

**UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST**

**PERCEPTIONS OF FREE AND FAIR ELECTIONS IN AMANSIE  
CENTRAL DISTRICT**

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PERCEPTIONS OF FREE AND FAIR ELECTIONS IN AMANSIE CENTRAL  
DISTRICT

BY

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

Name: Sampson Ofori-Gyamfi

### **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 Signature: ..... Date: .....

Name: Prof. S. B. Kendie

## **ABSTRACT**

The term free and fair election has now become a common phrase associated with the conduction of elections across the world. However, different interpretations are often given to free and fair elections which sometimes lead to misunderstanding among election stakeholders resulting in election conflicts. The study sought to assess the perceptions of the electorate on the extent to which the 2008 presidential and parliamentary elections were free and fair. A total of 156 respondents were used for the study. These comprised 100 electorate, made up of 10 respondents each from the Electoral Commission, media, political parties, security agencies, Amansie Central District Assembly and 6 traditional authority's. Questionnaire and interview schedule were used to collect data from the respondents. In addition to this, simple random and purposive sampling techniques were used to select the respondents.

The main findings of the study are that the electorate have bad perception of free and fair elections. Avoiding multiple registrations, not engaging in violence, not intimidating other voters, applying electoral regulations fairly are among the major roles played by election stakeholders to ensure free and fair elections in the 2008 national elections. Financial constraints and insufficient knowledge of the electorate on the electoral process are the two challenges affecting stakeholders in the promotion of free and fair elections at Amansie Central District. It is recommended that the government of Ghana, philanthropists

and benevolent organizations should provide financial assistance to election stakeholders and the electorate should be educated on free and fair elections.

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## **DEDICATION**

To my wife Adelaide Ofori-Gyamfi and my children Abraham and Gloria.

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## LIST OF ACRONYMS

AGA	Anglo-Gold Ashanti
AU	African Union
BNI	Bureau for National Investigation
CCPR	Convention on Civil and Political Rights
CDD	Centre for Democratic Development
CODEO	Coalition of Domestic Observers
CPP	Convention People's party
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DCE	District Chief Executive
EC	Electoral Commission
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West Africa States
EMB	Election Management Body
FM	Frequency Modulation
GCPP	Great Consolidated People's Party
GES	Ghana Education Service
GJA	Ghana Journalist Association
ICCPR	International Convention on Civil and Political Rights
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
LI	Legislative Instrument
MMDA	Metropolitan, Municipal, District, Assembly
MP	Member of Parliament
NCA	National Communication Authority
NCCE	National Commission for Civic Education

NDC	National Democratic Congress
NDI	National Democratic Institute
NEDEO	Network of Domestic Election Observers
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
NMC	National Media Commission
NPP	New Patriotic Party
PA	Polling Assistant
PNC	People's National Convention
PNDC	Provisional National Defence Council
PO	Presiding Office
PP	Political Party
RO	Returning Officer
RPD	Reformed Patriotic Democratic
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SPSS	Statistical Product and Service Solutions
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
US	United States

# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **Background to the study**

In modern democracies, the mandate to rule is sought through an electoral process which may take various forms. Good democratic practice requires that elections be conducted creditably for outcomes to win broad acceptance and legitimacy. The electoral process should therefore be transparent, free, fair and peaceful. This can be achieved when elections take place in an environment where nothing hinders or promotes illegally and unfairly the chances of any candidate. It is this premise that the Electoral Commission (EC) was established under Article 43 of the 1992 Republican Constitution of Ghana, and mandated to organize, conduct and supervise regular free and fair elections and referenda in accordance with article 42 of the constitution (Africa Governance, Monitoring and Advocacy Project, 2007).

Ghana's 1992 elections heralded the country's return to multi-party democratic electoral politics after more than three decades of political instability, military interventions and authoritarian rule. Successive democratic elections held in 1996, 2000, 2004 and 2008 have each been seen by domestic observers and the international community as an improvement over the previous polls. Today,



Ghana is widely viewed on the continent and beyond as a model of stability and democratic governance in Africa. The fiercely contested December 2008 presidential and parliamentary elections in Ghana served as an important milestone for the country's democratic process. For the second time since the return of multi-party democracy, the incumbent political party's presidential candidate was narrowly defeated in a run-off election held after none of the candidates obtained more than "50% plus one" of the popular vote constitutionally required in order to claim a first-round victory. The party primaries and the subsequent election campaigning in the lead-up to the December 7 first-round election, the December 28 run-off and the Tain Constituency re-vote on January 2 were marked with often highly acrimonious rhetoric and some instances of politically motivated violence by activists from the two largest political parties, the opposition National Democratic Congress (NDC) and the then ruling New Patriotic Party (NPP) (Adu, 2009).

The high stakes of the election – which were raised further by expectations of future petroleum revenues that would be managed by the next administration – led to a tense pre-election environment. Despite that, the elections were judged to be free and fair by domestic and international election observers. The final presidential election results showed NPP candidate Nana Akufo-Addo obtaining 49.77 % of the total vote, and his main challenger, Prof. John Evans Atta Mills of the NDC, finishing with 50.23% of the vote.

Notwithstanding all the successes made over the years, the country barely avoided a blood bath that is a cause to worry about and cannot be taken for

granted. There were many reported cases of irregularities, with the most striking of them being violence against polling agents, and an inability of agents to observe elections of some polling stations. Each of the major parties in Ghana has a regional stronghold, and both the NDC and NPP reported cases of violence against their agents in the opposing party's stronghold. There was an over indulgence of vote rigging from both of the major political parties. The question is: Do these not interfere with a 'free and fair' election? Both Kenya and Zimbabwe had independent electoral bodies just like Ghana's EC but were subject to manipulation by incumbent government authorities (Adu, 2009).

These elections revealed that electoral bodies wield immense power and if such power is not directed responsibly could result in mass killings of the citizenry. But the real danger is that, lack of honest introspection will deny us the chance to address these problems before they blow out of proportion. The great controversy surrounding Ghanaians on the perceptions of what constitute free and fair elections still remains unresolved. There is no perfect electoral system, and a completely flawless election is an ideal. Stakeholders try to improve upon the delivery and level of freeness and fairness of our elections. Similarly, the history of Ghana's stormy past with memories of military regimes between 1966 to 1969, 1972 to 1979, and 1981 to 1992, should always guide the nation. It is in the light of this that great expectation and hope that Ghana's democratic gains made over the years must be sustained as pacesetters of democracy in Africa (Ayee, 1998).

Amansie Central District Assembly is one of the twenty seven (27) administrative districts in the Ashanti Region. Constitutional requirement for grass root participation in governance through political decentralization is an important aspect of Ghana's democracy. According to Adama (2005) politics at the grass root is still very much influenced and haunted by past military and autocratic civilian ideologies at the various constituencies in Ghana of which Amansie Central District is not an exception. Also, a critical post election assessment of the 2008 presidential and parliamentary elections by the Research and Evaluation Department of the Electoral Commission (EC) revealed that, apart from the E.C most of the political actors have little idea about what free and fair elections entails and the specific roles stakeholders are to play. This phenomenon prevails in all constituencies in Ghana. These challenges no matter where it occurred, if concerted effort is not taken by stakeholders to overcome them, Ghana's giant strides made over the years in promoting the concept and practice of free and fair elections will be short-lived.

### **Statement of the problem**

The idea of democracy and the right of everyone to participate in the government of his or her country are clearly set out in Article 21 of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Specifically, the provision in Article 21(3) that 'the will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government' stands as a straightforward statement of the principle of representative democracy, which is now increasingly seen as essential to the legitimising of

governments among the community of states. The necessary conditions for free and fair elections at any democratic state include but not limited to the following:

- Impartial administration, to ensure that enrolment is open to all eligible voters and that casting a vote is a reasonably accessible process.
- Universal suffrage, so that all citizens are able to participate.
- Freedom from coercion, so that voters are not coerced in making their choices.
- Freedom of expression and association, so that citizens can participate in electoral debate.
- A system that ensures that votes are counted fairly and accurately.

According to Inter-Parliamentary Union (2005), existing universal and regional human rights instruments all over the world provide little detailed guidance on key issues, such as the periodicity of elections, the organization and entitlements of political parties, voter rights and registration, or the conduct of the ballot. That election should allow expression of the ‘will of the people’ may offer a standard of effectiveness, but the ways to hold opinions, and to meet and exchange ideas and information are central to the consolidation of democracy. The means by which progress towards that standard can be measured remain variable. International institutions, however, such as the United Nations (UN) Commission on Human Rights and regional supervisory organizations, have done relatively little to develop either the conceptual foundations of these provisions.

Every election held in the country since independence has been attended by a dispute of some kind. In each case, the outcome has been rejected by the losing political parties on the grounds that the electoral process failed to meet the criteria for free and fair elections. It is clear that the conduct of elections ought to

be such that it does not provide any grounds for allegations that they were not run properly. There is still pressing need for clear criteria by which to judge whether elections are free and fair. Terms like ‘periodic’, ‘free’, ‘fair’, and ‘genuine’, have no easily verifiable content, often being used subjectively and the scope and terminology remain ambiguous (Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2005). However, the quest for an appropriate definition in our context for the terminology ‘free and fair’ is still unresolved as the requirements needed to be fulfilled. What perception do the electorate hold on free and fair elections? Are stakeholders playing their roles effectively within their respective spheres of jurisdiction? Hence, these questions are the more reason why the research is being undertaken for the promotion of democracy in Amansie Central District and for that matter Ghana as a whole.

### **Objectives of the study**

The main objective of the study is to assess the perceptions of the electorate at Amansie Central District on the extent to which they considered the 2008 national elections supervised by the Electoral Commission of Ghana in Amansie Central District were free and fair. The specific objectives were to:

- Ascertain the perceptions of the electorate as to what constitutes free and fair elections.
- Find out the roles played by stakeholders to ensure freeness and fairness elections in the 2008 presidential and parliamentary elections
- Identify the challenges facing stakeholders in the promotion of free and

fair elections?

### **Research questions**

The study is guided by the following research questions:

- What are the perceptions of the electorate on what constitutes free and fair elections?
- What were the roles played by stakeholders during the 2008 presidential and parliamentary elections in Amansie Central District?
- Identify the challenges facing stakeholders in the promotion of free and fair elections.
- How can the challenges retarding free and fair elections be overcome?

### **Significance of the study**

The study will guide the EC in the district and elsewhere to commit the institution in fulfilling its specified constitutional mandate as an Election Management Body (EMB) in order to enhance free and fair election practices in the country. The study will also bring to the limelight stakeholders perceptions on what is free and fair elections. The study will bring the challenges facing stakeholders in the implementation of free and fair election practices to the limelight in order to take the necessary steps to overcome them in the future elections. The study is expected to add to knowledge on free and fair election practices that will form the basis for future research and improvement.

### **Scope of the study**

The study covers the electorate perception of free and fair elections in the Amansie Central District. The study focused on the perceptions people hold on free and fair elections and the role other stakeholders play towards the achievement of this democratic objective with emphasis on the 2008 Ghana's presidential and parliamentary polls. Attention was also focused on the challenges and the way forward in safeguarding the essential principles of free and fair elections in the Amansie Central District.

### **Organisation of the study**

The study is organized into five chapters arranged as follows:

Chapter One contains the background to the study, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, research questions, significance of the study, scope of the study and the organization of the study. Chapter Two reviews related literature on the topic under study. Issues reviewed in this chapter include political pluralism, representative democracy and governance, importance of stakeholders' perception of free and fair election, concept of free and fair elections, definitions and criteria of free and fair elections, international standards for free and fair elections, challenges in conducting free and fair elections; elections and conflicts in Africa and the conceptual framework for the study.

Chapter Three is the methodology of the study and it describes the study area, research design, data and sources, study population, sampling size, sampling techniques, research instruments, fieldwork, data analysis and ethical issues.

Chapter Four concerns itself with data analysis, and presentation and discussion of results while Chapter Five provides the summary, conclusions and recommendations of the study.



## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

#### **Introduction**

This chapter reviews literature that informs the study. Issues discussed in this chapter includes political pluralism, representative democracy and governance, importance of stakeholders' perception of free and fair elections, the concept of free and fair elections, definitions and criteria of free and fair elections; international standards for free and fair elections; African charter on democracy, elections and governance; responsibilities of stakeholders in elections, elections good governance and importance of elections to democracy. It also include overview of electoral system of Ghana; the EC of Ghana; elections in Ghana; challenges in conducting free and fair elections; elections and conflicts in Africa and the conceptual framework for the study.

#### **Political pluralism**

In general, the term “pluralism” describes the existence – and acknowledgement - of diversity. In any societal context the basis for a successful guarantee of pluralism is a consensus on common values which tie together the different groups in society and on how to manage diversity without conflict

(Girke, 2010). In this context, mutual respect and tolerance can be identified as core values that ensure free and peaceful coexistence and interaction among the diversity of groups and individuals. Such values are an indispensable ingredient of a functioning pluralistic society in which differences and conflicts may naturally arise out of divergent interests and positions.

The concept of political pluralism refers to a component of democracy where a multiplicity, diversity or plurality of opinions exists and where groups are free to express themselves within a political system (Girke, 2010). The link between pluralism and democracy is crucial: democracy requires that all people – with all their differing ideologies, opinions and values – be free to connect to government. Ideally, pluralism requires that no single group has a special claim to be heard before any others or to silence others. In this sense, democracy affirms that all groups and opinions in a society must be free to compete for attention and for followers (Girke, 2010).

### **Representative democracy and governance**

Representative democracy is a form of government founded on the principle of elected individuals representing the people, as opposed to autocracy and direct democracy. Representation is defined as the process by which political power and influence which the entire citizenry or a part of it might have upon governmental action is exercised on its behalf by a small number of elected individuals (Girke, 2010). Those representatives make decisions on behalf of and

with the expressed or implied approval of the community. The decisions made thus have a binding effect upon the whole community that is represented. However, the ultimate power in a representative democracy (under a representative government) always lies with the people. The representatives are chosen through periodical elections and have to be accountable to the citizens in all their actions and decisions and have to stand the critical judgement of their performance by the people. Thus, the power exercised by representatives is delegated, temporary and conditional. Today variants of representative democracy are widely viewed as the only legitimate form of government (Fukuyama, 1992).

### **Importance of stakeholders' perception of free and fair election**

The phrase 'free and fair' is commonly used in elections discourse, and it is for certain that many countries do use the phrase but do not go by the phrase. Any true observant in the African continent will come to realization that many incumbents have failed their citizens. Why are free and fair elections so important to politician's, ordinary persons and the international community? A free and fair election gives credence to the idea that the people are sovereign and have a right to keep or get rid of their government, which underpins democracy. One can also say that a free and fair election reveals the true will of the electorate and is therefore the only legitimate entrance to the democratic leadership (Mamadou, 2010).

Elections, as important as they are, do not exist in a vacuum, social and economic challenges, ethnic tensions, poverty and inequality and greatly impact a country's ability to realize short and long term goals of security, governability and development. The importance of elections can thus not be overstated. In a democratic society, elections provide a unique opportunity for the electorate to indicate their priorities, interest and concerns before exercising their right to vote. Equally important is the perception by the electorate that their elections meet the criteria for being transparent, free, fair and credible.

If the perception of stakeholders on the electoral system and for that matter the election results is positive, losers concede defeat easily while the vice-versa happens if the people have negative perceptions on the transparency of electoral system. This may lead to post election related violence. The factors that may encourage people to have positive perceptions on the conduct of polls are numerous some of which include; the independence and professionalism of the EMB, workable electoral laws, the transparency and integrity of the electoral process, credible voters register, adequate funding for the EC and political parties, avoidance of abuse of incumbency etc.

### **The concept of free and fair elections**

According to the Chairman of Ghana's EC Afari-Gyan, if elections are to assume the importance that they are capable of, they must be free and fair. Without being free and fair, elections cannot be said to express the true will and

sovereignty of the people that must underpin democracy. Wittingly, this is the reason why the concept of “free and fair” elections has become part of everyday election discourse (Afari-Gyan, 2009).

Afari-Gyan (2009) further adds that the phrase is often used recklessly. The problem is that the features of free and fair elections are very complex indeed. In fact, if someone tries to fully unravel the phrase, it could be deduced that, it prescribes conditions that must exist as a backdrop to democratic elections as well as sorts of behaviour all actors involved in elections must exhibit. So to describe an election in its entirety as ‘free and fair’ would turn to suggest that it took place under the conditions of perfect politicians and candidates, perfect security arrangements, and perfect voters. Perhaps, no such conditions exist anywhere in the real world of elections. Not that, is not to say that the concept of ‘free and fair’ elections does not have real content, it has, and can clearly be seen the content if the terms free and fair separately and examine them closely to find out what each entails.

#### Free elections

According to Afari-Gyan (2009) an election to be described as being free accordingly entails two aspects; firstly, people must be free to do certain things and secondly, the environment must be free from certain things. The things that a person must be free to do include: to register as a voter, to form or join a political party, to stand for election, to attend political meetings and rallies, to campaign, to decide whom to vote for and to cast a secret ballot. On the other hand, the things that the environment must be free from include: multiple registrations, multiple

voting, impersonation, vote buying, violence, intimidation, coercion, cheating, bribery and corruption, fraud and rigging.

#### Fair elections

Afari-Gyan (2009), further went on to state that for an election to be described as being fair, also entails two aspects. Firstly, certain things must be fair by their very nature and secondly, certain groups of people must be fair in their actions. The things that must be fair by their very nature include: the laws, rules, regulations, processes and procedures relating to elections. Electoral rules and regulations are said to be fair if they are comprehensive, non discriminatory, and enable the EC to do its work free from untoward external influence and provide avenues of seek redress for wrongful acts. Electoral processes and procedures are said to be fair if they are easy to understand and make it possible for ordinary persons to participate without difficulty.

When the electoral laws, rules and regulations, processes and procedures are fair in the manner described then one can say that the legal framework for election is sound. A sound legal framework establishes firm principles for electoral work and facilitates the resolution of electoral disputes for instance Ghana's EC derives its powers and functions from Article 43, 44, 45 46 and of the 1992 constitution of the Republic of Ghana and the EC's Act 451. Last but not least, certain groups of people should be fair in their actions and these include: the EC, the government, political parties and candidates, voters, security personnel, journalists, civil society behavior ions, and the judiciary. It can clearly be seen

that what the concept of free and fair election entails is extremely complex (Agyeman-Duah, 2005).

Against this backdrop, in practice, it can be said that if election goes well it does not necessarily mean that it was entirely free and fair in all aspects. For this reason, some observer groups have switched to using the term free and fair to describe election results as credible, genuine, or trustworthy. The switch in the use of this term is understandable in view of the complexity of the concept of free and fair elections. But in reality a close examination would indicate that the terms credible, genuine and trustworthy are descriptive of the degree or measure of freeness and fairness of an election. The term can therefore be described as very useful because it provides an ideal or a vision for democratic elections ( European Union Election Observation Mission to Ghana, 2008).

A sound legal framework is necessary backdrop, but it is not a sufficient condition for free and fair elections. According to Afari-Gyan (2009), just like the best practices of all democratic elections, when one says that certain group of people should be fair in their actions, in effect it means that there is a distribution of responsibilities towards achieving free and fair elections. In other words achieving free and fair elections is predicated on a presumption of rational electoral behavior by the various actors.

## **Definitions and criteria of free and fair elections**

Much of the focus of recent discussions on elections as ‘institutions of legitimate power flows’ or ‘devices for building legitimate government’ have centred around how to build democratic multi-party systems in the newly democratizing countries of Africa, Asia, and Central and Eastern Europe. One common feature shared by these countries is that they have experienced authoritarian rule in the form of either communist or military regimes during the several decades following World War II. In order to establish multi-party systems and well-functioning democracies, it has been argued that free elections are a prerequisite for countries that have suffered harsh dictatorship and lack a tradition of free and fair party competition. But the question remains as to how free and fair elections might be defined, and what requirements are needed for fulfilling them.

In her discussion on elections Kirkpatrick, (1981) suggests that there are four defining characteristic to elections: periodic, competitive, inclusive, and definitive. According to her, periodic elections limit the tenure of those elected and guarantee that before they can continue in office, they will be required to submit themselves once again to the voters for approval or disapproval. Competitive elections are those in which opposition and criticism of government are permitted, and in which alternative leaders compete for office, all under the conditions of free speech, press, and assembly on matters concerning public policy. Inclusive elections are those in which large proportions of adults are authorized to participate.



Finally, definitive elections are those whose outcomes largely determine the partisan composition of resulting government. Although, Kirkpatrick's strength lies in her four defining characteristics of elections which may be regarded as basic requirements for every democratic and free elections state. The weakness with this is that the definition seems unclear. To what extent are elections open and competitive enough to be considered democratic? These questions are always difficult to answer, because freedom in elections is not an absolute but rather a matter of degree. The question may further be posed: At what point on the spectrum can it be said that 'freedom' – or even 'democracy' – has been attained? It must be stated however that some of the indices mentioned by Kirkpatrick (1981), are relevant to this study especially the issue of competitiveness, inclusive and periodic elections.

Dahl (1956) provided a set of normative guidelines for elections and suggests a set of requirements necessary for free and democratic elections in an ideal perfectly democratic society. The main tenets of Dahl (1956) discussions on elections are that; Elections can divided into four different stages: the voting period, the pre-voting period, the post-voting period, and the inter-election stage and therefore suggests the following defining criteria for each of the four stages.

#### Voting period

- Every member of the organization performs the acts assumed to constitute an expression of preference among the scheduled alternatives, e.g., voting;

- In tabulating these expressions (votes), the weight assigned to the choice of each individual is identical; and
- The alternative with the greatest number of votes is declared the winning choice.

#### Pre-voting period

- Any member who perceives a set of alternatives, at least one of which he regards as preferable to any of the alternatives presently scheduled, can insert his preferred alternative(s) among those scheduled for voting; and
- All individuals possess identical information about the alternatives.

#### Post-voting period

- Alternatives (leaders or policies) with the greatest number of votes displace any alternatives (leaders or policies) with fewer votes; and
- The orders of elected officials are executed.

#### Inter-election stage

- All inter-election decisions are subordinate or executory to those arrived at during the election stage, i.e., elections are in a sense controlling; or
- New decisions during the inter-election period are governed by the preceding seven conditions, operating however, under rather different institutional circumstances; or

He argues that these conditions are measurable, though some may be problems and that they can be converted into statements about probabilities. The merits of his theory however lie in the fact that these scales of measurement could

be used to score the performance of countries' elections against a threshold as to whether it meets or falls within these benchmarks.

It seems, however, that the most critical weakness in Dahl's (1956) argument lies in his measurement. As he acknowledges some conditions such as four, five, and seven are highly measurable. For those conditions, frequencies or probabilities may be assigned for observers in an intuitive and rather arbitrary way, since they are not in metric quantitative forms. Given this, how can it then be said that a given political system has reached the status of, say, a polyarchy or hierarchy, when the result or measurement is highly dependent upon the arbitrary and subjective assessment of observers? The electoral environment also varies from one country to another.

Additionally, there are sound theoretical reasons behind each of Dahl's conditions; the fact remains that no society has ever met or is ever likely to meet them. The eight conditions may therefore be regarded as ideal to which in reality is impossible. Furthermore, while Dahl's definition of democracy is easily understood and widely accepted, it leaves out the fine details. A democracy consists of more than well conducted elections. A functioning democracy involves an entrenched and adhered to constitution, strong democratic institutions, an accountable public administrative apparatus, the rule of law, mechanisms capable of checking the power of political officials and the willingness of the political elite to adhere to democratic values and principles. It must be emphasized however that, some of Dahl's definition especially his concept of polyarchy as well as the four stages of elections is relevant to the discussions.

Mackenzie (1958) may be regarded as a pioneer in the study of free and fair elections. He suggests that there are four conditions under which it is prudent to introduce free elections. According to Mackenzie (1958) in order for an election to be considered free, there must be: an independent judiciary to interpret electoral law; an honest, competent, non-partisan administration to run elections; and a developed system of political parties, sufficiently organized to put their policies, traditions and candidates before the voters as alternatives among which to choose. Free elections should be generally accepted throughout the political community of certain rules of the game. The strength of his arguments undeniably lies in the fact that together, the four components highlighted above that is; independent and competent electoral administration, independent judiciary bodies, existence of political parties with policy alternatives, and impartial electoral law – were all necessary for building and maintaining free elections in a given political system.

It seems however, that the question of ‘at what point can a political system be said to have launched a democratic election’ is unresolved. That is, it is difficult to know ‘when’ and ‘in what context’ the functions or the components, separately or jointly, can be identified as democratic or undemocratic. For instance, in some countries it may be the case that the functions and roles of electoral law and political parties may be satisfactory, while those of electoral administration and judicial bodies may not. Meanwhile, it is conceivable that other combinations of institutions may operate satisfactorily while the rest may not. Thus, even though Mackenzie (1958) recognizes that free and fair elections

are a gradation or process rather than an absolute. Although some of the definitions might be of importance to this study, there are no clear guidelines for identifying or measuring a democratic election to suit the Ghanaian context. These are general principles; there is always the need to relativise before one can come out with an apt description on what constitute free and fair elections.

Another perspective on free and fair elections has been provided by political scientist. Beetham, (1993). The main tenet of his theory is that a free and fair election is one of four dimensions used to assess quality of democracy. According to Beetham , the quality of democracy may be assessed by the following four dimensions, within which two democracies principle – popular control and political equality – are emphasized: ‘free and fair election’, and; ‘open and accountable government’; ‘civil and political rights liberties’; and; ‘democratic society’. By free and fair elections, Beetham meant the extent to which each vote is of equal value, and the extent to which there is equality of opportunity to run for public office, regardless of one’s social group. The term ‘open and accountable government’ refers to the degree to which individuals or groups are systematically allowed access to information, influence decisions and seek redress from the government.

Civil and political rights or a liberty also refers to the extent to which such rights are effectively guaranteed to all segments of society. Democratic society refers here to the degree of equal opportunity for self organisation, access to the media, and redress from powerful corporations, and so on. This approach to

democracy – including of course free and fair elections – is neither an all-or-nothing trait which a country either does or does not possess.

According to Beetham, it should be seen as a continuum matter of degree, based on how far principle of popular control and political equality are realized in practice. Free and fair elections, as one of the four variables for assessing the quality of democracy measured according to his five check-points: The strength of his arguments could be discerned from the idea he suggests that there may be three different ways to assess the quality of democracy in a given country. Firstly, a frame of reference or standard of comparison can be established by comparing today's situation with the country's past. Secondly, countries of a given type can be compared against a set of benchmarks. Finally, the quality of democracy can also be estimated with the help of certain ideal standards. Among these three, the second alternative was argued to be the most plausible way to build a set of comparable indices measuring the quality of democracy.

The setbacks of Beetham's arguments are that such benchmarks existed for comparable countries. It would seem that the process of comparing the quality of democracy using a given set of indices is inevitably evaluative and judgmental. Comparing democratic performance means that the observer is using his or her own arbitrary, subjective, and qualitative measuring scale. As a result, an overall estimation of democratic performance would be highly difficult and of little meaning, although it provides a broad sense of the functions and performance of democracy in the given nations. Moreover, by and large, these indices are merely another expression of the requirements discussed by some of Beetham's

predecessors such as Kirkpatrick (1981) and Mackenzie (1958). In this sense, Beetham's four indices may be viewed as a set of requirements for free and fair elections to some extent. However, these benchmarks would be somehow problematic and quite complicated; it can work in the advanced democratic countries to some extent not in West Africa and for that matter Ghana.

In conclusion, though the preceding discussion provides basic information and a clearer understanding of the requirements necessary for free and fair elections, it is widely known that there remains no common consensus among political scientists as to its definition and measurement. However, as pointed out by Elklit (1994), it should be noted that there is no best way in which one can arrive at indisputable classifications of the degree of electoral democracy or democratic elections. This is partly due to the fact that classifying the degree of electoral democracy or democratic elections rests on normative definitions of the researcher, and partly to the fact that the use of definitions in measuring them rests on subjective and arbitrary estimations of the performance of norms selected by the researcher.

With these drawbacks in mind, there is therefore the need possibly to develop more empirically useful and objective tools to measuring elections to suit our context rather than relying on subjective and arbitrary estimations of works of the performance of norms selected by the Western scholars. In recent times however, have been the upsurge in works on elections by Ghanaian scholars like Boahen, Ninsin, Ayee, Oquaye, Crabbe, Agyemang- Duah, Twumasi to mention but few. Consequently, they have tried to review most of the works of researchers

outside the continent so far as general studies on elections in Africa and other emerging democratic states especially Ghana as whole is concerned by avoiding the mistake of the past where scholars used their countries' standards of measurement to describe the conduct of African elections as being free and fair or not.

### **International standards for “free and fair” elections**

An international consensus has more or less emerged in recent years on the necessary elements of democratic elections, and elections that meet those standards are often referred to as “free and fair.” Indeed, this phrase has become the rhetorical touchstone for most assessments of transitional or post conflict elections (World Bank, 1992). References to “free and fair” elections are not new. In 1927, for example, Henry Stinson, as special emissary of U.S. President Calvin Coolidge, “pledged the United States to a fair and free election” in Nicaragua, as part of an early effort at post conflict nation-building.

In 1956, a United Nations report on a referendum on the future of Togoland, a trust territory in Africa, used the term. But the phrase apparently first achieved salience when the United Nations established the process by which Namibia would gain independence (United Nations, 2009). In 1978, the UN Security Council called for the early independence of Namibia through free and fair elections under the supervision and control of the United Nations. International law imposes certain obligations on states and electoral authorities



regarding the conduct of elections. According to the United Nations (2009), the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the ICCPR, and other international instruments establish two essential conditions for democratic elections: (1) universal and equal suffrage, and (2) a secret ballot. International conventions banning discrimination based on race or gender further reinforce the right to participate in elections on the basis of “universal and equal suffrage.” To be “free and fair,” however, elections also must meet a number of other standards. In 1994, the Inter-Parliamentary Union formally adopted a *Declaration on Criteria for Free and Fair Elections*, which declared a broad range of rights of citizens, candidates, parties, and states as necessary for free and fair elections (United Nations, 2009).

### **African charter on democracy, elections and governance**

The most important instrument dealing with elections in Africa is the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance (the Democracy Charter). The Charter was adopted in January, 2007 and is not yet in force as the requisite number of ratifications has not yet been met. According to Quashigah & Okafor (1999), the Democracy Charter is a milestone in the African human rights system and is the only such instrument of its kind in international human rights law. Its adoption emphasizes the point that Africa is able to take an extra step in formulating initiatives that are unique to the African setting. There is no need for something to be tried and tested somewhere else before it is brought to Africa and

be expected to work in the same way. Chapter 2 of the Democracy Charter provides the objectives which include enforcement of the Democracy Charter. This charter is largely left to the African Union (AU) Commission and the Peace and Security Council. With regard to elections specifically, the Democracy and Electoral Assistance Unit and the Democracy and Electoral Assistance Fund are mandated to support elections through the provision of resources. The Democracy Charter provides the appropriate normative structure for democracy and elections in Africa but is lacking in enforcement mechanisms. It seeks reliance from the same AU institutions that are already overburdened.

Other African declarations in support of democratic elections include the *Lomé Declaration on Unconstitutional Changes of Government (2000)*, *Durban Declaration on the Principles Governing Democratic Elections in Africa (2002)*, AU Constitutive Act and NEPAD which talk about the promotion of democratic institutions and governance. Regional communities also have their own instruments that complement that of the African Union. SADC has adopted the SADC Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections which also set out the general principles of free and fair elections. ECOWAS also has a regional instrument on elections known as the ECOWAS Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance (Quashigah & Okafor, 1999).

## **Responsibilities of stakeholders in elections**

According to the EC of Ghana election stakeholders include the EC, political parties, media, electorate, security agencies, the government ,civil society organisations and the judiciary have key roles that they are expected to play to make elections free and fair. These roles are:

### The Electoral Commission

- It must lay transparent framework for the management and conduct of elections
- It must build adequate technical and operational capacity to perform its functions.
- It must build integrity in the system, such that outcomes of the system are verifiable.
- It must apply the laws, rules and regulations uniformly, without favour to a party or a candidate
- It must ensure easy access of stakeholders to electoral facilities
- It must do its work at all times to ensure electoral integrity
- It must not allow itself to be controlled by any external body including the government.

### The government

- It must provide the EC with the needed funds and resources in a timely fashion
- It must allow the EC to do its work without interference
- It must refrain from taking undue advantage of its incumbency.

## Political parties and candidates

A political party is defined as an organised group of people with at least similar political aims and opinions, seeks political power and exercise this power to govern by getting its candidates to public office.

Article 55(1) of the 1992 Republican Constitution of Ghana empowers the right to form a political party. Political parties, first and foremost, need internal party democracy, because a party cannot give to the larger society what it does not have within its own posture. Internal democracy must be displayed in respect of elections to party leadership positions, selection of candidates, transparency of party finances, parties and candidates. Parties must carry out a clean campaign that is characterized by real policy choices for the people, absence of personality attacks, abusive language, ethnic or religious incitement. Finally, they must eschew intimidation, violence, bribery and corruption and cheating.

## Electorate

The voter must register only once, and must cast one, and only one vote in an election, on the basis of his/her conscience as to the comparative merits of the candidates, and must allow other voters freely to do the same.

## Security agencies

It is the responsibility of security personnel to keep the general peace so that legitimate electoral activities can take place. They are to protect election materials from getting into wrong hands and also keep order at the polling stations

(PS) and collation centres. They are obliged by law to give equal protection to all candidates, election officials, and voters. Last but not least essential role played by the security personnel is the fact they must arrest and prosecute election offenders.

#### The media

The media have great potential as a public educator and as a guardian of democracy. To realise this potential, the media should:

- Give equitable access to parties and candidates and report their activities accurately
- Provide information that makes people knowledgeable about the electoral process.
- Refrain from publishing material that whips up ethnic or religious sentiments or results of opinion polls that cannot vouch for with the sole intent of swaying unwary voters.

#### Civil society organizations

Based on their capacities it is useful for civil society organisations, including faith-based groups to scrutinise the activities of the EC, participate in electoral education and monitor the abuse of electoral rights and fundamental human rights generally. Another crucial role played by the CSO's is to bring into the public domain abuse of incumbency and also to campaign for peaceful elections. Last but not least is to do election observation.

## The judiciary

Disputes over electoral preparations and outcomes are normal, and will occur from time to time. It is imperative that the courts settle such disputes fairly and punish offenders without delay. Obviously, the requirement to be fair will be problematic if the judiciary is not independent.

## **Importance of elections to democracy**

Democracy is largely understood to refer to a system of governance in which rulers are held accountable for their actions in the public realm by citizens acting indirectly through the competition and cooperation of their elected representatives. Lipset (1959) for example defines democracy as "a political system which supplies regular constitutional opportunities for changing the governing officials, and a social mechanism which permits the largest possible part of the population to influence major decisions by choosing among contenders for political office."

Schmitter and Karl (1991) in addressing what democracy "is and is not" assert that democracy is a political system that "operates by the contingent consent of the governed by politicians acting under conditions of bounded uncertainty." Huntington(1991) identifies democracies in terms of "the extent that its most powerful collective decision makers are selected through fair honest, and periodic election in which candidates freely compete for votes and in which virtually all the adult population is eligible to vote. Attempts to define elections

have equally been extended to the level of several domestic legislations. For example in Ghana elections are defined as a ‘combination of acts and procedures aiming at choosing, among various candidates, members of parliament or the president of the state’. Afari-Gyan (2009) notes that an election to public office in a multi-party democracy is characterised by four basic features:

Firstly, it is a contest between individual candidates or political parties or both. Secondly, through various activities election management body mediates the contest. Thirdly, the process associated with the contest must be fair and transparent. Finally, the outcome of the elections is determined by the votes of the electorate. The days are gone by when some scholars almost derided such contest as being of little consequence to democracy in Africa, presumably in view of the then flawed elections. Over the years, as electoral environment has improved, all have come to the realisation that periodic elections are critical to a democracy. Some of the potential benefits of elections to a democracy are numerous. In the first place elections are the only legitimate entrance to a democratic leadership. They provide an avenue for the electorate to express their will and sovereignty and give legitimacy to their political leaders.

Also, elections are the most demonstrable opportunity for political parties to articulate policies and programmes that they believe respect the aspirations of the people. Similarly, elections are the most demonstrable opportunity for electorate not only to assess the performance of the incumbent government, but also to indicate their expectations of future government. Last but not least, some

aspects of the cherished fundamental freedoms in a democratic society are on test during election.

The fundamental freedoms as enshrined in Article 21(1) in 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana plays crucial roles in elections due to the following reasons;

- The freedom of expression is essential for political discussion and the dissemination of campaign.
- The freedom of movement underpins campaigning and access to the electorate
- The freedom of assembly makes possible political meetings and rallies. The freedom of choice is essential to an election, for without choice voting is meaningless.

Elections represent a critical test of social cohesion and, if badly managed, could easily tear apart the fabric of society. The factors assembled are by no means intended to be exhaustive of the significance of elections to a democracy, but it is believed that they are sufficient to indicate why some people consider elections as the litmus test of democracy.

### **Elections and good governance**

Elections are one of the key instruments for facilitating good governance practices. The fear of defeat at elections tends to engender responsiveness to the concerns of the people and to promote good performance and accountability of



political leaders. The United Nations (UN) defines good governance according to an eight point model. These are participatory, consensus-oriented, accountable, transparent, responsive, effective and efficient, equitable and inclusive and the rule of law. According to this model, the UN assures that corruption is minimized, the views of minorities are taken into account and that the voices of the most vulnerable in society are heard in decision-making. Nowadays, international recognition and support for developing countries are often linked to the conduct of free and fair elections (United Nations, 2005).

### **Overview of the electoral system of Ghana**

As previously mentioned, the 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana recognises a multiparty state. It provides for the basic standards and principles of elections. Since its inception, it has witnessed five sets of elections in 1992, 1996, 2000, 2004 and 2008. The laws and norms governing elections in Ghana are framed in accordance with the provisions of the constitution. Generally, the Ghanaian electoral system comprises constitutional provisions regulating elections, the Political Parties Law (PNDL Law 281), the Representation of the People Law of 1992 (PNDC Law 284) and the Representation of the People Instrument (LI1538). Altogether these instruments have some basic characteristics. Ayee (1998) pointed out that some of the features of the Ghanaian electoral system include:

Universal adult suffrage for citizens who are 18 years and above (it used to be 21 years up to the advent of the second Republic, 1969 – 1972); Secret ballot; Official registration of voters; presidential and parliamentary and local government elections on the basis of first-past-the post. Presidential and parliamentary elections are held every four years; and 230 constituencies for purposes of elections to the legislature.

Badu and Larbie (1996) noted that there are other features which characterize the system. These include parliamentary and local elections on the basis of the first-past-the-post, a run-off election in case of no winner on the first ballot, no minimum voter turn-out requirement for presidential or parliamentary election and a permanent electoral commission. The most prominent tool of the Ghanaian electoral system is the Representation of the People Law of 1992 (PNDC Law 284). It is the key instrument which regulates the scope and content of the right to vote as provided under the Constitution of Ghana. Passed by parliament in 1992, the Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC) Law 284 has been amended twice. The first amendment in 1994 added and substituted substantive provisions to the body of subsection (3) of section 11 of the law, and it repealed paragraph (a) and (b) of the same provision. The second amendment extended the right to vote to Ghanaians living abroad. Since the restoration of multi-party democracy in 1993, Ghana has allowed multi parties to contest each election in accordance with the standards recognised in the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD).

Political parties (PP) have become primary mechanism that helps create an enabling environment for people to participate in the political process. Ghana's constitution also requires PP to be organised alongside democratic principles. Nevertheless in Ghana just as in other African countries PP are normally formed on ethnic lines and are mostly hi-jacked by few affluent people and sometimes bedeviled by the problem of internal party democracy. Article 55 of the constitution and the Political Parties Act of 2000. The main legal frameworks governing the formation and activities of PP in Ghana is the Act 574.

### **The Electoral Commission of Ghana**

The EC is one of the institutions formed under the 1992 Constitution of Ghana. The Commission was established by the Electoral Commission Act (Act 451) of 1993. It was set up purposely to manage all matters directly to the conduct of elections in the country. It is made up of 7 members – a chairman, 2 deputy chairman and 4 other members. The Commission has administrative and regulatory powers. The members meet regularly to make policies for implementation on day-to-day basis. Two co-ordinating directors, a number of directors and department/sections heads assist the chairman and the two deputies in the administration of the Commission. Currently, the Commission has offices being manned by electoral officers in all the 170 Metropolitan ,Municipal and District Assembly's (MMDA's) throughout the country who are well trained and are devoted to delivering incontrovertible elections to the acceptance of all

stakeholders. The work of the Commission according to the 1992 Ghana's Constitution covers: deciding on the electoral law and system, constituency delimitation, election management, voter registration, civic education and voter information, political organization and registration, electoral campaigns, including protection and respect for fundamental human rights, political meetings, media access and coverage, balloting, monitoring and results declaration, hearing complaints and dispute resolution.

### **Elections in Ghana**

In Ghana elections are viewed with particular importance. They are thought to be a process that formalises the character of popular participation in and influence over government. In fact, Ayee (1998) in his book "The 1996 General Elections and Democratic Consolidation in Ghana" noted that the rules of the electoral game are subject to definition and redefinition by those in power. He further observed that it is possible for those in power to adjust the rules of democratic process in order to diminish or even preclude the very possibility of electoral influence. The history of elections in Ghana dates before 1951 when Ghana was under British colonial rule. At first, the colonial system made no provision for participation of the natives in the process. Later, a few representatives of society were appointed to represent the local population in the council of representatives which resembled the colonial local parliament.

An election based on political parties and universal adult suffrage was conducted for the first time on 8 February 1951. Several elections were held after independence in 1957. Along with the 1966, 1972, 1979 and 1981 elections; military coups erupted and threatened the very attempts of democracy. At that time, the formation of political parties was banned. After the last coup in 1981, a military regime was established controlling the administration of state affairs until 1992 when the new constitution was adopted. On 15 March of the same year, the ban on political party activity was lifted. Under the 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana the President is the head of state and government and commander-in-chief of the armed forces. In terms of the Constitution his ascendance into power is subject to attainment of more than fifty per cent of the total number of valid votes cast in the presidential election.

The law further provides that legislative power is vested in Parliament, and its exercise is subject to compliance with the provisions of the constitution. The Parliament of Ghana consists of no less than two hundred and thirty elected members. Finally, the law provides that the EC may divide the Republic of Ghana into as many constituencies as needed for the purposes of election of parliamentary members.

### **Challenges in conducting free and fair elections**

Weak rule of law in many countries is the common reason why elections do not meet international standards of being "free and fair". One major challenge

is interference from the incumbent government. Dictators may use the powers of the executive (police, martial law, censorship, physical implementation of the election mechanism, etc.) to remain in power despite popular opinion in favour of removal. Problems that prevent an election from being "free and fair" take various forms one factor is lack of open political debate or an informed electorate. The electorate may be poorly informed about issues or candidates due to lack of: freedom of the press, objectivity in the press due to state or corporate control. Freedom of speech may be curtailed by the state, favouring certain viewpoints or state propaganda. Similarly, unfair rules leading to gerrymandering, exclusion of opposition candidates from eligibility for office, and manipulating thresholds for electoral success are some of the ways (United Nations, 2009).

Another difficulty with the running of elections is the interference with campaigns. Those in power may arrest or assassinate candidates, suppress or even criminalize campaigning, harass or beat political opponents, or intimidate voters with violence. Perhaps, the greatest challenge in holding elections in West Africa is tampering with the election mechanism. This can include confusing or misleading voters about how to vote, violation of the secret ballot, ballot stuffing, tampering with voting machines, destruction of legitimately cast ballots, voter suppression, fraudulent tabulation of results, and use of physical force or verbal intimidation at polling stations (Adama, 2005).

## **Elections and conflicts in Africa**

The issue of governance is a prime concern in African development strategies. Intrinsicly intertwined with this factor is that of elections. African leaders seem to generally agree that a change of government should be by the ballot and not by the bullet. The African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance, which was adopted in January 2007 by African Heads of Government, is evident of this general consensus even though the Charter is not yet in force. Notwithstanding this consensus, African leaders are still not prepared to leave office after being voted out by the people. As such, these politicians have resorted to manipulating the ballot system. It seems paradoxical that elections which ought to be the key to democracy are now the 'wisest' tool in legitimising autocratic rule. Despite having a number of elections, dictators remain in power in countries such as Libya, Egypt, Tunisia, Sudan, Chad, Cameroon, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Zimbabwe, Angola, Swaziland, Guinea and Niger.

The current strategy by the African Union is to encourage the creation of independent electoral commissions that have their independence entrenched in national constitutions. This is an attempt by the African Union to encourage the independence of these institutions. However, recent elections in Nigeria, Kenya, Zimbabwe and Cote d'Ivoire have exposed the inherent weaknesses of the current system. Both Kenya and Zimbabwe have independent electoral bodies but were subject to manipulation by incumbent government authorities. Both elections revealed that electoral bodies wield immense power and if such power is not

directed responsibly it could result in mass killings of the citizenry (Quashigah and Okafor, 2009).

Elections are one of the major causes of conflict in Africa. Disputed results and an imbalance in the powers of the competing parties have resulted in various major conflicts in Africa in countries such as Kenya and Zimbabwe (Africa Governance, Monitoring and Advocacy Project, 2007). Elections have been used in Africa as a tool for resolving civil wars and other intra-national conflicts. They have also been used as the gateway from colonial rule to independence. Strangely, elections have also been accused of fuelling conflict due to the manner in which they polarize groups, mainly on ethnic or racial grounds, especially when electoral rules are manipulated by incumbent regimes. West Africa is a volatile region where stolen elections will not be received 'warmly' by the citizenry, as is the case in Ghana (Quashigah & Okafor, 2009).

In Ghana, both the NDC and NPP have reported violence against their agents in the opposing party's stronghold in recent times. Some of which includes, Issa Mobila's death in 2004, the murder of Sule Alhassan - an NPP activist - at Agblogloshie market on the day the 2008 election results were announced and the killing of three NPP activists at 'Konkomba' Market in Accra after the declaration of the 2008 presidential election results as well as the scenes from Bawku, Gushegu, Tamale Central and Mion constituencies - just to mention a few - resulting from pre-election and post electoral related violence exposed the country's political frailties. The need to maintain the absence of conflict through credible elections for future polls is of paramount importance (Adu, 2009).



## **Conceptual framework**

The study was guided by Inter Parliamentary Union (2006) concept of free and fair elections. According to this concept, in any state, the authority of the government can only derive from the will of the people as expressed in genuine, free and fair elections held at regular intervals on the basis of universal, equal and secret suffrage. Every adult citizen has the right to vote in elections, on a nondiscriminatory basis. Every adult citizen has the right to access to an effective, impartial and non-discriminatory procedure for the registration of voters. No eligible citizen shall be denied the right to vote or disqualified from registration as a voter, otherwise than in accordance with objectively verifiable criteria prescribed by law, and provided that such measures are consistent with the state's obligations under international law. The right to vote in secret is absolute and shall not be restricted in any manner whatsoever.

Inter Parliamentary Union's concept of free and fair elections further entails that everyone has the right to join, or together with others to establish, a political party or organization for the purpose of competing in an election. Everyone individually and together with others has the right to express political opinions without interference. Every candidate for election and every political party shall have an equal opportunity of access to the media, particularly the mass communications media, in order to put forward their political views. The right of candidates to security with respect to their lives and property shall be recognized and protected. Finally, there should be independent professional Election Management Body to organize incontrovertible elections in the country.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **Introduction**

This chapter discusses the various methods and techniques that the study employed in the collection of data and the analysis of results. It describes the study area, research design, data and sources, study population, sampling size, sampling techniques, research instruments, fieldwork, data analysis and ethical issues.

#### **Study area**

The Amansie Central District Assembly (ACDWA) is one of the 27 administrative districts in the Ashanti Region. This district was established by Legislative Instrument (LI 1774, 2004). Just as the other assemblies in the country derive their powers, structure and functions from the Local Government Act 462. The district is located in the southern part of the Ashanti region and shares common boundaries with Bekwai Municipal Assembly to the north-east, Amansie West to the west, Obuasi Municipal Assembly to the south-east, Adansi North to the east, Adansi South and Upper Denkyira in the Central Region to the south. The district can be found within Latitude 6000N and 6030N and Longitudes

1000W and 2000W. According to the 1992 Constitution and other enactments, a district assembly is the highest political and administrative body in the district. It exercises deliberative, legislative and executive functions.

The Assembly is made up of the District Chief Executive, assembly members of whom 16 or two-thirds are elected by universal adult suffrage and 7 or one-third are appointed by the President in consultation with chiefs and interest groups in the district. The Member of Parliament in the area is an ex-officio member. The Assembly is chaired by the Presiding Member, who is elected from among the members of the Assembly. For effective administration, the District Chief Executive, who is the political head of the district, is supported by the central administration, headed by the District Co-ordinating Director to govern the area. The Amansie Central has about 206 settlements with Jacobu as the administrative capital. The district has five major communities which comprised Jacobu, Afoako, Tweapease, Fiankoma and Apitisu.

Politically and administratively, the district has only one constituency that is Odotobri. There are 16 electoral areas and 99 unit committees which constitute the last substructure of the assembly. There is one town council and 6 area councils which are functional. According to the 2000 Population and Housing Census, the total area of the district is about 710sqkm. The district has a total population of 81,871, of which the urban population is 7,825 and the rural population 74,076 which constitutes 9.6 and 90.4 % respectively. The sex population for male is 42.6% while that of female 57.4%. The district has an economically active population of 47.6% and an economically inactive population

of 52.4%. The economically active population and gainfully employed constitute about 32.3 percent. The remaining 67.7 percent of the population depends on the 32.3 percent for their livelihood. The dependency ratio therefore is about 1: 3. According to the EC, Amansie Central District has 117 polling stations and the voter population of 37,425 as at 2008. Similarly, available statistics released from Ghana Education Service (GES) quotes the literate and illiteracy rates of population to be at 60.2% and 39.8% respectively. Currently, there are 6 political parties operating in the district and the active ones are the NPP, and NDC and the inactive ones are the, CPP, PNC, GCPP and RPD.

### **Study design**

A descriptive research methodology and a survey were used for the study. Descriptive research presents a picture of the specific details of a situation, social setting or relation. This design has been chosen based on the objectives of the study and the research questions associated with it. The term ‘survey’ on the other hand refers to a research methodology designed to collect data from a specific population, or a sample from that population and typically utilizes a questionnaire or an interview as the survey instrument (Robson, 1993). Surveys are widely accepted as a key tool for conducting and applying basic social science research methodology. It is the most appropriate design and could lead to the drawing of meaningful conclusions from the study.

## **Study population**

The study comprised seven categories of election stakeholders. These were the electorate, Electoral Commission, political parties, media, security agencies, Amansie Central District Assembly and traditional authorities. These people were selected because the organization of any free and fair elections to a larger extent depends on them. They were also involved to know their contributions in the 2008 national elections in Ghana and the challenges that affected them in their effort to promote free and fair elections at Amansie Central District.

## **Sample size**

The Fisher, Laing, Stoeckel and Townsend (1998) formula for determining sample size was employed to get a representative sample size for the electorate. This formula is given as:

$$n = \frac{z^2 pq}{d^2}$$

Where:

n= the desired sample size (when the population is greater than 10000)

z= the standard normal deviation, usually set at 1.96 which corresponds to 95 percent confidence level;

p= the proportion of the target population have particular characteristics or the knowledge of the target population on a particular phenomenon

q= 1.0-p; and

d= the degree of accuracy desired, this is usually set at 0.05.

With (z) statistic being 1.96, degree of accuracy (d) set at 0.05 percent and the common characteristics (universal adult suffrage rights, which 18years and above) of the target population on elections (p) at 95 percent which is equivalent to 0.95, then “n” is:

$$n = \frac{(1.96)^2 (0.95) (0.05)}{0.05^2}$$

$$n = 73$$

Seventy three (73) respondents were obtained but to cater for non-response rate 27 respondents were added. As a result of this, 100 electorate were selected for the study. Since the electorate are not the only people that makes up election stakeholders other election stakeholders were also involved.

Concerning the other stakeholders, 50 respondents comprising 10 respondents each from the Electoral Commission, political parties, media, security agencies and the Amansie Central District Assembly were selected. Six traditional chiefs were also involved in the study. In all 156 respondents were involved in the study. The distribution of the total sample size for the study is shown in Table 1.

**Table 1: Total sample population for the study**

Units	Sample size
Electorate	100
Electoral Commission	10
Political parties	10
Media	10
Security Agencies	10
Amansie Central District Assembly	10
Traditional Authorities	6
Total	156

Source: Fieldwork, 2010

### **Sampling techniques**

Both probability and non-probability sampling techniques were used to collect data from the respondents. Simple random and purposive sampling techniques were used to select the respondents. Simple random sampling which is an example of probability sampling technique was used to select the electorate for the study. In doing this, the 2008 National Voters Register for Amansie Central District was used.

There are five major communities in Amansie Central District (Jacobu, Afoako, Tweapease, Fiankoma and Apitisu) so in each community relying on the 2008 National Voters Register for the Amansie Central District 20 electors were

randomly selected to make up the 100 respondents assigned to the electorate. Purposive sampling on the other hand which is example of non-probability sampling technique was used to select the other stakeholders. Purposive sampling which is a form of sampling technique in which people that have expertise or have much knowledge about a phenomenon on which a research is being undertaken are selected. Ten (10) respondents each from the Electoral Commission, political parties, media, Amansie Central District Assembly and 6 traditional authorities were purposively selected.

### **Sources of data**

Both primary and secondary data were used in the study. Primary data were collected using questionnaires and interview schedule from the study population through a field survey. Examples of data collected from the field include the socio-demographic characteristics of respondents, the electorate perception on what constitute free and fair elections, the roles played by elections stakeholders to ensure free and fair elections in 2008 national elections at Amansie Central District, and the challenges facing election stakeholders in the promotion of free and fair elections in Amansie Central District.

Secondary data on elections and activities relating to elections were obtained from the Electoral Commission office at Amansie Central District. Other secondary information on the elections was obtained from books, journals,



newspapers, seminars, articles, reports, the internet, as well as, conference and working papers.

### **Research instruments**

Two main research instruments namely questionnaire and interview guide were used in the study. Questionnaire and interview schedule were used because of the advantages they offer in a study. According to Richardson (2004), using questionnaire and interview schedule in a study is good because data collected through the use of these instruments are standardized and therefore easy to analyse. In addition, through these research instruments, data were gathered quickly from large number of respondents.

The questionnaire was used to collect data from the respondents of the Electoral Commission, media, political parties, security agencies and the Amansie Central District Assembly. This is because the workers in these institutions have high educational background and this enabled them to answer the questionnaires without any difficulties. The interview schedule was administered on the electorate and the traditional authorities. This helped the electorate and traditional authorities who were illiterates or have low educational background to participate in the study. The use of the interview schedule helped the researcher to translate some of the questions into Twi which is the most widely spoken language in the area for the respondents to provide required answers to them. The questionnaire and the interview guide had a mixture of close and open ended questions.

## **Fieldwork**

The fieldwork for the study took place between 6<sup>th</sup> November and 14<sup>th</sup> December, 2010. In all, one month and nine days were used to collect data from the field. The first three weeks were used to administer the interview schedules among the electorate and the traditional authorities whilst the remaining days left were used to distribute the questionnaires on the other stakeholders. The administration of the interview schedules was undertaken in the morning from 7:00 am to 10:00am and in the evening from 4:00pm and 6:00 pm. The administration of the questionnaires were done during working hours from 8:00 am to 3: 00 pm because it was around this time that most of the respondents were at post in their respective institutions.

## **Data analysis**

The questionnaires and interview schedules were processed through the use of Statistical Product for Service Solution (SPSS) version 15. In doing this, all completed questionnaires and interview guide were first scrutinize to correct the errors that were made in some of the data. All the open-ended questions were also quantified to facilitate easy input into the SPSS software. After this, all the questionnaires and interview schedules were coded, a template was laid and all the data were inputted in to the SPSS software. The SPSS was used to run

descriptive analysis such as frequencies, percentages, tables and charts to present the results of the study.

### **Ethical issues**

Ethical issues were not left out during the field work. Permission was obtained from the traditional authorities and the Amansie Central District Assembly before the field work was embarked on. Concerning the administration of the questionnaire and the interview schedule consent was sought from respondents before they were involved in the study. In addition to this, the researcher identified himself with the respondents to avoid false impression. The purpose of the study and the nature of the questionnaire and interview schedule were also made known to the respondents. Participation in the study was not compulsory.

Anonymity of respondents was respected. During the field work, all forms of identification including respondents' names, addresses and telephone numbers were avoided. All the information given by the respondents was protected confidentially. In doing this, information given by one respondent was not made known to the others.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

#### **Introduction**

This chapter provides the results and discussion for the data collected from the field. It covers four main areas; namely, the socio-demographic characteristics of respondents, perception of the electorate on free and fair elections, roles played by stakeholders in the 2008 presidential and parliamentary elections, challenges facing stakeholders in promoting free and fair elections, and conclusion.

#### **Socio-demographic characteristics of respondents**

Although, the study was not geared towards the description of the personal characteristics of respondents, it was important to highlight some of the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents to have a fair idea about the status of the respondents. Socio-demographic variables that were considered were sex, age, level of education, ethnic background and occupation of the respondents.

Sex of respondents

Election stakeholders play important roles in electoral activities especially in elections. Their active participation in elections makes election successful. They participate in election by voting, attending political parties rallies, monitoring of election proceedings and other activities. Table 2 shows the gender of the stakeholders (Table 2).

**Table 2: Sex distribution of respondents**

Sex	Frequency	Percent
Male	87	55.8
Female	69	44.2
Total	156	100.0

Source: Fieldwork, 2010

The results in Table 2 show that males constitute the majority of election stakeholders in Amansie Central District. Out of the 156 election stakeholders that were interviewed 55.8 percent were males whilst 44.2 percent were females. This finding is contrary to the 2000 Population and Housing Census of the area where females out-numbered their male counterparts.

#### Age of respondents

Ghana's population is described as a youthful one with most people falling within the working age; that is, between 15- 64 years. To find the situation in Amansie Central District, the respondents were asked to indicate their ages on the questionnaires. Table 3 shows the age distribution of the respondents.

**Table 3: Age distribution of respondents**

Age	Frequency	Percent
18 – 27	41	26.3
28 – 37	58	37.2
38 – 47	23	14.7
48 – 57	15	9.6
58 – 67	12	7.7
68 and above	7	4.5
Total	156	100.0

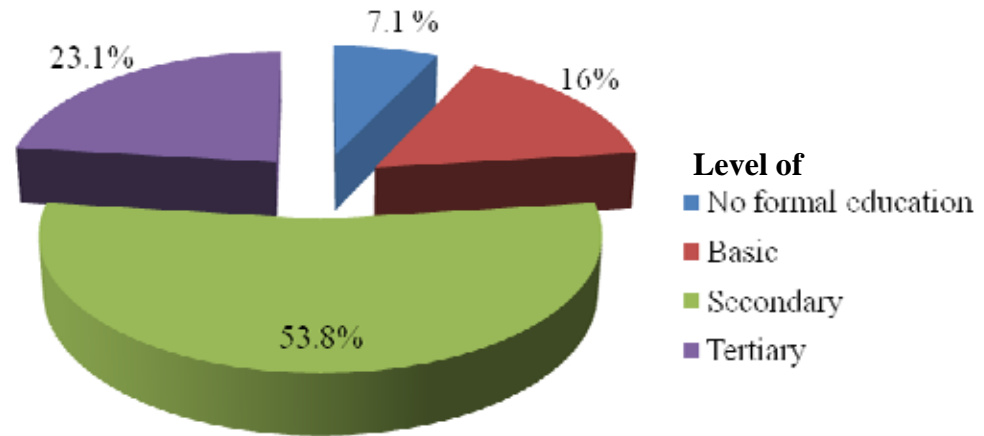
Source: Fieldwork, 2010

The respondents within the age bracket 28 – 37 constituted the majority with 37.2 percent. The age group that was second was the 18 -27 age group. It had 26.3 percent, followed by 38 - 47 age category with 14.7 percent. Respondents who were 68 years and above were the smallest with 4.5 percent. The age distribution of the respondents shows that most of the respondents fall within the working age and hence conforms to the working age trend in Ghana.

#### Level of education

The educational background of election stakeholders is important. The level of education of the stakeholders has some effect on their level of participation in electoral activities. This is because when a person has high level of education, such person can easily comprehend the concept of election, the importance of elections, read and understand election regulations and hence

participate well in many electoral activities to make election within their area successful. The level of education of the respondents was high (Figure 1).



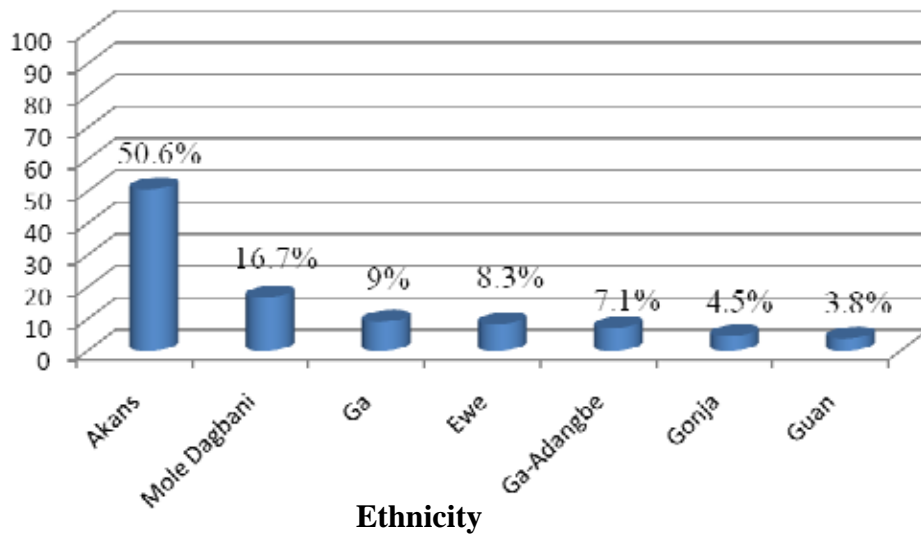
**Figure 1: Educational background of respondents**

Source: Fieldwork, 2010

Among the respondents involved in the study, the majority 53.8% of them had secondary education. About 23.1 percent had tertiary education and only 7.1 percent had no formal education. The high proportion of the respondents with secondary and tertiary education can be attributed to the selection of stakeholders like the Electoral Commission, security agencies, the media, and the Amansie Central District Assembly. These stakeholders require secondary and/or tertiary level of education as a minimum job requirement in their institutions. The educational distribution of the respondents does not conform to the educational background of residents in the area where majority of the residents have basic education as their highest educational qualification (Ghana Statistical Service, 2008).

## Ethnic background

The 2008 Ghana Living Standard Survey Round Five (GLSS 5) revealed that Akans constitute the highest ethnic group in Ghana (Ghana Statistical Service, 2008). What was observed in the study area was not different. The majority of the respondents were Akans. About 50.6 percent of the respondents were Akans.



**Figure 2: Ethnic background of respondents**

Source: Fieldwork, 2010

After the Akans, the Mole-Dagbani ethnic group had 16.7 percent followed by Ga (9%), and Ewe (8.3%).



## Occupation

In Ghana as a whole, the most dominant economic activity is agriculture. As a result of this, most people are employed in agriculture and agriculture-related activities. The occupational background of the respondents conformed to the general occupational pattern in Ghana (Table 4)

**Table 4: Occupation of respondents**

Occupation	Frequency	Percent
Industry	2	1.3
Unemployed	3	1.9
Commerce	17	10.9
Public/Civil Servants	63	40.4
Agriculture	71	45.5
Total	156	100.0

Source: Fieldwork, 2010

From Table 4, about 45.5% of the respondents indicated that they were employed in the agricultural sector. Those employed in the Public/Civil Service sector were 40.4 %, 10.9 % in commerce with only 1.3 % in the industrial sector. Amansie Central District is in the forest zone of Ghana where the soil, rainfall, temperature and other elements of the weather are favourable for farming. This may be the reason why many of the respondents were engaged in agricultural activities.

## **The perception of the electorate on free and fair elections**

The electorate form greater percent of election stakeholders across the world. As a result of dominant nature of the electorate, their perception on any aspect of elections or electoral activities may affect elections either positively or negatively. Therefore, the electorate was asked to express their views on free and fair elections to know how they perceive free and fair elections. Out of the total sample size of the study which was 156 respondents, the electorate constituted 100 of the interviewees so all the analysis done on the perception of free and fair elections represent the views of only the electorate. The perceptions on free and fair elections were assessed on the following issue; elements of free elections, elements of fair elections, the voters register, the nature of elections at Amansie Central District and participation in electoral activities.

### Elements of free elections

For elections to be accepted as free, the people must be free to register as a voter, to form or join a political party, to stand for elections, to attend political meetings and rallies, to campaign, to decide whom to vote for, to cast a secret ballot. There must also be no vote buying, multiple voting, violence, intimidation and rigging of election results (Afari-Gyan, 2009). Despite the above, the electorate perceived free elections to have mainly three elements namely, elections with no violence, no multiple voting and no intimidation (Table, 5).

**Table 5: Electorate perception of free elections**

Elements of free elections	Frequency	Percent
No violence	98	24.8
No multiple voting	85	21.5
No intimidation	81	20.5
No rigging of election results	43	10.9
Free to cast a secret ballot	37	9.4
Free to stand for elections	29	7.3
Free to attend political meetings	22	5.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>395</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Fieldwork, 2010

\*Multiple responses

In Table 5, the most of respondents (24.8%) perceived free election to be an election with no violence. Election with no multiple voting (21.5%) and no intimidation (20.5%) were the other two elements that the electorate perceived free election to have. Other elements that makes elections free like no rigging of election results, free to cast a secret ballot, free to stand for election and free to attend political meetings had no responses from the respondents. In addition, some elements such as free to register as a voter and free to form or join a political party also did not receive any responses from the respondents. The results in Table 5 show that the electorate has negative perception of free elections and this can be attributed to their inadequate knowledge of the concept of free elections.

## Elements of fair elections

Fair election comprises elements such as non-discriminatory electoral regulations, easy participation of electoral processes, easy understanding of electoral procedures and fair actions of election stakeholders (e.g. EC, government, political parties, judiciary, voters, security agencies, media etc.) (Gyan, 2009). The perception of the electorate of fair election was limited. The majority of the respondents (62.1%) perceived fair election to have only one element, which is the application of the electoral regulations without any discrimination. Table 6 shows the perceptions of fair elections.

**Table 6: Electorate perception of fair elections**

Elements of fair elections	Frequency	Percent
Application of electoral regulations without any discrimination	92	62.1
Fair actions of election stakeholders	39	26.4
Easy to participate in the electoral process	17	11.5
Total	148	100

Source: Fieldwork, 2010

\*Multiple responses

From Table 6, apart from the application of the electoral regulations without any discrimination, the remaining elements of fair elections had less than 30 percent response from the electorate. For example, fair actions of election

stakeholders and easy to participate in electoral process had 26.4 percent, 11.5 percent response from the electorate respectively. Information in the media on discriminatory practices given to voters during national elections in Ghana and other parts of Africa might be the reason why majority of the electorate perceive elections to fair when electoral regulations are not discriminatory.

#### Voters' register

Voters' register is one of the key instruments that the electoral commissions use to conduct nation elections. For every election to be free and fair, the voters register must be accurate, free from multiple registrations of voters. Over the years, the state of Ghana's voters register has received diverse views from many people. While some people perceive the voters register to be good and accurate some people also believed that the voters register is inaccurate and contains multiple registrations especially regarding the controversy surrounding the allegation of some bloated registers in Ashanti Region prior to the 2008 national polls (Adu, 2009). The perceptions of the electorate in the study area were sought on the national voters register at Amansie Central District to know how they perceive the voters register in their locality.

In general, the perception of the national voters register in Amansie Central District was good. Table 7 shows the perceptions on the national voters' register.

**Table 7: Electorate perception of the voters' register**

Statement	SA (%)	A (%)	U (%)	D (%)	SD (%)	Total
The voters register is inclusive and up to date	11.0	21.0	52.0	13.0	3.0	100
The voters register contains many ghost names	27.0	18.0	5.0	4.0	46.0	100
The voters register contains multiple registrations	6.0	16.0	5.0	67.0	6.0	100
The voters register contains the names of unqualified persons	14.0	7.0	22.0	23.0	34.0	100

{SA= Strongly agree; A= Agree; U= Undecided; D= Disagree; SD=Strongly disagree}, N=100

Source: Fieldwork, 2010

With the exception of the statement “the voters register is inclusive and up to date” where majority of the electorate (52%) were undecided, most of the electorate had good perception of the voters register. For example, most of the electorate (50%) believed that the register did not contain many ghost names, about 73 percent believed that the register did not contain multiple registrations and about 57 percent were of the view that the voters register did not contain names of unqualified persons. The good perception of the electorate of the voters register in Amansie Central District corroborates Ghana’s Electoral Commission’s view that Ghanaian voters register is accurate and contains the names of all legitimate voter’s (Clotney, 2008).

## The nature of elections in Amansie Central District

Although the 2008 presidential and parliamentary elections of Ghana were successful, there were some cases of election malpractices which made some people think that the 2008 national election was not free and fair. The electorate were asked to express their views on the 2008 presidential and parliamentary elections. Overall, majority of the electorate believed that 2008 presidential and parliamentary election in their area was free and fair (Table 8).

**Table 8: Electorate perception of the 2008 national elections at Amansie Central District**

<u>Extent of agreement</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Strongly agree	62	62.0
Agree	23	23.0
Undecided	2	2.0
Disagree	7	7.0
Strongly disagree	6	6.0
Total	100	100.0

Source: Fieldwork, 2010

Out of the 100 electorate, 85 percent indicated that the 2008 presidential and parliamentary election in their area was free and fair. Only 6 percent indicated that the 2008 presidential and parliamentary election in their area was not free and fair. The views expressed by the electorate in Table 8 show that the electorate perceived the 2008 presidential and parliamentary election in Amansie Central

District as free and fair. This means that the electorate were able to cast a secret ballot and there were no multiple voting, violence, intimidation and rigging of election results during the 2008 presidential and parliamentary election in Amansie Central District.

After knowing the electorate over all perception of the 2008 presidential and parliamentary elections in Amansie Central District, the electorate background characteristics were examined via their perception of the 2008 presidential and parliamentary elections. This helped the study to get much insight of the electorate perception of the 2008 presidential and parliamentary elections in Amansie Central District. It also helped to know the trend of the electorate perception across their socio-demographic characteristics. Sex, age, educational background and level of education were the socio-demographic characteristics of the electorate that were used to assess their perceptions.

With respect to the sex background of the electorate, it was found out that males perceived the 2008 presidential and parliamentary elections as free and fair compared to their female counterparts. About 43 percent (42.9%) of the electorate who were males viewed the 2008 presidential and parliamentary elections as free and fair compared to 32.8 percent responses from their female counterparts (Table 9).



**Table 9: Socio-demographic characteristics via their perception of the 2008 presidential elections in Amansie Central District**

Socio-demographic characteristics	Perception of free and fair elections	
	Yes (%)	No (%)
<i>Sex</i>		
Male	42.9	12.8
Female	32.8	11.5
<i>Total</i>	75.7	24.3
<i>Age</i>		
18-27	18.6	7.7
28-37	32.8	4.5
38-47	11.5	3.3
48-57	5.1	4.5
58-67	5.8	1.9
68 and above	3.8	0.6
<i>Total</i>	77.6	22.4
<i>Level of education</i>		
No formal education	1.3	5.8
Basic	5.8	10.1
Secondary	40.4	16.1
Tertiary	18.6	1.9
<i>Total</i>	66.1	33.9
<i>Occupation</i>		
Unemployed	1.3	0.6
Industry	1.3	0.0
Commerce	7.1	3.8
Public/civil servants	32.7	7.8
Agric	27.6	17.8
<i>Total</i>	70.0	30.0

Source: Fieldwork, 2011

Among the age groups, the 32.8% proportion of the electorate within 28-37 age brackets had the highest positive perception of the 2008 presidential and parliamentary elections (Table 9). The 40.4% of the electorate with secondary educational background perceived the 2008 presidential and parliamentary election as free and fair compared to the electorate with other educational

background. Furthermore, the 32.7% of the electorate who were civil/public servants perceived the 2008 presidential and parliamentary elections as free and fair compared to the electorate with other employment background (Table 9). In all, across all the four socio-demographic characteristics of the electorate, the electorate had positive perception of the 2008 presidential and parliamentary elections in Amansie Central District.

**Roles played by stakeholders in the 2008 presidential and parliamentary elections.**

For any election to be free and fair devoid of any violence, some actors or stakeholders of elections should perform their roles well. To know the roles that the various election stakeholders performed in the 2008 presidential and parliamentary elections in Amansie Central District, the stakeholders were asked to indicate the roles they performed best to ensure free and fair elections. The electorate pointed out three roles that they performed to ensure free and fair elections in the 2008 national elections in their area (Table 10).

**Table 10: Roles played by the electorate to ensure free and fair election**

Role	Frequency	Percent
Avoiding multiple voting	87	40.1
Not engaging in violence	72	33.2
Not intimidating other voters	58	26.7
Total	217	100

Source: Fieldwork, 2010

Among the roles played by the electorate, avoidance of multiple voting was the highest (Table 10). About 40 percent of the electorate indicated that in order to make the 2008 national election in Amansie Central free and fair they did not engage in multiple voting practices. Apart from the electorate, the other stakeholders (Electoral Commission, political parties, the media, security agencies, District Assembly and traditional authorities) that were involved in the study also indicated the various roles that they played to make the 2008 national elections in Amansie Central District free and fair. Table 11 present the roles played by stakeholders other than the electorate in Amansie Central District.

**Table 11: Roles played by other stakeholders**

Role	Frequency	Percent
<b>Electoral Commission</b>		
Applying the electoral regulations fairly	6	60.0
Organising transparent elections	3	30.0
Ensuring easy access of stakeholders to electoral facilities	1	10.0
Total	10	100.0
<b>Political parties</b>		
Education of party supporters on peaceful elections	7	70.0
Offering platform for candidates to contest elections	3	30.0
Total	10	100.0

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Continuation of Table 11

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**Media**

Giving equal opportunity to political parties to showcase their policies, ideas etc on our network	6	60.0
Educating the general public on the electoral process	4	40.0
Total	10	100.0

**Security agencies**

Keeping order at polling stations and collation centres	5	50.0
Protecting electoral materials	5	50.0
Total	10	100.0

**The District Assembly**

Giving electoral education to the electorate in the district	7	70.0
Not interfering in the activities of the EC	3	30.0
Total	10	100.0

**Traditional authorities**

Giving equal support to all political parties in the area	6	100.0
Total	6	100.0

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Source: Fieldwork, 2010

The Electoral Commission indicated that applying the electoral regulation fairly (60%), organizing transparent elections (30%) and ensuring easy access of stakeholders to electoral facilities were the three main roles they played to ensure

free and fair elections in Amansie Central District (Table 11). Among the political parties, education of party supporters on peaceful elections (70%) and Offering platform for candidates to contest elections (30%) were given as the key roles that they played to ensure free and fair elections at Amansie Central District.

With respect to the media, the dominant roles that were given by the selected respondents included equal opportunities to political parties to showcase their policies, ideas etc (60%) and educating the general public on the electoral process (Table 11). Among the security agencies, Amansie Central District Assembly and the traditional authorities, keeping order at polling stations and collation centres (50%); giving electoral education to the electorate (70%); and showing equal support to all political parties in the district (100%) respectively were the dominant roles that were played by them to ensure free and fair elections in the 2008 presidential and parliamentary elections at Amansie Central District.

### **Challenges facing stakeholders in the promotion of free and fair elections**

Several problems have been raised as serving as hindrances to the organization of free and fair elections in many parts of the world. To know the challenges that affect free and fair elections at Amansie Central District, all the 156 respondents selected for the study were asked to point out the challenges that militate against the conduct of free and fair elections in Amansie Central District. The views of the respondents are shown in Table 12.

**Table 12: Challenges facing election stakeholders in the promotion of free and fair elections**

Challenge	Frequency	Percent
Financial constraints	141	27.6
Insufficient knowledge of the electorate on the electoral process	123	24.1
Tribal politics	119	23.3
Interference in the electoral activities by government	76	15.0
Weak electoral laws	51	10.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>510</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Fieldwork, 2010

\*Multiple responses

The 27.6% respondents said that financial constraints were a challenge that affected many stakeholders in the promotion of free and fair elections (Table 12). According to the respondents, financial constraints made it difficult for some stakeholders (security agencies, Electoral Commission, Civil Society Organisations) to obtain all the necessary logistics they required to perform their roles satisfactorily. Another important challenge raised by the respondents was insufficient knowledge of the electorate on the electoral process (24.1%). It was followed by tribal politics (23.3%) and interference in the electoral activities by government (15.0%).

Financial constraints as the key challenge confronting stakeholders in the promotion of free and fair elections is in line with the findings of Mulonde (2009) which revealed that financial constraint is the main challenge affecting political parties, EC and the media in ensuring free and fair elections in Uganda.

### **Conclusion**

This chapter has provided information on the electorate perception of 2008 presidential and parliamentary election, roles played by various election stakeholders and the challenges facing election stakeholders in the promotion of free and fair elections. Although the electorate had insufficient knowledge on what constitute free and fair elections their overall perception of the 2008 presidential and parliamentary elections in Amansie Central District was positive. Financial constraint was the key challenges confronting the election stakeholders. The next chapter focuses on the summary, conclusions and recommendations of the study.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **Introduction**

This chapter sums up the whole study on the promotion of free and fair elections in the Amansie Central district. It contains a summary of the study, major findings, conclusions from the findings, and recommendations to improve on the promotion of free and fair elections in Amansie central district.

#### **Summary**

The study sought to assess the perceptions of the electorate at Amansie Central District on the extent to which they considered the 2008 national elections supervised by the Electoral Commission of Ghana in Amansie Central District were free and fair. Interview schedule and questionnaire were the research instruments that were used to collect data from the field. Examples of the data collected from the field were the perception of the electorate on free and fair elections, role of stakeholders to ensure free and fair elections in the 2008 presidential and parliamentary elections, and the challenges facing stakeholders in the promotion of free and fair elections. Seven categories of people constituted



the target population for the study. These were the electorate, electoral commission, political parties, media, security agencies, the ACDA and the traditional authorities.

A total of 156 respondents were used for the study. These comprised 100 electors, 10 respondents each from the EC, media, political parties, security agencies, ACDA and 6 traditional authorities. Simple random sampling technique was applied to select the electorate and purposive sampling was used to select the other stakeholders. Interview schedule was employed to collect data from the electorate and traditional authorities, and questionnaires were administered to collect data from the electoral commission, political parties, media, security agencies and the ACDA. The data for the study were analysed and presented using summations, percentages and charts.

The major findings of the study include the following: About 24.8% of the electorate perceived free elections to involve only elections with no violence. Also, 21.5% of the electorate perceived election with no multiple voting and election with no intimidation constituted 20.5%. While, 62.% of the electorates perceived fair elections to be elections where electoral regulations are applied fairly without any discrimination .

The electorate had positive perception of the national voters register in their area. For example, 50 percent of the electorate believed that the voters' register does not contain many ghost names; about 73 percent believed that the voters register does not contain multiple registrations and about 57 percent were of the view that the voters register does not contain names of unqualified persons.

The electorate perceived the 2008 presidential and parliamentary elections in Amansie Central District as free and fair. About 85 percent of the electorate confirmed this after the study.

The electorate played three main roles to ensure free and fair elections in the 2008 national elections in their area. These roles were avoiding multiple registrations (41%), not engaging in violence (37%) and not intimidating other voters (22%). Among the EC, political parties and the media, applying the electoral regulation fairly, educating party supporters on peaceful elections, and given equal opportunities to political parties to showcase their policies, ideas on their network respectively were the dominant roles they played to ensure free and fair elections in 2008.

Keeping order at polling stations and collation centre's, given electoral education to the electorate in the district and given equal support to all political parties were the key roles that were performed by the security agencies, Amansie Central district assembly and the traditional authorities respectively to make the 2008 national election at Amansie Central District free and fair. Two main challenges affect election stakeholders in the promotion of free and fair elections in Amansie Central District. These challenges are financial constraints (40.4%) and insufficient knowledge of the electorate on the electoral process (30.1%).

## **Conclusions**

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions could be drawn from the study. The electorate in Amansie Central District have insufficient knowledge on what constitute free and fair elections but their over all perception of the 2008 presidential and parliamentary elections in their area was positive. The views expressed by the electorate on what constitute free and fair elections was limited, and did not encompass most of the elements of free and fair elections.

The roles played by election stakeholders in Amansie Central District in order to ensure free and fair elections in the 2008 presidential and parliamentary elections were satisfactory. The electorate, EC, political parties, media, security agencies, the ACDA and the traditional authorities in Amansie Central District played key roles to make the 2008 national elections in their area to promote free and fair election practices. Financial constraints and insufficient knowledge of the electorate on the electoral process are the main challenges that confront election stakeholders in the promotion of free and fair in the Amansie Central District.

## **Recommendations**

In relation to the findings and conclusion of the study the following recommendations have be suggested:

- The ACDA in collaboration with the EC and National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE) must organize educational campaigns on the

concept and practice free and fair elections for the electorate in Amansie Central District. The educational campaign can take the form of workshops, seminars, radio shows and any other appropriate channel. This measure will help to broaden the knowledge of the electorate on the Ghana's electoral process and the concept of free and fair elections and hence change the perception of the electorate on free and fair elections. This will help the electorate to get sufficient knowledge on Ghana's electoral process and do away with all electoral practices that are contrary the concept and practice of free and fair elections.

- The government of Ghana, philanthropist and benevolent organizations should provide adequate financial assistance to election stakeholders like the EC, security agencies, media and political parties. Such financial assistance will help these institutions to acquire the necessary logistics to undertake their duties on election activities and participate actively during and after electioneering period.

### **Areas for further research**

The study was limited to only the activities of elections stakeholders in the promotion of free and fair elections in Amansie Central District. Comparative studies can be undertaken on the activities of election stakeholders in the promotion of free and fair elections in Amansie Central District and other Districts in Ghana. This will bring to bear the differences and similarities in the

roles played by elections stakeholders in promoting free and fair elections at the district level.

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## **APPENDICES**

### **APPENDIX: A**

#### **QUESTIONNAIRE FOR ELECTION STAKEHOLDERS OTHER THAN THE ELECTORATE**

You will be contributing significantly towards the completion of this project if you respond to this questionnaire as frankly as you can. Indeed, this is an academic study and the confidentiality of any information provided is guaranteed.

#### **Background Characteristics of respondents**

Please, tick where appropriate (✓).

1. Sex: Male [ ]  
Female [ ]
  
2. Age of respondent in years
  - A.18-27 [ ]
  - B.28-37 [ ]
  - C.38-47 [ ]
  - D.48-57 [ ]
  - E.58- 67 [ ]
  - G. 68 and above [ ]
  
3. Educational level
  - A. No formal education [ ]
  - B. Basic [ ]
  - C. Secondary [ ]
  - D. Tertiary [ ]

4. Occupation of respondent.....

6. Ethnic group /tribe background .....

7. Marital Status

A. Single [ ]

B. Married [ ]

C. Separated [ ]

D. Widowed [ ]

8. Religious Affiliation

A. No-religion [ ]

B. Orthodox [ ]

C. Protestant [ ]

D. Pentecostal [ ]

E. Muslim [ ]

F. Traditional [ ]

G. Other [ ] Specify .....

**PERCEPTIONS ON FREE AND FAIR ELECTIONS**

9. What do free and fair elections mean to you?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

10. What are the elements of free elections?

.....  
 .....  
 .....

11. What are the elements of fair elections?

.....  
 .....  
 .....

12. Are all qualified eligible voters given the chance to vote during elections through Universal Adult Suffrage? A. Yes B. No

If no, give reasons.....  
 .....  
 .....

13. Is creation or demarcation of electoral boundaries done to favour a particular party or candidate? A. Yes B. No

14. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the national voters register in Amansie Central District.

SA= Strongly agree, A= Agree, U= Undecided, D= Disagree, SD= Strongly disagree

Statement	SA	A	U	D	SD
The voters register is inclusive and up to date					
The voters contain many ghost names					
The voters register contains multiple registration of electorate					
Voters register contains the names of unqualified persons					

15. Can political parties and candidate campaign freely everywhere in the Amansie Central District? A. Yes B. No

16. Are polling officials able to deliver efficiently in accordance with the elections rules and regulations? A. Yes B. No

17. Give reasons in support of your answer

.....  
.....

18. Is there a level playing field among political parties and candidates in the district during elections? A. Yes B. No

19. Are the electoral laws uniformly applied throughout the district? A. Yes B. No

20. Are people entirely free to participate in political activity? A. Yes B. No

21. Will you consider the receiving of money, motor bikes, bicycles, tee- shirts etc. from party activists during general elections as a fair practice in the district?  
A. Yes B. No

22. Give reasons in support of your answer.

.....  
.....  
.....

23. Why should democratic elections be free and fair?

.....  
.....  
.....

24. To what extent do you agree with the statement that “the 2008 presidential and parliamentary elections in Amansie Central District was free and fair”

A. Strongly agree [ ]

B. Agree [ ]

C. Undecided [ ]

D. Disagree [ ]

E. Strongly disagree [ ]

25. Are candidates or people allowed to challenge unqualified voters or disputed results? A. Yes. B. No

26. The electoral law prohibits;

- a. Double registration or double voting,
- b. Prevention of a qualified person from exercising his right to register or vote,
- c. Impersonation,
- d. Intimidation of political opponents,
- e. Registration of minors,
- f. Defacement or destruction of political opponents or candidates posters, and
- g. Seeking to influence voting pattern in whatever manner within 500 meters of polling station on polling day.

I want to find out from you whether these laws operated in Amansie Central District or not during the 2008 general elections? A. Yes B. No

Give reasons in support of your answer

.....

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.....

**THE ROLE OF STAKEHOLDERS IN THE PROMOTION OF FREE AND FAIR ELECTIONS**

27. In your opinion, who are the major stakeholders in democratic elections?

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.....  
.....

28. What role did you play effectively to ensure free and fair elections in the 2008 presidential and parliamentary elections in Amansie Central district.

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.....

29. In your opinion which stakeholder performed his roles well in the 2008 presidential and parliamentary elections in Amansie Central District?

- A. The electorate [    ]
- B. Electoral Commission [    ]
- C. Security agencies [    ]
- D. Political parties [    ]
- E. Media [    ]
- F. Traditional authorities [    ]
- G. Other [    ], Specify .....

30. Give reasons for your answer in question 29.

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.....  
31. What role exactly did you play did play during the 2008 general elections?

.....  
.....  
.....

32. Are you able to carry out your duties/role as applicable to you as a stakeholder of an election? A. Yes B. No

Give reasons in support of your answer

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

33. Are you able to exercise your rights and responsibilities as a stakeholder of an election in the district? A. Yes B. No

Give reasons in support of your answer

.....  
.....  
.....

34. Are you able to carry your roles as applicable to you as stakeholder? A. Yes B. No

Give reasons in support of your answer?

.....  
.....  
.....



35. Which activities engaged your attention most as a stakeholder during the 2008 general elections?

- A. Training of party agents
- B. Acquisition of funds and logistics
- C. Election Campaigns
- D. Voter education
- E. Protection of election materials and officials.
- F. Others specify.....

36. Is the essence of secrecy of vote by the electorate respected in the district?

- A. Yes B. No

37. How do you rate the performance of EC during the 2008 presidential and parliamentary elections in Amansie Central District?

- A. Excellent
- B. Very good
- C. Good
- D. Poor

38. Give reasons in support of your answer

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39. In your own assessment, do you think that all stakeholders played their role effectively in the promotion of free and fair elections during the recent 2008 general polls in the district? A .Yes .B No

40. Give reasons in support of your answer.

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.....

41. Do the security services play a neutral role in providing election security?

- A. Yes
- B. No

42. How do you rate the performance of the security service during the 2008 Presidential and Parliamentary Elections?

- A. Excellent
- B. Very good
- C. Good
- D. Poor

43. Do the print and electronic media allow equitable access to parties and candidates? A. Yes B. No

44. Where do you place Ghana's E.C terms of control or independence?

- A. Fully independent
- B. Partially Independent
- C. Not independent
- D. Difficult to decide

45. Give reasons in support of your answer

.....  
.....

**CHALLENGES FACING THE PROMOTION OF FREE AND FAIR ELECTIONS**

46. What are some of the challenges you are facing as applicable to you as stakeholder in your attempt to ensure free and fair elections in Amansie Central District?

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47. What are the challenges retarding the effort of the EC in the promotion of free and fair elections in a democracy?

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48. In your opinion, what problems do election stakeholders face in the promotion of free and fair elections in Amansie Central district?

- A. Weak rule of law [ ]
- B. Insufficient knowledge of the electorate on the electoral process [ ]
- C. Financial constraints [ ]
- D. Interference in the electoral activities by government [ ]
- E. Tribal politics [ ]
- F. Other [ ], specify.....

**RECOMMENDATION TO PROMOTE FREE AND FAIR ELECTIONS**

49. How can the challenges confronting you as an election stakeholder be addressed?

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50. What can be done to strengthen the EC to carry out their mandate effectively

and efficiently as an election management body?

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52. How can the problems militating against the promotion of free and fair elections in the district be addressed?

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.....

**APPENDIX: B**  
**INTERVIEWING GUIDE FOR THE ELECTORATE**

You will be contributing significantly towards the completion of this project if you respond to this questionnaire as frankly as you can. Indeed, this is an academic study and the confidentiality of any information provided is guaranteed

**Background characteristics of respondents**

Please, tick where appropriate (✓)

1. Sex: Male ( )  
Female ( )

2. Age of respondent in years

- A. 18-27 [ ]  
B. 28-37 [ ]  
C. 38-47 [ ]  
D. 48-57 [ ]  
E. 58- 67 [ ]  
G. 68 and above [ ]

3. Educational level

- A. No formal education [ ]  
B. Basic [ ]  
C. Secondary [ ]

D. Tertiary [ ]

4. Occupation of respondent.....

5. How long have you been working in your current chosen profession?  
.....

6. Ethnic group /tribe background.....

7. Marital Status

- A. Single
- B. Married
- C. Separated
- D. Widowed

8. Religious affiliation

- A. No-religion
- B. Catholic
- C. Protestant
- D. Pentecostal
- E. Muslim
- F. Traditional
- G. Other specify.....

**PERCEPTIONS OF ELECTORATES ON FREE AND FAIR ELECTIONS**

9. What do free and fair elections mean to you?  
.....  
.....

.....  
.....  
10. What are the elements of free elections?  
.....  
.....  
.....

11. What are the elements of fair elections?  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

12. Creation or demarcations of electoral boundaries was done to favour a particular party or candidate. A. Yes B. No

13. Give reasons in support of your answer  
.....  
.....

14. A free and fair election basically means what?  
.....  
.....  
.....

15. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the national voters register in Amansie Central District.

SA= Strongly agree, A= Agree, U= Undecided, D= Disagree, SD= Strongly disagree

Statement	SA	A	U	D	SD
The voters register is inclusive and up to date					
The voters register contain many ghost names					
The voters register contains multiple					

registration of electorate					
Voters register contains the names of unqualified persons					

16. Do polling officials deliver efficiently in accordance with rules and regulations?

A. Yes B. No

17. Give reasons in support of your answer.

.....  
 .....

18. Will you consider the receiving of money, motor bikes, bicycles shirts etc. from party functionaries during general elections a fair practice in the district?

A. Yes B. No

Give reasons in support of your answer?

.....  
 .....

19. Do a level playing field exist for parties and candidates in the Amansie Central District? A. Yes B. No

20. Are the electoral laws uniformly applied throughout the district? A. Yes B. No

21. Are people entirely free to participate in political activity? A. Yes B. No

22. Why does democracy require free and fair and elections?

.....  
 .....



23. To what extent do you agree with the statement that “the 2008 presidential and parliamentary election in Amansie Central District were free and fair”

A. Strongly agree [ ]

B. Agree [ ]

C. Undecided [ ]

D. Disagree [ ]

E. Strongly disagree [ ]

24. Are candidates or people allowed to challenge unqualified voters or disputed results? A. Yes B. No

25. The electoral laws prohibit;

- a. Double registration or voting,
- b. Prevention of a qualified person from exercising his/her right to register or vote,
- c. Impersonation,
- d. Intimidation of political opponents,
- e. Registration of minors,
- f. Defacement or destruction of political opponents or candidates posters, and
- g. Seeking to influence voting pattern in whatever manner within 500 meters of polling station on polling day.

I want to find out from you whether these laws operated in Amansie Central District or not during the 2008 general elections? A. Yes B. No

Give reasons in support of your answer

.....

.....

.....

.....

**ROLE OF ELECTORATE IN FREE AND FAIR ELECTIONS**

26. In your opinion who do you think are the major stakeholders of elections in the constituency?

.....  
.....  
.....

27. Are you a registered voter? A. Yes B. No

28. Are you able to exercise your rights and responsibilities as applicable to you as stakeholder during general elections in recent times?

A. Yes B. No

29. Give reasons in support of your answer

.....  
.....  
.....

30. Is the essence of secrecy of vote by the electorate respected in the district?

A. Yes B. No

31. Did you vote in the district during the 2008 presidential and parliamentary polls?

A. Yes B. No

32. If yes, did you vote purely on your own accord without being forced? A. Yes

B. No

33. If no, why didn't you vote?

- A. Ghanaian voters are not respected
- B. Lost faith in all parties and politicians.
- C. Goes against my religion

- D. Difficult to decide
- E. Others specify.....

34. Why do you vote?

- A. I don't know
- B. To select a leader and vote party out of government
- C. Is a means of exercising my right
- D. Is a form of expression my likeness or dislikeness for a parties or candidates policy?
- E. Others specify. ....

35. What role did you play effectively to ensure free and fair elections in the 2008 presidential and parliamentary elections in Amansie Central district.

.....

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.....

.....

36. In your opinion, which stakeholder performed his roles well in the 2008 presidential and parliamentary elections in Amansie Central district?

- A. The electorate [ ]
- B. Electoral Commission [ ]
- C. Security agencies [ ]
- D. Political parties [ ]
- E. Media [ ]
- F. Traditional authorities [ ]
- G. Other [ ], Specify .....

37. Give reasons for your answer in question 36.

.....  
.....  
.....

38. The major factor that you consider as most important when voting for a particular candidate or party in the constituency is?

- A. Ethnicity
- B. Leadership qualities
- C. Party manifestoes
- D. Party loyalty
- E. Others please specify.....

39. Do you belong to a political party? A. Yes B. No

40. If yes, does the party have an office in the district? A. Yes B. No

41. Have you attended a party meeting before? A. Yes B. No

42. What are your responsibilities applicable to you as stakeholder of elections in the district?

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43. How do you get involved in political activities during national polls?

- A. By acting as an election official.
- B. By acting as party agent for a candidate
- C. By giving voter education to the people
- D. By giving protection to election officials, election materials and candidates

E. Others specify.....

44. Do the security services play a neutral role in providing election security?

A. Yes B. No

45. Give reasons in support of your answer

.....  
.....  
.....

46. Do parties and candidates conduct themselves in a matured and responsible manner?

A. Yes B. No

47. How do you rate the performance of the security service during the 2008 presidential and parliamentary elections?

- A. Excellent
- B. Very good
- C. Good
- D. Poor

48. In your own assessment, do you think that all stakeholders played their role effectively during the recent 2008 general polls in the district? A. Yes .B No

Give reasons in support of your answer.

.....  
.....  
.....

49. In your opinion are the electorate in the district adequately informed and educated on their rights and responsibilities? A. Yes B. No.

50. Give reasons in support of your answer

.....  
.....  
.....

51. Where do you place Ghana's E.C in terms of control or independence?

- A. Fully independent
- B. Partially independent
- C. Not independent
- D. Difficult to decide

**CHALLENGES IN ORGANISING FREE AND FAIR ELECTIONS**

51. What are some of the problems preventing electorate from playing their role effectively as stakeholders in organising free and fair elections?

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52. What are some of the challenges militating against the EC in the promotion of free and fair elections in Amansie Central District?

.....  
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.....

53. In your opinion, what problems do election stakeholders face in the promotion of free and fare elections in Amansie Central District?

- A. Weak rule of law [ ]
- B. Insufficient knowledge of the electorate on the electoral process [ ]
- C. Financial constraints [ ]
- D. Interference in the electoral activities by government [ ]
- E. Tribal politics [ ]

F. Other [ ], specify.....

**RECOMMENDATION TO PROMOTE FREE AND FAIR ELECTIONS**

54. What are some of the measures that can be instituted to help electorate/voters to play their role effectively in the promotion of free and fair elections?

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55. How can free and fair elections be promoted?

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56. What can you do as a voter to promote free and fair elections?

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