly to share information relating to decisions on fees, fines and other development projects in their traditional areas.

The indications from interviews with the key informants at the District Assembly were that, there existed formal structures for participation, through the National Development Planning Systems Law and the Legislative Instrument (1988). These laws set out clear channels of civil society participation in governance at the district level. The Local Government Law for instance required civil society organisations to channel their inputs by way of policy proposals, and other key concerns through their Assembly members to the appropriate sub-committee of the District Assembly for consideration and feedback. However, weaknesses in the consultations of Assembly members created a vacuum in public participation in policy decisions.

The District Assembly, in involving civil society organisations in decision making, especially policy decision making, exercised their best discretion to decide whether or not civil society inputs were necessary in decision making. In using their discretion, the issue of capacity was paramount in deciding on whom to participate. Capacity considerations accounted for the participation of traditional authorities and World Vision, argued a key

informant. The absence of clear policy guidelines on who, how and the extent to which District Assemblies should facilitate the participation of civil society organisations in policy decision making at the local level is a challenge to strengthening local participation in governance (Crawford, 2004).

According to Crawford, the absence of clear policy guidelines on the participation of civil society organisations in decision making creates the conditions for the informal exclusion of civil society organisations from decision making, and also the basis for promoting elite control in the decision making process and outcomes of governance. Similar opinions were also shared by Edwards (2010) in his review of contemporary civil society where he observed that, even though the lack of specific policies on participation hindered the effectiveness and efficiency of citizens involvement in decision making by local governments, the lack of political will and indiscretion by local governments to involve civil society in decision making was a stronger challenge which if unaddressed, may render ineffective any policy on participation on grounds on the lack of political will to implement.

A question was posed to both key informants and civil society organisations to ascertain the procedures for civil society participation in project planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. The key informants were of the general view that civil society organisations were involved in project implementation. The key informants opined that all major projects at the district level had supervising committees set up in the beneficiary communities by the District Assembly in collaboration with the implementing agencies. These committees included District Child Protection Committees, Community Child Protection Committee, Water and Sanitation

Committees. They implemented and in some cases, monitored projects after which they reported to the District Assembly. There was scarcely any evaluation of projects.

Civil society organisations confirmed the existence of such committees, of which most civil society organisation discussants were members. However, they indicated that they were not involved in project planning, but only implementation. Members of the Cocoa Farmers Association who doubled as Community Child Protection Committee Members corroborated by admitting that as committee members, they were only invited to implement child labour campaigns on cocoa farms, but never participated in the planning and evaluation process. They further opined that their involvement was restricted to projects which had participatory monitoring as conditionality by donors.

Interviews with key informants at the District Assembly indicated that Unit Committees and Area Councils facilitated the mobilisation of civil society organisations to participate in the monitoring of government projects, the outcomes of which were reported to the District Assembly through the Area Councils. Key informants however mentioned that, the effectiveness of this practice in recent years have been limited, due to the lack of motivation by Area Councils and Unit Committees. On an irregular basis however, Unit Committees and Area Councils received capacity support to enable them effectively mobilise civil society to monitor ongoing projects. An example is the HIPC watch project where Unit Committees and Area Councils in Twifo Praso were supported to mobilise civil society organisations to monitor HIPC funded projects in education and health (Action for Rural Education, 2006).

The focus group discussion identified the participation of civil society organisations in monitoring as a form of implementation strategy, and not as an assessment exercise. An example given by the Cocoa Farmers Association was the activities of the Community Child Protection Committee which was to, primarily, monitor the use of children on cocoa farms, which was essentially different from monitoring the performance of a building contractor or the distribution or use of the District Assemblies Common Fund.

In ascertaining the utilisation of existing channels for expressing concerns, civil society organisations revealed the lack of confidence in channelling grievance through Assembly members, and preferred direct engagement with the political authority, since direct engagement assured them of feedback. The faith based organisations and traditional authorities dealt directly with the District Chief Executive, while other civil society organisations also utilised the approved channel of passing through their Assembly members to the District Assembly.

A traditional authority remarked *“Since 2001, my community have made countless requests to the District Assembly to extend electricity to two of my villages which are major cocoa producing areas. All my efforts writing petitions and following up from the works department and the district engineer proved futile until the current District Chief Executive, who has been operating a large cocoa plantation on my land, was appointed a District Chief Executive. I approached him directly with a request for electricity connectivity to two of our villages. Barely a year after his assurance, he has delivered his promise”* (Focus Group Discussions at Twifo Praso, 10/03/2011).

The Ghana Hairdressers and Beauticians Association for instance was very influential in decision making at the District Assembly due to their large membership. They consequently had strong political connections with the District Chief Executive which granted them preferential access to the District Chief Executive. Moreover, The Cocoa Farmers and Hemang Carpenters Association utilised the approved channels by dealing with the District Assembly through Assembly members but testified to its inefficiency and bureaucracy.

In the case of the Hemang Carpenters, a member remarked “*we have in the past two years been advocating for the District Assembly to also consider Hemang carpenters in the award of contracts for the production of school furniture. After sending several unsuccessful petitions through the Assembly member, we decided to directly engage the District Chief Executive as a last resort, and it worked. Today, our members have been awarded contracts to produce furniture to schools in the Hemang circuit*” (Focus Group Discussions at Twifo Praso, 11/03/2011). It is in this vein that Lewis (2007) asserts that, the survival of local civil society organisations may hinge strongly on the connectedness of the leadership to political authority.

Key informants at the District Assembly also admitted the inefficiency of most Assembly members as liaisons between their constituents and the District Assembly but were quick to point out the fact that they were volunteers and not paid full time staff of the Local Government Service. They remarked that since they were only volunteers and received no monthly remuneration, transportation and communication facilities from the District Assembly to facilitate their work, very little could be done to facilitate

effective liaison, public engagement and quality feedback on issues raised by an average of 4,000 members in each electoral area. They went on to explain that until the role of Assembly members was made a full time one, there could not be any meaningful engagement and feedback amongst Assembly members, the District Assembly and the local constituency.

On the issue of female participation, a follow up question was posed to key informants to mention some of the institutions available for women participation in governance at the district level. They mentioned the District Assembly, Department of Social Welfare, National Commission of Civic Education, The Commission for Human Rights and Administrative Justice, World Vision Twifo Praso, Information Service Department and the Queen Mothers Association as institutions that supported the participation of women in governance in the district. Their activities included sponsoring the participation of women in District Assembly elections, organising capacity building activities to strengthen the capacity of women to engage in political discourse at the district level and educating women on laws and policies that exist to promote their rights to participate in governance. This finding is consistent with Crawford's (2004) opinion on enhancing the participation of women in governance.

Even though Crawford opines to capacity building of women as a strategy to increase their participation in political discourse at the local level, he insists on the need to critically study the potential of capacity building alone in increasing participation of women by rather identifying the conditions under which capacity building might widen openings for greater political participation of women in the popular sectors at the local level, and under

what conditions they are likely to serve the integration and co-optation of the popular majorities into a political system. Crawford bemoans the over emphasis on training and capacity building of women at the expense of institutional renewal and political campaign resource support.

The minimal involvement of civil society in project planning was manifested by the lack of their participation in the process with the exception of traditional authority, which had a say in the location of projects, obviously because they owned the land. The Cocoa Farmers Association and Ghana Hairdressers and Beauticians Association remarked that, they were only involved in project planning by the District Planning and Coordinating Unit, when the District Assembly perceived the success of the project as depending heavily upon their involvement. They mentioned the mass cocoa spraying exercise and the Skills Training and Employment Programme as two development policies which they were involved in the planning, through to the implementation stages.

Awareness level of government policies and plans

The ability of civil society to play meaningful roles in social, economic and political governance depends also on the level of awareness and appreciation of major development policy issues. Triesman (2007) believes that civil society organisations are more likely to participate in the implementation and monitoring of policies they are aware of, than those they know very little or nothing about. This informed the third objective of this study, which was to assess civil society awareness levels on government policies being implemented in the district. The focus group discussions with civil society organisations also revealed a perception that the District

Assembly led by the District Chief Executive conceived and developed all policies in the district. They however admitted that, even though some policies like the Capitation Grant, National Health Insurance Scheme and the National Youth Employment Programme were national policies from Accra, there were still spaces for inputs from civil society organisations in decisions relating to their implementation.

It is noteworthy that, the local Government Act, 1993 (Act 462) mandates the General Assembly of the District Assembly, and not the District Chief Executive, to formulate policies (Ahwoi, 2010). The response of key informants during the interviews also indicated that the General Assembly rather developed policies for the District Chief Executive and his team to implement. They however, corroborated the earlier assertion by civil society organisations that most policies are were fashioned from Accra but insisted such policies had no room for local inputs.

It is worth mentioning that even though interviews with key informants at the District Assembly also pointed to the fact that policy making at the District Assembly was normally a unilateral process that involved only the District Assembly, civil society organisations differed in opinion. According to civil society organisations, non-governmental organisations like World Vision Twifo Praso were involved in policy making at the District Assembly, and in some cases, sponsored most of their policy proposals which the District Assembly adopted. An example was the child labour policy that prevented the use of children on farms during school hours.

Focus group discussions revealed that the Capitation Grant, Ghana School Feeding Programme, the National Health Insurance Scheme, National

Youth Employment Programme and District Assembly Common Fund were known policy initiatives of the Government of Ghana in support of development at the local level. Civil society organisations revealed they were conscious of the objectives of the policies, the strategy for implementation and the benefits to their community because they were involved in the implementation. What was rather unknown to discussants were the time-lines for the implementation of the Ghana School Feeding Programme and the National Youth Employment Programme, which are time bound projects, and funding sources.

Civil society organisations exhibited knowledge of the District Assembly Common Fund as a major source of central government funding to the District Assembly. They did not know about the formula for allocations, guidelines for utilisation and the amounts ever received by the District Assembly or the disbursements and receipt periods for the District Assembly Common Fund. Even though some discussants were School Management Committee and Parent Teacher Association executives in their communities, they did not know the amounts of money their schools received as Capitation Grant each term, simply because they were not informed by the head teacher and were not aware of their mandate to demand such information for accountability purposes. This finding aligns with (Aryee's 2000) observations on limited civil society knowledge levels on accountability issues.

According to Aryee, the limited civil society knowledge of government policies, especially information relevant for financial and social accountability limits their involvement in the local level governance. In Aryee's analysis of popular participation in decentralised governance in Ghana, he identified the

lack of adequate civil society knowledge on key development policy and accountability issues as a major setback to civil society accountability in local governance. While attributing the situation to the lack of civil society enthusiasm in local governance and accountability issues, perpetrated by traditional values that promotes respect for authority and diminishes the degree of social accountability, he observes that the existence of such beliefs will continue to diminish civil society interest in social accountability and make local participation less than meaningful.

Similarly, Albrow and Glasius (2007) also believe that, information sharing as a social act plays a decisive role in building a democratic state. Legitimacy and consensus on political decisions are provided through open communication between the state and civil society. In this understanding, which may not always be the case, the political system (state, government, and political society) needs the articulation of interests in the public space to put different concerns on the political agenda. According to Albrow and Glasius, established institutions, such as political parties and the state's information apparatus, usually perform this articulation. Therefore, the ability of the state and its information apparatus to engage the citizenry on policy issues is crucial to a responsible and accountable democratic society.

Key informants at the District Assembly cited weak capacity and low level of education of local civil society organisations as being two reasons for their non-involvement in the planning of major policies. A key informant quizzed *“how do you expect us to invite drivers and peasant farmers, most of whom are not educated beyond secondary school, to sit in planning and review meetings of the District Assembly?”* (Focus Group Discussions at

Twifo Praso, 11/03/2011). According to them, the most important aspect of the policy was not the participation of civil society organisations in planning or increased knowledge of civil society organisations on the policy framework but rather, the efficient and effective delivery of the policy, and its impact on poverty reduction in the communities.

The aforementioned perception held by key informants of the District Assembly is prejudiced and lacks merit. During the discussions with cocoa farmers, the chief cocoa farmer remarked that *“even though majority of our members are not educated beyond the secondary level, they are able to manage their businesses and appreciate basic development issues. Most of the cocoa farmers are School Management Committee leaders who have successfully supervised the management of basic schools in their communities, and cannot be said to be of inferior capacity to appreciate development planning issues”* (Focus Group Discussions at Twifo Praso, 12/03/2011). The minimal civil society involvement in planning is consistent with Pinkney’s (2005) observations on political participation.

Apart from confirming the assertion by civil society organisations that they were not involved in the planning processes of policies in the District Assembly, this also brings into question the issue of social accountability and its relevance to quality policy management and delivery. In Pinkney’s view, key informant opinions on the mandate and capacity of civil society to participate in development policy planning is a feature of a political system deeply dominated by neo-patrimonial relations in whom state officials believe they have no need to respond to citizen’s concerns but distribute resources to the citizenry.

The weak link between civil society and political authority in Africa creates and maintains an information gap in policy management and implementation. Civil society organisations are largely denied access to information on the fundamentals of major social and economic policies, for which reason they lack the requisite capacity to monitor their implementation, and demand social accountability. This is a major source of deepening socio-political exclusion to perpetuate corrupt and unaccountable regimes in Africa. The media becomes a useful part of civil society in this respect, since they are quite educated and well connected to political authority, due to their influence, and have the capacity to produce information for citizens' education and enlightenment on policy and accountability issues, including corruption (Albrow & Glasius, 2007).

The study also sought to determine the source of civil society information on key government policies, especially against the background of their non-involvement in the planning and policy design, and no knowledge on policy frameworks. Focus group discussions with civil society organisations revealed that the electronic media, especially radio stations were the main sources of information on government policies. According to the discussants, the district had access to four radio stations which were Spark FM, Radio Central, Peace FM and Twifo FM. The radio stations aired educative programmes on government policies and programmes including the National Youth Employment Programme, the Capitation Grant and the Ghana School Feeding Programme using local dialects.

On the role of the Information Service Department in educating the public on government policies and citizens responsibilities, discussants from

civil society organisations viewed the department as only relevant during the political season, where they propagated government achievements and not necessarily, policy education. Key informants at the District Assembly disagreed with this view, challenging that the Information Service Department was very useful in policy education at the community level. While admitting their logistical constraints, they contended that the Information Service Department had a public education van which toured communities in the district to educate them on government policies. This finding is synonymous to Batliwala and Brown's (2006) observations on the role of the mass media in political education.

In Batliwala and Brown's analysis of the role of the media in political education, they observed that the media plays a lead role in political and policy information and education for the purpose of achieving legitimacy and consensus among civil society. A similar view is expressed by Tongreen et al., (2008) where they underscored the role of the media in providing information on governance which is required for demanding social and political accountability, which includes information related to the allocation, distribution and utilisation of resources in society.

Nature of civil society organisations' participation in governance

The final objective was to determine the forms of civil society organisations' participation in governance. The objective sought to understand the methods of involving civil society organisations in key decision related to budgeting and taxation at the District Assembly.

Key informants at the District Assembly explained that budget hearing was an annual activity which usually took place in the last quarter (October-December) of its financial year. During budget hearings, the District Assembly presented a tentative costing of prioritised activities to key stakeholders and members of the District Assembly for input, validation, and approval by the Regional Coordinating Council. It is later adopted as the District Assembly's economic plan for the ensuing financial year. Budget hearing was important because it reviewed the budgetary performance of the District Assembly in the current year, and projected its spending based on expected revenues and income, in the ensuing year. They mentioned officials of the District Assembly, departmental heads of centralised bodies in the district, and key stakeholders in the district as participants at budget hearings.

Focus group discussions with civil society organisations revealed that occupational associations and faith based organisations were usually excluded from participating in budget hearings. A member of the occupational associations recounts how in one rare instance they were invited to participate in the budget hearing in 2007. According to her *“the District Assembly invited our group to elect a representative to participate in the 2007 budget hearing because the activity was being supported by a United States Agency for International Development funded project called Government Accountability Improves Trust. However, after the project ended in 2008, we have never been invited”* (Focus Group Discussions at Twifo Praso, 12/03/2011).

Nonetheless, occupational associations and faith based organisations claimed they were aware that, traditional associations and World Vision Twifo Praso were involved in budget hearings at the District Assembly. Traditional

associations confirmed participating in budget hearings sessions at the District Assembly. They mentioned World Vision and Assembly members who chaired sub-committees of the District Assembly as some of the participants. The selective involvement of traditional authorities confirms Appiagyei-Atua's (2002) observations that traditional authorities had enormous influence on decision making at the District Assembly due to their virtual ownership of land, gold, timber and other mineral deposits within their traditional areas. Their participation in major economic, social and political decisions, according to Appiagyei-Atua, is not only 'mandatory' but strategic.

Key informants at the District Assembly confirmed the participation of traditional authorities and World Vision but added that civic unions that were established under the United States Agency for International Development funded Government Accountability Improves Trust project were also involved in budget hearings. They further explained that the non-involvement of faith based organisations, occupational associations and other local non-governmental organisations as well as community based organisations was due to the low capacity of local civil society organisations and contended that the District Assembly only involved civil society organisations of the requisite capacity to appreciate and participate in budget planning and hearing.

Accordingly, the involvement of World Vision and the civic unions in budgeting was indicative of the level of participation of civil society organisations in development planning and decision making. Ensuring increased participation of local civil society organisations in development decision making, including budgeting, requires an appreciable level of capacity, observed a key informant. This is confirmed by Edwards (2010) in

his analysis of local civil society participation in decision making in local governance. Edwards observes that the proliferation of non-governmental organisations in Africa has generated some level of civil society enthusiasm and capacity to appreciate governance and participate in political and economic governance at the local and national levels. He however, believes that indigenous organisations rather than foreign ones, should lead.

Related to budgeting is public financial accountability. The study's bid to find out how the District Assembly accounted for public funds to civil society organisations concluded with a contradiction, with the key informants at the District Assembly submitting that civil society organisations were invited to attend annual tax hearing sessions. This position was vehemently challenged by civil society organisations who contended that they were not involved in any session which required the District Assembly to render public accounts. Not even were traditional authorities invited to participate in tax hearings. Since none of the discussant at the focus group discussion ever participated in tax hearings, they could not determine whether tax hearings were still being organised by the District Assembly, but admitted knowledge of the activity in the early 1990's.

The key informants at the District Assembly were of the opinion that there was no need for civil society organisations to attend tax hearings of the District Assembly since they were duly represented by their Assembly members, whom in spite of the numerous logistical constraints, are expected to feedback to their electoral areas. In line with his opinion, the key informants confirmed the opinions expressed by civil society organisations about their non-involvement in tax hearing sessions of the District Assembly, but added

that Assembly members participated on behalf of all citizens in Twifo Hemang Lower Denkyira District. It was confirmed that World Vision Twifo Praso participated in the event because they funded close to 30 percent of the District Assembly's local development budget and deserved to directly ascertain how their funds were utilised.

Fee fixing is an annual economic governance activity in Twifo Hemang Lower Denkyira District. The function of fixing fees for the purpose of taxation is among the 86 statutory functions transferred from the centre to the Districts by the Local Government Act, 1993 (Act 462). According to Ahwoi (2010), fee fixing involves decision making relating to the various fees that are levied on the use of key social and economic facilities in the district, as well as the earnings of economic units. Fees charged are usually meant for maintaining and improving the quality of service provided by the facility and financing local development initiatives. Examples of fees fixed by the District Assemblies include the use of market fees, roads tolls and artisan fees.

Focus group discussions revealed that, the leadership of occupational associations and traditional authorities were invited to attend fee fixing sessions of the District Assembly, since they represented the membership of the various taxable economic units within the dominant informal sector in the district. The participation of occupational associations was nonetheless, only symbolic, since they were only informed of revised fees with very little avenues and opportunities for negotiation during fee fixing. The Ghana Hairdressers and Beauticians Association confirmed that, one of their members was a government appointee at the District Assembly and was able

to represent their interest during fee fixing negotiations at the District Assembly.

Responses to the question of women participation in leadership were mixed. The study sought to ascertain, first, the participation of women in leadership within civil society organisations and further, in the governance of Twifo Hemang Lower Denkyira District. The focus group discussions pointed to the fact that, women were not interested in contesting leadership positions within the associations with mixed gender membership due to the cultural belief that, men were born to lead women. In fact, only two civil society organisations (Ghana Hairdressers and Beauticians Association and the Ghana National Tailors and Dressmakers Association) had women occupying leadership positions.

The discussions with Ghana Hairdressers and Beauticians Association and the Ghana National Tailors and Dressmakers Association also disclosed that, whereas all five executives from the Ghana Hairdressers and Beauticians Association were women, only two out of the five executives from the Ghana National Tailors and Dressmakers Association were women, even though about 80 percent of the membership of tailors and dressmakers were females. Members explained that, apart from the cultural belief that, men were born to lead women, men dominated leadership positions because they were relatively educated compared to the female members. Similar cultural reasons also accounted for the absence of females in the leadership of the Twifo and Ati Mokwa Traditional Councils.

The low numbers of female members in the Ghana Private Road Transport Union, Cocoa Farmers Association and the Hemang Carpenters,

accounted for lack of female representation in their leadership. In the case of the Ghana Private Road Transport Union, only 3 out of 210 members were females. The Cocoa Farmers and Hemang Carpenters Association had 12 females out of 420 and 2 females out of 39 respectively. The Ahmadiya and Al-Suunna muslim councils and the Local Council of Churches had no female members in leadership positions, since their religion did not encourage women to lead.

The limited involvement of females in the leadership of civil society organisations in Twifo Hemang Lower Denkyira District is consistent with Offei-Aboagye's (2000) views on the limited participation of women in positions of leadership. Offei-Aboagye observes that, leadership is seen by society as a preserve of men, with many husbands reluctant to have their wives occupy positions of leadership. She further identifies cultural factors, especially society's perception that men are born to lead, and women's multiple roles as wives and mothers as factors accountable the low female interest and participation in leadership.

Offei-Aboagye further observes that, the gender gap in education is an outcome of the aforementioned deeper-seated cultural beliefs, and is probably of more consequence. Gender stereotypes of men's and women's roles are also of cultural origin, and include the widely held perception that political activity is indecent for women while economic factors relate to a lack of access to the funds required for campaigning, especially on an individual, non-partisan basis.

Contrary to the low numbers of women at the District Assembly, the level of involvement of female Assembly members and their impact has been

important. The key informants at the District Assembly explained that during District Assembly sessions, each Assembly member had equal rights on discussions and voting. It was also noted from the study that, each woman at the District Assembly belonged to at least one sub-committee and participated in committee meetings and the collective decisions taken at the committee level. Female Assembly members were however, influential in lobbying their male colleagues to support the allocation of projects that addressed the concerns of women.

Conclusion

The activities of local civil society organisations are largely service delivery, religious and welfare in nature and scarcely involve governance activities. International non-governmental organisations and traditional authorities are regular participants in local governance decision making processes of the District Assembly, mainly due to the level of influence they wield in Twifo Hemang Lower Denkyira District. Even though civil society organisations scarcely participate in development policy decision making, the proliferation of radio stations in Ghana has provided civil society organisations with policy education related to key government policies and programmes, but lack information and capacity to demand accountability in the implementation of key government policies and programmes.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

This chapter presents the summary of the key findings and conclusions arrived at from the study and ends with recommendations for strengthening the participation of civil society organisations in local level governance in Twifo Hemang Lower Denkyira District. The first part comprises the summary of the entire study and the key findings per objective whereas subsequent sections capture the conclusions, recommendations and suggestions for further studies.

Summary

The main objective of the study was to examine the activities of the various civil society organisations in the Twifo Hemang Lower Denkyira District in the Central Region of Ghana. A qualitative descriptive study was conducted. Two different instruments were employed for the research and these were an interview guide and focus group discussion guide. The interview guide was used for key informants at the District Assembly while focus group discussions were conducted among the civil society organisations. Key District Assembly officials were interviewed with 10 civil society organisation's participating in the focus group discussions.

The first objective was to determine the activities of the various civil society organisations in Twifo Hemang Lower Denkyira District, and the main issues that emerged were:

- a. The core activities of civil society organisations depended on their key objectives. However, these activities were not static but shaped by the prevailing exigencies in society.
- b. Generally, majority of civil society organisations were involved in membership welfare, social service provision and capacity building activities with limited involvement in policy engagement and advocacy.

The institutional framework for the participation of civil society organisations in decision making at the District Assembly was also examined as the second objective of the study. The following were the key findings:

- a. Civil society organisations were required to register at the District Assembly to confirm their existence and regularise their operations. However, the study revealed that only about 40 percent of civil society organisations in the district had adhered to this provision.
- b. The Local Government Act, 1993 (Act 426) provided a legal framework for the participation of civil society organisations in decision making processes of the District Assembly. Evidence from the study revealed that this legal provision did not provide adequate space for the participation of civil society organisations in decision making processes at the district level.

- c. Of all the civil society organisations operating in the district, the District Assembly usually preferred to engage traditional authorities and international civil society organisations such as World Vision in decision making, while community based organisations were involved in project implementation and monitoring.
- d. The District Assembly involved some civil society organisations in monitoring its projects because they were funding requirements from donors.
- e. Civil society organisations had little confidence in the existing structures of the District Assembly because they failed to adequately respond to their concerns.

The third objective was to assess the awareness levels of civil society organisations on government policies and plans. The following key findings were established by the study:

- a. Civil society organisations were well informed on key government policies and programmes such as Capitation Grant, Ghana School Feeding Program, National Health Insurance Scheme and the National Youth Employment Program, because they were involved in the implementation. However, they had very little knowledge of the District Assembly Common Fund.
- b. Civil society organisations had knowledge of broad policy objectives, implementation strategies and citizens roles, but

were not informed about policy time-lines and policy financing issues.

- c. Radio stations were the major source of information and education to civil society organisations on government policies since they communicated in the local dialect and were accessible in areas where there was no electricity, through batteries.
- d. Civil society organisations perceived the District Chief Executive to be the source of policies in the district.

The fourth objective was to examine the nature of civil society organisation's participation in governance in Twifo Hemang Lower Denkyira District. The major findings were:

- a. District Assemblies involved traditional authorities in budget hearing because of the role they played in providing land for developmental projects.
- b. District Assemblies involved occupational associations and traditional authorities in fee fixing since their members were primary responsible for paying the fees.
- c. Assembly members, as representatives of the communities, failed to provide feedback on budgetary decision making due to inadequate logistics.
- d. Only civil society organisations that supported the District Assemblies budget were invited to participate in budget hearing sessions of the District Assembly.

Conclusions

Civil society organisations are formed and exist on religious, economic and social principles, but they all have a collective objective of pursuing the wellbeing of their membership and society in general. The activities of the civil society organisations were largely service delivery and these included credit support for membership, capacity building, and donations to needy persons, technical and financial support to education and health delivery. The leadership of civil society organisations were involved in some advocacy engagements with the District Assembly in pursuit of their member's interest and economic welfare. This included negotiations on fees and credit facilities for the membership. The activities of the civil society organisations were funded mainly from membership dues and royalties. The Local Government Act, 1993 (Act 462) provided the legal framework for civil society participation in decision making processes at the District Assembly but, there was neither a policy guideline, nor monitoring mechanisms to ensure the implementation of the two laws. District Assemblies used their discretion by selectively involving civil society in decision making. Due to the ineffectiveness of Assembly members as liaisons between the District Assembly and the citizenry, civil society organisations dealt directly with the District Chief Executive.

On monitoring of policies and projects, it is conclusive that District Assemblies only involved civil society in monitoring its policy decisions and projects, when they were compelled by donors. It can also be concluded from the study that civil society organisations were much more conscious of key

government policies in which they were the direct implementers as well as beneficiaries.

The participation of civil society organisations in local level governance in Twifo Hemang Lower Denkyira District took the form of their direct involvement and inputs in key decision making platforms at the District Assembly, notably budget hearings, fee fixing and tax hearings. Traditional authorities and World Vision Twifo Praso were the only civil society organisations that were involved in budget hearing, fee fixing and tax hearing. Traditional authorities and World Vision were selected because they contributed significantly towards the District Assembly's budget. Occasionally, occupational associations were invited to participate in fee fixing.

Recommendations

On the basis of the findings and conclusions of this study, it is recommended that the Twifo Hemang Lower Denkyira District Assembly should;

- a. Promulgate a policy to register all civil society organisations in order to strengthen the relationship between civil society organisations and the District Assembly.
- b. Intensify the organisation of periodic public engagement activities to share information on policy proposals of the District Assembly and educate civil society organisations on the decision making framework within the local government system in the district.

- c. Adopt participatory budgeting by involving civil society stakeholders, especially occupational associations and local non-governmental organisations to participate in budget hearing sessions of the District Assembly.
- d. Motivate and equip District Assembly members to efficiently perform their liaison functions between local government and the citizenry.

It is important to note that, strengthening the participation of civil society organisations in governance is not the sole responsibility of the District Assembly. In order to ensure the effective and efficient participation of civil society organisations in the governance processes in the Twifo Hemang Lower Denkyira District, civil society organisations should;

- a. Take interest in advocacy activities, including occasional meetings with the District Assembly to discuss issues related to their socio-economic developments. Such policy engagement meetings should be institutionalised and made part of the civil society organisations annual activity plan.
- b. Form coalitions and networks in order to strengthen their voice and representation on decision making platforms at the District Assembly. Invite Assembly members to attend their meetings and brief them on emerging policy issues at the District Assembly.
- c. Submit budgetary proposals to the Presiding Member of the District Assembly prior to budget hearing sessions.

- d. Advocate for the formulation of a policy guideline to facilitate the participation of civil society organisations in local level decision making, implementation and monitoring.

Suggestions for further study

To enable a deeper appreciation of the dynamics of the participation of civil society organisations in local level governance, it is recommended that the structural factors that enable or constrain the involvement of civil society organisations in the activities of the Twifo Hemang Lower Denkyira District should be explored.

APPENDICES

A: FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR CIVIL SOCIETY

ORGANISATIONS

This instrument is designed to elicit responses from civil society organisations in Twifo Hemang Lower Denkyira District as part of a research on the participation of civil society organisations in local level governance in the Twifo Hemang Lower Denkyira District. It is aimed at examining the activities and examining the nature of civil society participation in political and social governance in Twifo Hemang Lower Denkyira District. It is purely an academic exercise in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of a Master of Arts degree in Democracy, Governance, Law and Development which the researcher is currently pursuing at the Centre for Development Studies, University of Cape coast. All views and opinions expressed by respondents will be used strictly for academic purposes only.

Section A: Details of civil society organisations

Name of civil society organisation:
No. of members:
Gender composition of members: Male..... Female.....

<i>Section B: Activities of the civil society organisations</i>	What are the aims and objectives of your organisation? What activities does your organisation engage in? How do you organise such activities? What is the level of involvement of your members in organising such activities? How many people does your organisation represent? How does your organisation fund its activities?
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<p><i>Section C: Institutional framework for the participation of civil society organisations in decision making.</i></p>	<p>What is the existing institutional framework for civil society organisation to make inputs into the districts plans? How does it work?</p> <p>How do civil society organisations channel concerns to government?</p> <p>What are the procedures to enable the participation of civil society organisations in project planning, monitoring and evaluation?</p> <p>How have your civil society organisation succeeded in utilising such procedures?</p> <p>What are some of the institutional factors that restrain civil society organisations from utilising such procedures?</p> <p>What institutions in the district promote civil society participation in governance and how functional are they?</p> <p>What mechanisms are available for monitoring the implementation of decisions/projects and how effective are they?</p> <p>What are the procedures for the participation of civil society organisations in fee fixing and budget hearing?</p> <p>How effective are these procedures?</p>
<p><i>Section D: Awareness level of civil society organisations on government policies/plans.</i></p>	<p>Who is responsible for making plans and policies in the district?</p> <p>What are some of the priorities in the districts development plan?</p> <p>What are some of the national plans/policies that are currently being implemented in the district?</p> <p>How were the plans prepared?</p> <p>How were you involved in the planning</p>

	<p>process?</p> <p>What do you know about the ff: National Youth Employment Program, Capitation Grant, National Health Insurance Scheme, Ghana School Feeding Program, and District Assemblies Common Fund?</p>
<p><i>Section E: Nature of civil society organisation's participation in governance.</i></p>	<p>How does your civil society organisation participate in decision making at the District Assembly?</p> <p>How does your civil society organisation participate in fee fixing and budget hearing?</p> <p>How have you been involved in the following: National Youth Employment Program, Capitation Grant, National Health Insurance Scheme, Ghana School Feeding Program, and District Assemblies Common Fund?</p> <p>How has your civil society organisation been involved in decision making at the community level?</p> <p>How does your civil society organisation make input into the district's budget and plans?</p> <p>How is your civil society organisation involved in project planning, implementation and monitoring?</p> <p>How does your civil society organisation participate in national and local levels elections?</p> <p>How has your civil society organisation encouraged and supported women to avail themselves for leadership positions in the district?</p> <p>How many members of your civil society organisation are local government practitioners: Unit Committee, area, town, zonal councilors, Assemblymen and women?</p> <p>How are leaders elected/selected in your</p>

	organisation? What qualities do you look out for in a leader? How many women occupy leadership positions in your organisation? Why
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Thank you

Target group: civil society organisations

B: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR KEY INFORMANTS

This instrument is designed to elicit responses from governance practitioners in Twifo Hemang Lower Denkyira District as part of a research on the participation of civil society organisations in local level governance in the Twifo Hemang Lower Denkyira District. It is aimed at examining the nature of civil society participation in political and social governance in Twifo Hemang Lower Denkyira District. It is purely an academic exercise in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of a Master of Arts degree in Democracy, Governance, Law and Development which the researcher is currently pursuing at the Centre for Development Studies, University of Cape coast. All views and opinions expressed by respondents will be used strictly for academic purposes only.

Section A: Activities of the civil society organisations in the district.

- 1) What are some of the activities of civil society organisations in the district?
- 2) How many civil society organisations operate in the district?
- 3) How are their activities related to your activities?

Section B: Institutional framework for the participation of civil society organisations in decision making.

- 1) What are the legally required institutional frameworks for participation in the District Assembly?
- 2) What is the existing institutional framework for civil society organisations to make inputs into the districts plans?

- 3) How does the District Assembly ensure the utilisation of these channels?
- 4) What are the procedures for civil society participation in project planning, monitoring and evaluation?
- 5) Mention some institutions available for women participation in governance at the district level?
- 6) Mention the various levels of planning and decision making in these institutions?
- 7) What mechanisms are available for monitoring the implementation of decisions/projects?

Section C: Nature of civil society organisation's participation in governance

- 1) What is the form of involvement of civil society organisations in planning and monitoring processes at the District Assembly?
- 2) Which civil society organisations are normally invited to take part in budget hearing and fee fixing process?
- 3) What are the criteria for selecting such civil society organisations?
- 4) How is civil society involved in budget hearing and fee fixing at the District Assembly?
- 5) How are civil society organisations involved in project monitoring?
- 6) How are civil society organisations involved in project implementation?
- 7) How does the District Assembly account for public funds to civil society?
- 8) How is civil society represented on major decision making bodies of the District Assemblies?
- 9) How do women participate in decision making at the District Assembly?
- 10) In what ways are women involved in the implementation of decisions made?
- 11) How many women are members of the District Assembly?
- 12) How did they become members?

Thank You

Target group: Key informants at the District Assembly

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