

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN LOCAL GOVERNANCE IN THE NEW JUABEN  
MUNICIPALITY

BY

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## **DECLARATION**

### **Candidate's Declaration**

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

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

### **Supervisors' Declaration**

We hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of the thesis were supervised in accordance with guidelines on supervision of thesis laid down by the university of Cape Coast.

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## ABSTRACT

A very important role of local government is enabling local community members to take part in decision-making process in matters that affect their lives and also enhancing citizen's participation. This formed the basis of this study. Women's understanding of local governance and factors that affect women's participation in local governance were sought. Qualitative approach was adopted with interview guide being the instrument used to elicit information from the participants of the study. Purposive sampling procedure was used to draw the thirty influential respondents including men and women respondents for the study. The analyses were done qualitatively using narratives and themes.

The study revealed that, women exhibited awareness of local governance even though their level of participation in their various communities was low. Women expressed concerns of their low participation and discussed issues such as low level of education, financial constraints, and intimidations among others that hinder them from participating fully or as expected of them in their communities.

The study therefore concluded that, women's unequal status in terms of decision making in the community are as a result of structures and through the choices made by these women. Therefore, to raise women's level of participation in decision making in their communities, it is incumbent on the women themselves, programme implementers, civil societies and the government to create the enabling environment for their participation.

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## **DEDICATION**

To my wonderful family and Mr. Solomom Duah-Boateng.

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## LIST OF ACRONYMS

AU	African Union
PNDC	Provision National Defence Council
NCWD	National Council of Women and Development
MOWAC	Ministry of Women's and Children's Affairs
NGO	Non –Governmental Organisation
NDC	National Democratic Congress
NPP	New Patriotic Party
NJM	New Juaben Municipality
CVM	Civic Voluntarism Model
SES	Socio-economic Status
PE	Psychological Empowerment
CSOs	Civil Society Organisations
WID	Women In Development
GAD	Gender And Development
HND	Higher National Diploma

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### **Background to the study**

Participation is a very important ingredient in the social, economic and political levels of every society be it large or small, developed or underdeveloped, oligarchic or democratic. Those who are unable to participate, whether neglected or excluded, are likely to enjoy less power than those who participate. This is because those who are not able to partake do not feel part of what is going on in the society and therefore are not ready to take and accept any forms of decisions made by others. This is because, to the theorists of the Civic Voluntarism Model of Participation (Verba, Scholzman & Brandy 1972), the individual being a part of decision making is a form of motivation which awakes interest and commitment. Participation is a development approach, which recognises the need to involve both the advantaged and the disadvantaged segments of the population in the design and implementation of policies concerning their wellbeing (Tagoe, 2006). According to Mishra(1984, p. 88 as cited in Addo-Deku, 2012), “Participation means collective and continuous efforts by the people themselves in setting goals, pooling resources together and taking actions which aims at improving their living conditions”. The emergence of participatory development and governance has led to renewed interest in the concept of participation and the need to increase involvement of socially and economically marginalised people in the decision-making process (Gujit & Shah, 1998 as cited in Tagoe, 2006). The United Nations’ Development Programme (1993) acknowledges in its reports the need

to empower ordinary people to take charge of their lives, to make communities more responsible for their development, and make government listen to their people. This is because the overall development of a country depends upon the maximum utilisation of her people, both men and women. However throughout history, the status of women has received less attention and treatment from both liberal and conservative thinkers (Nyerere, 1993 as cited in Addo-Deku, 2012).

In most parts of the world, women have been marginalised in different spheres of life. Their involvement especially in the social, economical and political arenas is limited. As such, the issue of women's participation in development, decision making and most importantly, governance, has gained global attention and has necessitated considerable efforts at both international and local levels to bridge the inequality gap between men and women's participation in governance (Gyimah & Thompson, 2008). This situation is evident in the world conferences organised to address the minimal participation of women in politics and governance.

At international conferences on women in Mexico in 1975, Copenhagen in 1980, Nairobi in 1985 and Beijing in 1995, there were calls for women's equal access to and full participation in power structures and decision-making. Indeed, the Beijing Conference noted that:

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that everyone has the right to take part in the Government of his/her country. The empowerment and autonomy of women and the improvement of women's social, economic and political status is essential for the achievement of both transparent and accountable government and

administration and sustainable development in all areas of life (United Nations' Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization 1995: Article 181 as cited in Gyimah & Thompson, 2008).

A distinguishing feature of these conferences was the creation of the awareness and the need to empower women to exercise their political and fundamental human rights in a bid to increase participation in political activities. The Beijing Conference, for instance, requested the institution of a quota system of 30 percent of all elective offices for women. Dahrelup (2001) has argued that this has been the most effective tool to increase women's political participation.

In addition, the Platform for Action (1995 as cited in Addo-Deku, 2012) from the Beijing Conference specifically concluded that:

Women's equal participation in decision making is not only a demand for justice of democracy, but also be seen as a necessary condition for women's interests to be taken into account. Without the perspective of women at all levels of decision-making, the goals of equality, development and peace cannot be achieved.

Rwanda, Burundi and Tanzania as African countries achieved the 30 percent quota system in 2005 (Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2005). Developed countries like Norway recorded 37.9 percent women of all its elected officers, with Denmark, Sweden and Germany equally exceeding the 30 percent in 2005. However, despite these efforts to enhance women's participation in national governance, their actual participation remains relatively low. Indeed, the situation of women varies in different parts of the world. However, despite

these global attempts for gender equality in governance, women's participation in the field is marginalised. According to the International Women Democracy Centre Report (2008), women occupy only 18 percent of parliamentary seats around the world although women constitute a little over half of the world's population. The situation is even worse in Africa given the various efforts such as affirmative action made by the international community to increase women's participation in politics and governance. This is as a result of many hindrances which may be cultural or political that women encounter in political participation both at the national and local levels.

Governance has been in existence since humans began to live together in communities and became practical when people tried to organise themselves to undertake functions for their mutual benefits (Minoque, 1997 as cited in Deku, 2005). Since the hunter and gatherer generations through to the emergence of cities to states and nations, humans have learned that, there is strength in numbers and sharing works and resources can be a good thing. This comes along with the appointment and election of leaders. The leaders exercised power to manage affairs, made decisions and implemented decisions for the betterment of their communities.

Governance is defined as the rule of the rulers, typically within a given set of rules. One might conclude that governance is the process by which authority is conferred on rulers, by which they make the rules, and by which those rules are enforced and modified (Tagoe, 2006). Governance has been important for conflict resolution, consistencies in organisational behaviour and accomplishing of shared objectives (Deku, 2005). For governance to be labelled good, it has to be participatory, consensus oriented, accountable,

transparent, responsive, effective and efficient, equitable and inclusive and follow the rule of law. It assures that corruption is minimised, the views of minorities are taken into account and that the voices of the most vulnerable in society are heard in decision-making. It is also responsive to the present and future needs of society. Hence good governance is an all inclusive governance whereby all citizens and stakeholders are major players in the development and governance of the society. Good governance depends on an ability to exercise power, and to make good decisions over time, across a spectrum of economic, social, environmental and other areas. Governance therefore comes with participation of all the society to play their respective parts and roles in the achievement of good governance, right from the top to the bottom or from the national to the local level.

Local governance is the active involvement of the local population in the political, social and citizenship activities within the territorial boundaries of a local government through which authority or powers are conferred on individuals as rulers who administer these rules, for the betterment of the area. Local governance informs local policy and strengthens local accountability. Women are marginalised in decision making at several levels leading to the deepening inequality gap between men and women's participation in national and local politics, though it is well recognised that there can never be a true reflection of a democratic nation if such inequalities exist (Ara, 2006).

This situation does not, however, suggest that no efforts have been made to bridge the lacunae between men and women's participation in governance. In Nigeria, with the combined efforts of the government and the Alliance for Africa, a global non-governmental organisation, the 'Women in



Governance and Decision Making' project was designed to contribute to the broader goal of empowering and advocating for the full participation of women in governance and decision making process from the South East State of Imo in local elections in 2002 (Global Alliance for Africa Report, 2006). In South Africa, a 30 percent quota for female candidates has been instituted. It is therefore known that, generally, despite these efforts and policies, women's presentation in government still remains insignificant and has assumed only minimal appreciation. In Africa, women constitute only 17.2 percent in parliament (International Women's Democracy Centre Report, 2008).

In Africa, women have had and continue to fight against their traditional status, which tends to relegate them in decision-making as well as the western concept of hegemonic masculinity which Verba, Schlozman and Brandy (1995) label as the third component for an individual to participate. This they called recruitment by friend and the society at large. This fight against traditional status permeated cultures due to the influx of colonialism with its impact of subordination of women as the weaker and less intelligent vessel (Women's News, 1991 as cited in Deku, 2005). The traditional concept as well as the colonial concept of subordination has combined to make the problem of women in third world countries take on extraordinary dimensions. Because these concepts have gradually become structures in the society that one can not over look or climb over with ease, because people in the society are not free to act as they please but are exoected to go by certain laid down principles as introduced by Hay (1995). It is for these reasons that the third ordinary session of the Assembly of the African Union (AU) held in Addis Ababa in July 2003 is significant. The summit adopted a declaration to

promote gender equality in Africa by which the heads of state reaffirmed their commitment to expand and promote gender equality at all levels and build on the progress so far achieved in addressing issues of major concern to women of Africa. In 2003, the AU elected five female Commissioners as one of the steps towards women's participation in political governance.

Over the years in Ghana, successive governments have made considerable efforts to ensure equal representation of women in governance. The most comprehensive effort was the decentralisation of political power and authority from the centre to the local level (Offei-Aboagye, 2004). It was believed that by doing so, women will have easiness and increase participation in governance at least at the local or district level. It was realised that women who want to make it to parliament or as ministers, chief executives and other positions of authority must equally compete for a foothold. Particularly women who want to be in Parliament have to endure hostilities from some of the constituencies because of cultural perceptions of women in their communities such as women are by products of men, are weaker vessels and are expected to take of children in the houses, while men go all out working for the women and children ( Deku, 2005). As Allah-Mensah (2005) suggests, women are more likely to be active participants in local politics and governance than national level.

The decentralisation process in Ghana spearheaded the creation of 110 District Assemblies in 1988. The Ministry of Local Government was to provide a more responsive, equitable and participatory development to the local district assembly level and to bring government and decision making closer to the grass root level (Offei-Aboagye, 2004). The creation of the District Assemblies

gave an impetus to the enactment of the Local Government Law (PNDC Law 207), which started the operations of the Ministry of Local Government (Ferrazi, 2006).

Provisions in the decentralisation process were also a major tool to encourage women's participation in governance at the local level to be involved in public decision making process. These provisions included a non-partisan local government system, the freedom to use local language in the business of the assembly and the discretion in creating additional sub-committees (Offei-Aboagye, 2004). This was to attract more people especially women because according to Downs (1957) in the famous rational choice theory, individuals measure the advantages and disadvantages of issues before getting involved (Barkan, 2004). So, the Government of Ghana in 1998 gave the directive for the reservation of 30 percent of the membership of District Assembly for women (Ferrazi, 2006).

In sum, in Ghana from 1992, the decentralisation process, local governance and the District Assembly concept have become integrated into the country's governance structures. This is to see an all inclusive governance and development of the country and communities where by development is not at the shoulder of only a group of people but for all present in the society. In spite of significant achievements like bringing down governance from the top to the bottom, there are still challenges confronting the decentralisation process. These challenges are seen from the angles of unequal representation on the part of women and men of the country where by women seem to be 'sitting on the fence' for men to take the lead in doing everything including decision making at the local front.

## **Statement of the problem**

There have been attempts towards women's emancipation in most fields of human engagement worldwide but there seems little headway at the local front. Women groups such as the National Council of Women and Development (NCWD) and the created Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs (MOWAC) and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) have aimed at addressing poverty, diseases and illiteracy among others which have been identified as the plight of women's low participation in local governance (Addo-Deku, 2012).

In 1994, women's participation in the local governance consisted of only about three percent and increased to five percent in 1998 (Offei-Aboagye, 2004). Despite the government directive issued in 1998 that reserved 30 percent of seats for women in the local governance, no appreciable impact was made. Meanwhile, it is established that men and women play important roles in the achievement of socio-economic and sustainable development of a country and this achievement is through self-reliance. So the neglect of the human dimension in development could mean that realisation of such objectives could be a fiasco (Addo-Deku, 2012). This implies that, all concerned especially women should be considered not just as passive beneficiaries but much more as active participants, which could be the basis for their empowerment.

Twenty-four years after the inception of Ghana's local government Act (Act 462), women's participation continues to be low. The New-Juaben Municipality has had one female member of Parliament. With the exception of this woman who has gained prominence in governance in the district, majority of people involved in the administration, governance and decision making in

the district have been men. Data for the district assembly representatives in 2010 reports that, of the 172 members, only 14 were women. With 54 elected members for the assembly, only five were women and out of the 369 unit committee members 33 are women (Electoral Commission, 2010). Though several educational programmes have been organised to sensitise women to partake in politics in the municipality, the number of women who volunteer to take part in governance is still low. In this era of advocacy of empowerment of women, it is important to find out the factors inhibiting women from actively participating in politics in Ghana.

The situation above raises some key concerns, which motivated the researcher into an investigation of the situation in the New-Juaben Municipality (NJM) of the Eastern Region of Ghana. As suggested by Powley (2008), if government is to be efficient and effective at the local grass root level, it must draw on the experiences of both men and women through an equal representation in decision making and local government activities.

### **Objectives of the study**

The general objective of the study was to explore the factors affecting women's participation in local governance in the New-Juaben Municipality in the Eastern Region of Ghana.

The specific objectives were to:

1. Explore women's perception of local governance.
2. Examine factors that facilitate women's participation in local governance.

3. Examine factors that hinder women's participation in local governance.
4. Suggest strategies to improve the level of women's participation in local governance.

### **Research questions**

The following research questions were designed to guide the researcher in the study:

1. How do women perceive the concept of local governance?
2. Which factors facilitate women's participation in local governance?
3. What are the factors that affect women's participation in Local Governance?
4. What are the strategies and ways required to increase the level of women's participation in local governance?

### **Significance of the study**

The study will contribute to the on-going discourse on the issue of low representation of women in governance. It will bring to the attention of government, policy makers and non NGOs the extent to which women have been excluded from political life, though no law in Ghana bans their participation. It is intended to help unearth the reasons why only few women still participate in politics in Ghana. It is also to create the awareness that women are capable of becoming great politicians. Therefore, it is necessary to

identify and address some of the problems confronting women; including those serving as impediment to their participation in governance in Ghana; to make recommendations that will help to improve the participation of women in governance in Ghana and the rest of the world.

The study will also delineate lessons and recommendations for the enhancement of democracy, good governance and gender issues in Ghana.

To the academia, the study will add up to the existing knowledge on women in governance and also serve as a reference document for students and practitioners in the field of local governance and gender issues.

### **Organisation of chapters**

The study is organised in a five chapter discussion. The first chapter focuses on introduction which addresses the background to the study which is a general information about the issues being discussed, problem statement; objectives of the study, research questions and relevance of the study. Chapter Two is review of related literature. It deals with theories which are propounded by authorities, conceptual definitions and conceptual framework. All these are to give an over view of what other researchers have done and how they are linked to this study or how well they refute this study. The third chapter tackles issues in relation to the methodology for the study. In this chapter, issues about the study area, the population, the sampling procedures and size as well as the data collection and analysis are discussed. The fourth chapter presents results and discussion, and finally the fifth chapter concentrates on summary, conclusions and recommendations of the study.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

#### **Introduction**

This chapter examines the theoretical framework and reviews relevant literature related to the study. It begins by positioning the study within a theoretical framework. Various theories explain women's participation in national development and how they could be empowered to play meaningful role in the decision-making processes especially, at the local level. In this chapter, the concept of participation, the civic voluntarism model of political participation, structure-agency theory, the rational choice theory and the empowerment theory were reviewed in addition to other relevant concepts to the study.

#### **Concept of participation**

Richardson (1983, p.8) defined the concept to mean "the ways in which ordinary citizens can or do take part in the formulation or the implementation of social policy decisions". According to a report from the Human Development Report (1993), participation is a process and gives a very practical definition. To the report, it is a process whereby people are closely involved in the economic, social, cultural and political processes that affect their lives. Correspondingly, Rahman (1991) suggests that participation involves all forms of action through which citizens take part in the operations of administration. Rahman(1991, p.3) further suggests a narrow and a broader



meaning of participation. In its narrow sense, participation means “specific action by which the citizen participates for a limited purpose”. Broadly, the concept refers to the role of members of the general public as distinguished from that of appointed officials including civil service in influencing the activities of government or in providing directly for community needs. From the perspective of women’s engagement with politics and governance, Alinaya, Santos-Maranan and Endrinal (2007, p.5) defined participation as:

*... physical presence, voice and ability to influence outcomes of decision-making spaces in the public sphere, from national-locals, electoral politics to small community organisations to sectorial organisations, from assuming key positions in decision making processes/bodies to mobilisation demanding gender responsive governance.*

Participation is a process that enables “have-nots” citizens, those who are excluded from decision making processes to be included. It is a strategy that “have-nots” involve in sharing information and join to set priorities and goals (Arnstein, 1969). The typologies of the concept participation by different scholars are in diverse forms (Pretty, 1995) but the most widely acknowledged ladder of participation is Arnstein’s ladder of participation. This ladder has eight rungs of participation with each rung corresponding to an extent of citizen’s participation. The eight rungs are further categorised into three. The bottom rungs of the ladder are the manipulation and therapy, which describe the level of non-participation. Its objective is not to enable people to participate in planning but to enable power-holders to educate and participate. The next level is the level of tokenism which involves informing, consultation and

placation. Under this second level, citizens may hear or be heard but lack the power of influencing decisions. This level is an illustration of a voice without a voice itself. The highest level of participation is power. This includes partnership, delegated power and citizen control. This level represents the climax of participation, as citizens control all issues and win the majority of decision making seats. It can be deduced that a person participates in an event when he/she is actively concerned about it and takes action to exhibit such concern. Thus, for participation to occur, a person must be involved in the plan, formulation and implementation as explained by Grant and Naidoo (2004). Participation is also not dependent on passive membership but on decision making (Sartori, 1987 as cited in Toerell, 2006). Participation embraces the level of consultation or decision making in all phases of a project cycle or event, from needs assessment to appraisal, to implementation, to monitoring and evaluation (Gaventa & Valderrama, 1999). Justifying this assertion, Pateman (1970) explains that, participation excludes the following situations: when an individual merely takes part in a group activity, where an individual is merely given information on a decision affecting him or her before it is executed, or where an individual is present at a meeting but has no influence.

Understanding participation involves understanding power (Wilcox 2001). The exercise of power is to make decisions or influence decision making process. Through participation citizens have the power to decide on a preferred government system as well as the policies that affect their lives (Toerell, 2006). But there is a critical difference between going through the empty ritual of participation and having the real power needed to affect the outcome of the process (Arnstein, 1969). She believes that, “participation

without the redistribution of power is an empty and frustration processes for the powerless” (pg 217). As coming together to take a decision does not happen for nothing but for a purpose, participation has been linked to empowerment. Participation and empowerment are linked like hand and glove Holcome (1995). Different as they may be, the two concepts depend on each other to give meaning and purpose. While participation represents action, or being part of an action such as decision making process, empowerment represents sharing control, the ability to participate, to influence decision as well as allocation of resources (Addae, 2010). The following assumptions have been drawn by Arnstein (1969) from participation and empowerment and these are;

There is a basic right to participate and the objective is to introduce change in social condition. Active participation improves relationships between community members and organisations which reduces alienation. Through participation, disadvantaged groups will gain access to resources and positions of control. Participation will result in attitudinal changes in community members, organisations, and society at large.

Conclusively, participation implies representation, the involvement of people in decision making processes. The participation on the part of women therefore can be seen as a bridge of gap between citizens especially women and the state by recasting citizenship as practiced rather than as given in relation to power and act as a powerful instrument to empower the least privileged and the marginalised group within societies.

## **Political participation**

According to Verba and Nie (1972 p.2) political participation “refers to those activities by citizens that aim at influencing the government, either by affecting the choice of government personnel or by affecting the choices made by government personnel”. Political participation is a means by which governing officials are informed of the preferences and the needs of the public and are induced to respond to those preferences and needs (Verba, 1996). Toerell (2006) has defined political participation as any behaviour intended to directly or indirectly influence public decision-making process thereby securing a particular political outcome. Political participation includes taking part in the process of formulation, passage and implementation of public policies (Parry, Moyser & Day, 1992). In this regard, political participation can be thought off to include series of activities that influence public policies or government actions.

Every citizen has the right to political participation in a bid to influence public affairs (Kleins, 2005). The legal foundation of this right is encoded in the United Nation’s 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which was later formalised and elaborated in other treaties, most notably the 1976 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. It must be emphasised, that unlike the other forms of participation, the right to citizen’s political participation is restricted to persons only endowed with citizenship status.

Political participation has been observed to be essential for consolidating a democratic society. It enhances civic consciousness and political maturity. It is also the only means through which citizens choose and legitimise a preferred form of government through the electoral process

(Ginsberg 1982). As more people become involved in the business of democratic decision-making, fewer groups are left out, and the democratic process becomes legitimised across the wider domain (Bruce, 1999). Political participation also promotes effective and efficiency in government by holding government more accountable and responsive to the needs of her citizens. According to Grant (2004), political participation should not be exchanged with involvement in electoral processes, because political participation extends from the right to elect representatives and taking part in electoral processes into the right to influence decisions and who wields power. Consequently to Stromquist (1988), involvement in election campaigns and voting processes is not sufficient to guarantee people to be partakers in the decision making processes, as voting turnout can often overstate the extent to which citizens truly participate in public decision making.

Many studies on women's political participation have identified that irrespective of women's equal rights to political participation, they face many hindrances, which results in a wider gender disparity between them and their male counterpart (Cole & Sabik, 2010). Like the Civic Voluntarism Model (CVM) of participation, many studies have emphasised the role of education in limiting women's effective political participation. Hong and Maffii (2010) identified the unequal access to formal education as a crucial factor for the low participation of women in Cambodian politics. In a similar vein, Bangladesh women's participation in local governance is limited due to their low level of formal education (Ara & Khan, 2006). Women's education is the only tool for their development and empowerment; therefore women who acquire higher

education possess the civic skills, knowledge and attitudes needed for their meaningful participation (Stromquist, 1988).

However, women's formal education has no linkage with their limited participation in governance (Longwe, 2000). To her, there exists no correlation between the percentage of educated women in a particular country to their percentage in parliament, higher levels of government and even at the local government level. Thus, addressing the limited educational facilities for women to improve their participation would be a misplaced priority.

In a comparative case study of women's political participation in two rural communities in Bolivia and Pape (2008) observed that the factors that act as blockades to women's political participation are socio-cultural, institutional and economic. A similar study on female political participation in India established that the major factor responsible for gender inequalities in politics is resources (Gleason, 2001). Gleason (2001) however viewed resources in terms of education, finance and civic skills required for meaningful political participation. Sossou's (2011) phenomenological study on Ghanaian women's perception about politics has also established education and finance as the major barriers to women's political participation.

It is important however to emphasise that, if women occupy key political positions, they have the potential to play a greater role towards the promotion and improvement in the status of their fellow women in their social, economic as well as their political lives. Buttressing this assertion, Allah-Mensah (2005) suggests that, women who occupy higher positions have the tendencies and the power within their means to influence the activities of other

women. Moreover Galligan and Clavero (2008, p.154) argued that female politicians can increase women's representation in political activities

*...by mobilizing other women around the demands for a greater presence of women in political decision making, raising awareness of the problem of the underrepresentation in party and parliamentary contexts and exerting pressure on the party leadership to increase women's presence in party structures and candidate lists.*

### **Social participation**

Participation brings to community and social intervention programmes in terms of “added efficiency, sustainability and the collective community power” (Gaventa & Valderrama, 1999, p.5) because the dominant concern with participation has often been related to involvement in community, projects and social interventions. It is therefore seen as organised efforts to increase control over resources and regulative institutions in given social situations on the part of the groups and movements hitherto excluded from such control (Abaka, 2012). As a result, being present, being involved and being in control have been identified by Richard (1996) as three major forms of social participation. Being present requires the physical presence of members during social projects. Also, being involved implies an active participation during the implementation of programmes, while being in control emphasises the total power of participants in decision making regarding the plan formulation and implementation of programme objectives (Richard, 1996). He further observed that, participation in development activities or social interventions are most

often measured by the presence of participants. He believes that participation as presence is adopted by most development theorists and educators on social intervention because of its important political impact of numbers in programmes and influence when it comes to soliciting for funding or other forms of support.

Nevertheless an individual can be present in an activity without being involved in any way or having control over the activities. Social participation refers to the community members' involvement regarding the decision concerning a social intervention to the evaluation of such projects. It is realised at the level of consultation or decision making in all phases of a project cycle, from needs assessment, to appraisal, to implementation, to monitoring and evaluation of such project. But unlike Richard, (1996), Ingen (2008) has identified other types of social participation as formal involvement in association, maintenance of informal contacts within the home and outside the home and distant social contacts.

Social participation is crucial for democracy and also for enhancing levels of education, safety, economic development, health and above all social capital (Putnam, 1999). De Tocqueville (2000) buttresses this assertion that people have a natural tendency to look for social connectedness and that sufficient social participation is crucial for democracy. Ahwoi (2010) asserts that participating in identifying, designing, implementing and managing projects especially in rural areas does not only benefit local expertise, but also strengthens stability since people become satisfied that their needs are being taken into consideration.



Irrespective of the importance of social participations, Herman (2004) explains that a notable difference exist in women and men's participation in social development projects and that, apart from their physical presence in social projects, women exhibit limited control and involvement in social, community projects and interventions. Majority of women are socially, culturally and politically barred from participation in community development planning and decision-making processes regarding community projects (Ajayi & Otuya, 2006). A study undertaken by Singn (2006) identified three levels of involvement in social development projects at the local governance level. The first is the level where people are basically informed about projects in order to achieve cost-effectiveness and compliance to planned interventions. The second level emphasises the point where local people organise themselves in committee or self-help groups where they could influence project implementation and are part of the process of consultation. The last level, which emphasises on active participation is the point where local people or stakeholders actively influence and participate in decision making and share responsibilities in implementation. It was at the end of the study realised that, though women are seen at the consultative stage regarding projects implementations, when it comes to decision making regarding such projects, they are left behind. In the Imo state in Nigeria, a research by Ozor and Nwankwo (2008) buttresses the study by Singn (2006) in the sense that that women are not given equal opportunities for participation in community projects/programmes especially, regarding leadership and decision making roles in such projects. This is because to Agarwal (1992) when it comes to management of social and natural resources, women have traditionally be

denied any role in the decision-making process. In Ghana for instance, a study done by Kumi-Kyeremeh (2006) indicated that women are the least participant in projects for alleviating poverty in the Central Region.

### **Citizenship participation**

Citizenship participation is based on a concept of citizenship that has been extended to include more than social and economic rights, to include the right to participation as a basic human right (Cornwall & Gaventa, 2000). To some, citizenship implies a set of individual rights, while to others it is seen as a broader set of social and civic responsibility. Gaventa and Valderrama (1999) have also defined citizenship participation to mean the direct ways in which citizen's influence and exercise control in governance, not only through the more traditional forms of indirect representation. It also refers to citizens' knowledge and skills that shape their civic character and commitment to participate or exert important influences in both the family, media, community groups and other governmental agencies. This presupposes that citizen participation often requires citizen education. Citizenship education means explicit and continuing study of the basic concepts and values underlying democratic political community and constitutional order (Butts, 1988). Effective citizen participation requires educational programmes which should provide the citizenry with both the necessary knowledge and with opportunity for the development of desirable traits of public and private character. Therefore, justice, respect for individual worth, fairness, co-operation, persistent, moral responsibility, empathy for others, civility, respect for law,

civic mindedness and honesty are what should be looked out for in citizenship participation as its traits ( Butts, 1988).

### **Decentralisation and local governance**

Decentralisation is the transfer of responsibility (authority), resources (human and financial) and accountability from central government to local self-governing entity (Aryee, 2003). It is the transfer of responsibility for planning, management and resource raising and allocation from the central government and its agencies to the lower levels of government (Works, 2001). To Manor (1998), decentralisation is the transfer of resources and power to lower-level authorities which are largely or wholly independent of higher levels of government and which are democratic in some way and to some degree. Decentralisation has shaped the scope of development thinking, administration and governance both in developed and the developing countries (Aryee, 2000). Governments therefore adopt the decentralisation policy as a way of achieving participatory, accountable and responsive development and governance (Crook & Manor, 1998). Decentralisation policies, even though pursued differently by nations, have the essence of “enhancing participation, greater control over programmes by beneficiaries, increased resource mobilisation for development projects, as a foundation for democracy and a tool to achieve better governance” (Wunsch, 2004 p.1). The policies of decentralisation offer countries opportunities to neutralise some of the common problems of centralised, hierarchical and bureaucratic structures (Aryee, 2000). Within the development context, decentralisation has been closely linked with such

benefits as equity, effectiveness, efficiency and responsiveness. As emphasised by Wunsch (2004) decentralisation increases political stability and national unity by giving groups in different sections of the country the ability to participate more directly in development decision making.

In the Ghanaian context as argued by Offei-Aboagye (2004), decentralisation was to make government more inclusive and responsible to the local people by incorporating them in steering the affairs of their local communities and in matters that affect their lives. Broadly speaking, decentralisation can occur along three dimensions, administrative, fiscal, and political. Administrative decentralisation extends jurisdiction over the civil service to local governments. Fiscal decentralisation gives local governments the responsibility to raise their own revenue and/or provides them with unconditional transfers from the central government. Political decentralisation aims to provide citizens and their elected officials with greater decision-making authority at the local level (Hoffman & Metzroth, 2010). Consequently, fiscal, political and administrative decentralisations have all aimed to devolve authority, power and responsibilities from the central to the local people. This was meant to empower local authorities to operate and function independently and to ensure participatory governance which is not only inclusive, but more responsive and more accountable to the local people (Abaka, 2012).

As a measure against duplication and confusion of ineffectiveness and slow development at the local level together with disorientation in the popular mind and the resulting dichotomy in the administrative systems, an attempt was made in 1971 to introduce a new structure of local administration (Amadu, 2004). Long before the attainment of independence in 1957 and sometime

thereafter, commissions and committees of enquiry had been appointed at various times to enquire into the administration of the country. The reports of these bodies made conclusive recommendations for the devolution of central administrative authority to the local levels. Some of the most significant of these commissions and committees of enquiry were; The Waston Committee (1949), The Coussey Committee (1949), The Sydney Philipson Committee (1951), The Frederick Bourne Committee (1957), The Greenwood Commission (1957), The Regional Constitutional Commission (1957), The Akuffo-Addo Commission (1966), The Mills-Odoi Commission (1967), The Constituent Assembly (1969).

In spite of the recommendations most of which were accepted, attempts at decentralisation could not materialise until 1974. Though passed in 1971, the Local administration Act of 1971 (Act 359) was not implemented until 1974 due to the change in government in 1972. Significant changes were however made to the 1971 Act before it was implemented by the Local administration (Amendment) Decree 1974, NRCD 258 (Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development, 1996 as cited in Amadu, 2004). With the introduction of the Local Government Law (PNDC Law 207) in 1988, the then quasi-military Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC) government established a new local government system in which the district assemblies became the key institutions in the system. The stated aim of the 1988 Local Government Law was “to promote popular participation and ownership of the machinery of government by devolving power, competence and resource/means to the district level” (Deku, 2005). The 1992 Constitution which marked the transition to multi-party democracy at the national level, endorsed and

consolidated the 1988 reforms with few substantial changes. In Ghana, the implementation of decentralised policies resulted in the local government system. Charlick (2000) and Francis and James (2003) have conceded that decentralisation reforms can only make sense if they contribute to effective local government system. Jahan (1997) defined local government as intra-sovereign government unit within the sovereign state dealing mainly with local affairs, administered by the local authorities.

Local governance deals with the rule governed process through which residents of a defined area participate in their own governance in limited but locally important matters; are the key decision makers in determining what their priority concerns are, how they will respond to them, and what and how resources will be raised to deal with those concerns, and are the key decision makers in managing and learning from those responses (Aryee, 2003).

In the view of Ahwoi (2010) local governance system in Ghana has from time immemorial been part of the country's ways of life, where chiefs and local authorities held political and social power to administer local affairs. However, the earliest organised form of local governance was the indirect rule system introduced by the British colonial authority. It was a system governed through local authorities headed by "favoured traditional chiefs" who were given local authority with powers "to establish treasuries, appoint staff and perform functions" (Crawford, 2004, p.3). This system was characterised by "decentralised despotism" as it necessitated a number of deficiencies (Mamdani,1996). Yet, the British system of indirect rule initiated a pattern of local governance system that has continued to exist until today.

There has been ample evidence in literature to demonstrate that Ghana, after independence has moved through series of changes towards decentralised policies to involve the rural people in decision making process. Various governments through different committees and commissions attempted to improve local government systems to bring most Ghanaians into the decision making process (Akuse group, 1981 as cited in Ahwoi, 2010). Owusu (2005) believes that efforts towards decentralised governance were necessitated by the following: the limited effectiveness of both political and economic policies that had been implemented (including Structural Adjustment Programmes, political democratization and the privatization of Ghana's economy), the limited achievement of the top-down development administration, the increasing agitation for participation and empowerment by the populace, central government too expensive to manage.

It can be argued that, the extent to which local governance will be effective is much dependent on the legitimacy, the quantum of the devolved powers and authorities to operate independently from the influence of the central government. It is also worthy to acknowledge that, local governance will only be effective if it sticks to its participatory approach by an all-inclusive participation of all segment of the populace devoid of any gender biases. Indeed most scholars have argued that, the essence of decentralisation and local governance policies were to encourage women's participation in governance at least at the local level (Offei-Aboagye, 2000; Evertzen, 2001). Ledingham (2001) was of the view that citizens tend to participate in local governance when they perceive that local government is providing benefits for local people, acting in the best interest of local people and dedicating resources to

support matters of importance of citizens in the exchange relationship between people and local government. Thus, women will participate more in local governance if the cost of their participation is low and the benefit is high. Also, Rishi (2003) proposed that women's participation in local governance could be high only if they have interest in local government affairs. He argued further that if women exhibit positive attitude towards local government, it is more likely that they will support the local government issues as well as participate more in local government matters. Even so, the extent to which decentralisation is increasing women's participation at the local level remains an empirical question. Local government is the lowest tier of government. It is closest to citizens and the community and therefore known as 'local'. It has an extremely important role to play in a society as an agent of change and development (Alam & Nickson, 2006).

### **Civic voluntarism model of political participation**

Theories of public participation, such as the civic voluntarism model (CVM), typically assume that local participation takes place in the polity where one resides (Lidstrom, 2007). A general explanation of the limited participation of women in local governance may be derived from the civic voluntarism model of Verba and associates (Verba, Schlozman & Brandy, 1995). It is essentially a structural theory of participation which argues that people get involved if they have the capacity, and to a lesser extent the motivation to do so. There are three major propositions under the CVM. The



first is resources, such as education, social class, family income, leisure time, and communication and organisational skills (civil skills) that provide the means and ability to be active in any endeavour. People with high socio-economic status (SES) are more likely to have such resources and to be active participants than those with lower SES. Thus, the CVM recognises the importance of SES, especially education for participation. Individuals with high levels of education will participate in governance than those who have never been to school or with no formal education. Therefore, with limited educational attainment of most women in most societies, their participation in local governance will be low. The second component of the CVM is psychological engagement with politics, or attitudes that incline citizens to become more active. That is whether they deem it possible to influence political decision-making, are interested in politics and support a particular political party (Lidstrom, 2007). Examples of such cognitions include interest in political issue, political efficacy or the belief that one's actions will influence the political process, and a feeling of trust in political leaders and in one's fellow citizens. All these conditions help motivate people to become politically active. If those with the resources for political activity were not so motivated (psychologically), they would be less inclined to take part in political action (Barkan 2004). To Verba and Nie (1972) there is a positive relationship between political efficacy and political participation, as citizens with greater sense of efficacy have a greater effect on political outcome.

The third component is recruitment by friends and associates in one's interpersonal networks. People may have the resources and psychological engagement for political activity, but still remain inactive unless asked by their

network members (social and cultural settings) to take part. Common networks are found in places of worship, voluntary organisations, and work settings. Thus, people with greater involvement in such settings are more likely to be recruited into political activity. Such involvement is important for another reason: it can help people learn and refine the communication and organizational skills emphasized earlier. It can also build social capital, which according to Putnam (1999), is an important mechanism for political participation.

Within the context of the CVM, women's limited participation in local governance could be explained. Indeed most women lack the resources required for active participation. For instance, the dual roles of women as care takers of the home, wives and as mothers limit their time to engage actively in local governance. In addition, the low income of most women inhibits their political participation. As suggested by Duke (2010) and Ara, (2006), majority of women struggle to meet their daily subsistence and are particularly concerned with earning their daily living than following any political development. Moreover, the high illiteracy rate of women relegates the majority of them to the background, offering them little space for political participation. Addo-Adeku (2012, p.205) explains this through a survey conducted to show that "priority is given to the boy child against the girl child right from birth". Some of the reasons assigned for the favouring of the boys in school were that, (1) the boys will continue the lineage, (2) have the capacity to take care of girls siblings and (3) girls easily get pregnant and marry even without education. Consequently, they lacked the requisite confidence and skills required for leadership roles in local governance.

Furthermore, women lack the motivation especially from the home and society to engage in meaningful political activities. Duke (2010) asserts that the patriarchal nature of most societies inhibits women from their engagement in public activities. Therefore, enhancing women's participation would require the elimination of the possible impediments against women's participation albeit social, political and citizenship. The CVM, in its attempt to explain the reasons for women's limited participation, is flawed in some respects. The theory fails to provide an explanatory link between the socio- economic variables and participation. The theory also overemphasises on resources as a determining factor for involving in political activity as most women who are resourcefully sound still do not participate in political activities. In addition, the theory overemphasises political participation to the detriment of other aspects of participation (Verba, 1996). Finally, by providing the reasons for limited participation, the theory fails to provide the possible ways of enhancing participation.

### **Structure –agency theory**

Structure and agency are key understanding mechanisms, which attempts to answer the question of actions of individuals in a community. It has at its base a fundamental question that humans have posed for a long time. This is an essentially normative question. "Are we free to act as we please, or are we shaped and governed by structures (rules and regulations)? Hay (1995 as cited in Deku, 2010) argues: Every time we construct, however tentatively, a notion of social, political or economic causality we appeal, whether explicitly or

(more likely) implicitly, to ideas about structure and agency. The 'agency approach' is sometimes twinned with methodological individualism, which argues that the only reality we can grasp is the deeds/actions of individuals, not classes.

The approach suggests structural forces such as hegemony which cannot be seen as real; are intangible and thus we can say nothing provable about them. This implies that we cannot look at classes to explain the behaviour of individuals. Giddens (1976) suggests the actor is an embodied unit and as such, a possessor of causal powers that she may choose to employ to intervene (or not) into the ongoing sequence of events in the world. This makes her an agent. Giddens defines action or agency as the stream of actual or contemplated causal interventions of corporeal beings in the ongoing process of events-in-the-world. It is analytical to the concept of agency that a person or agent could have acted otherwise (Archer, 1996 as cited in Deku, 2010). This conception of the agent ties agency to power. Agency approaches see the individual as atomised, positing a voluntarist approach to human action. They argue that the context in which an individual lives is a pluralism; social power is spread between groups, and that no single group dominates. The way to analyse, therefore, is by looking at what the individual tells us - there is an onus on reflexivity; on the individual being able to account for and be aware of the reasons and implications of their actions. This approach also pays attention to time.

Structuralists deny that the human actor is the ultimate social reality, focussing instead on the *situated* human actor. Structure is essentially explanation in terms of the social/economic/political context in which action

occurs. Key concepts in this focus are emplacement and embodiment. It argues that because conditions change through time and space, then the "great man" theory does not work. Structuralist approaches recognise that there are specific conditions, which produce human actions or behaviour. Essentially individuals are believed not to be atomised but acting as a result and through the constraints and structures in which they exist. Behaviour is then not a result of free will but a product of structural factors. In positing reasons for behaviour, you are beginning a structure approach: explaining action according to the structure/context in which it takes place. A structure approach would hold that individuals are situated actors in place and embodiment. We are embodied physically, defining out health, opportunities, life possibilities, etc., and emplaced in terms of lifestyle, conditions, etc. Our actions therefore respond to the structures of one kind or another, in which we are situated. We can therefore predict life chances according to structures such as class, race and gender. From this approach we can understand the relevance of the debate to politics and the involvement of women. The structure-agency debate is useful insofar as it provides a framework within which to explain social change; and to attribute causation, and this is what Giddens recognises in his two sided coin analogy. He is right that we can only see one side of the coin at a time; this results from our own perceptual limitations when interpreting phenomena. Political theory needs abstraction and over-simplification of the world to enable us to explain phenomena and change; the structure agency debate is one tool to enable us to do this.

### **The rational choice theory**

The classic definition of rational action comes from Downs (1957) who postulates that individuals will participate in politics, for example by voting, only if the benefits of such participation outweigh the costs (Barkan, 2004). If we assume that individuals are economically rational, then they should seek to maximise their benefits from any activity while minimising their costs (Pattie, Seyd & Whiteley, 2003).

Activism should therefore occur where the costs of involvement are low and the benefits of successful action are high. For instance, actors would participate in development projects when they perceive the benefits outweigh the costs of participation. Krek (2004) argues that, individuals in their rationality avoid participating for common goods, but rather take part in activities to enhance and satisfy their individualistic self-interested goals. This is because, given the fact that the benefits to be accrued as a result of collective action are public goods for everybody's consumption, rational individuals will prefer to "free ride" by enjoying the benefits of a common group without really participating in common activities.

Participation of women in local governance can also be said to be the result of human calculations. Scholars have observed that participation incurs cost and usually bring about benefits. The costs of participation include resource (time, money and civil skills) and the cost of informing oneself about the form of participation (Krek, 2004; Verba & Nie 1957). Similarly, Hoy (2006) observed the benefits of participation to include the following incentives: money, power, idyllic investments as well as general incentives that are non-material. Therefore given the cost benefit analysis, women will decide

to participate in local governance if the benefits of their involvements exceed the resources invested in such participation. Naturally, they will be excluded when they anticipate that they will lose or gain nothing from their involvement in local governance activities, be it political, social or citizenship.

Similarly, women will prefer to “free ride” if they realised that the benefits of their participation is for public or common good. It is however important to note that adults’ (women) desire to participate in any given activity is driven by the satisfaction of their specific needs (Dakenwald, 1982). Thus, to the extent that the gains could bring about a possible change in their current conditions, women will decide to participate in local governance activities.

### **Empowerment theory**

The origin of empowerment as a form of theory could be traced to the ideas of Freire (1973) when he recommended a plan for liberating the oppressed group in societies based on critical consciousness (Addo-Deku, 2012). Subsequently, various studies have been conducted highlighting the essence of empowerment of women. To explain women’s participation in both social and political context, the study adopted personal and community empowerment theories. Rappaport (1987) and Kieffer (1984) have explained that personal empowerment or empowerment at the individual level concerns individual mastery and control over their lives as well as a critical understanding of their environment. Zimmerman, Israel, Schilz and Chechoway (1992) thus explained personal empowerment within the scope of psychology and developed the Psychological Empowerment (PE) theory as a

form of approach towards personal empowerment. Thus empowering women for participation requires a personal approach of women and their preparedness to be empowered (Mosedale, 2005). In this regard, Parmar (2003) also viewed women empowerment as a personal, internal and self-directed process.

There are three major components in the psychological or personal empowerment theory; intrapersonal, interactional and behavioural. The intrapersonal component denotes the way of thinking of people towards their ability and capability to influence social (work, family) and political systems in their community (Zimmerman *et al.*, 1992). To Paulhus (1983), it is a self-perception that includes domain-specific perceived control, socio-political control and self-efficacy to exert control and perceived competence. Peterson (2011 p.594) perceive socio-political control as a vital element of the intrapersonal component of PE involving two dimensions; leadership competence (that is people's perception of their skill at organising a group of people) and policy control (that is people's self-perception of their ability to influence policy decisions in an organisation or community).

The interactional component of the personal empowerment theory involves a person's critical awareness and understanding of the socio-political environment. It comprises of the knowledge or the awareness of the resources needed to achieve goals, awareness of one's environment and the development of decision making and problem solving skills needed to engage actively in one's environment. Thus for women to be empowered for meaningful participation, consciousness creation of their limited participation is very crucial. According to Hur (2006) consciousness creation is the process of



increasing awareness of how social and political structures affect individual and group experiences and contribute to personal or group powerlessness.

The final component of the personal empowerment is the behavioural. This is conceptualised as individual actions that are expected to directly affect outcomes (Peterson, 2011). To Zimmerman *et al* (1992), it is the specific actions taken by individuals to exert some influence on the social and political environment through participation in community organisations and activities. It includes participation in voluntary associations, contacting public officials, solving community issue or problem, political groups, religious groups and service organisations. Kabeer (2002) has also argued that personal empowerment constitute three interrelated dimensions which are critical. These are resources, agency and achievements. According to her, resources involve access, future claims on material, human and social resources. Agency requires the ability to define one's goals and act upon them and achievements on the other hand reflect the well-being outcomes of any action. In her framework, Kabeer (2002) considers education as a potential resource or catalyst of empowerment. However, access to resources such as education is less valuable as a measure of empowerment than the potential that resources have to enhance women's capacity for self-determination (Deku, 2005).

Another important component within the empowerment theory is community empowerment. Commonly referred to in literature as collective empowerment, community empowerment takes place when people join in action to overcome obstacles to attain social change (Staples, 1990). The basic underlying principle of community empowerment is that, people become empowered through collective action which most of the times is constrained by

power structures. Community empowerment has four major components; collective belonging, involvement in or community engagement, control over organisations in the community and community building (Boehm & Staples, 2004; Speer, 2004; Hur, 2006). Collective belonging emphasises on belonging to a social network of peers, autonomy while being part of a collective society and social solidarity. Therefore if women are to be empowered for participation in social or political activities, they must be encouraged to form network of associations. The second component as involvement in community activities or community engagement refers to taking part in community activities or events that may lead to affecting change in or the power structures within the society (Boehm & Staples, 2004). Thus by participating in solving community problems and other activities, women develop the competence, problem solving abilities and confidence to participate in more organised local government activities.

The notion of control over organisation in community empowerment denotes gaining forces to influence representative groups. It also involves the efficacy of controlling such community group organisation, group support, advocacy and political control. The final component of community empowerment is community building or social cohesion. It refers to creating a sense of community among members aimed at increasing the ability of community members to work together, solve community problem and make group decisions for social change (Peterson, 2011).

It must be emphasised that empowering women for increased participation requires both individual and collective efforts. Women as individuals need to develop the capabilities to overcome their psychological

and intellectual obstacles and attain self-determination, self-sufficiency and decision making abilities (Becker, Kovach & Gronseth, 2004). This could be attained through education which could enhance personal self-development of women by equipping them with the confidence, civic skills, leadership competence and awareness creation of their limited participation in their socio-political environment (Kabeer, 2002). In addition, women must be encouraged to participate in non-political institutions activities to confer on them the opportunities for developing “politically relevant resources” as well as contributing to their psychological engagements with politics. Verba (1996) believe that citizens’ political participation is determined by a larger extent their involvements in non-political institutions.

Women’s role within their communities influences the extent of their participation. According to Guteirrez (1990) the goal of community empowerment is to help community members to develop the ability to change negative situations and prevent the recurrence of the problems that created the situation. Therefore if women assume total control of community activities or organisations, they will be empowered to participate meaningfully in local government activities. This is because by participating in community activities, women are able to further develop their organisational abilities. Batliwala (1994) agrees, arguing that, it is through involvement in groups that people begin to develop the awareness and ability to organise to take actions to bring about desirable change.

Empowerment theory is not immune to criticism. Most scholars believe that it is not the only panacea for all individual and social problems. As such Speer (2000 p.58, cited in Hur, 2006) stressed that the theory is over

individualistic and conflict oriented, resulting in an emphasis on mastery and control rather than cooperation and community.

In sum, theories reviewed so far postulate that, actions are not taken in a vacuum, rather an individual will only partake in an activity be it personal or societal, local or national when he/she sees the need to, weighs profit against loss or is encouraged to. The CVM for example makes issues clear on why a person (woman) plays active role or does not at all in governance. According to the model, three issues are involved; resources, psychological engagement and recruitment by social networks. So if all these factors come to play, then a person decides to participate depending on which component she possesses. On the other hand if a person lacks these factors, he/she thinks not about participating at all. The structure-agency theory from Giddens (1976) in its two sided coin analogy states that the actions of people in a community are as a result of free will or rules that govern the community. That is, one is either free or not free or in other words the actions of an individual are as a result of what the individual is made of or as a result of what the society has outlined as rules and regulations. The rational choice theory is a frame-work for understanding human behaviour, particularly, the choices that individuals make. Though it forms a major theoretical paradigm in economics in explaining consumer behaviour, this theory has gained much influence and visibility within the lexicon of social sciences in recent years (Herrnstein, 1990 as cited in Deku, 2005). The Empowerment theory postulates that empowerment is a two way affair occurring both at the individual (personal/psychological) and group or community level. On the one hand women themselves could enhance their participation through personal development or personal self-efficacy and

formal education, thus developing the requisite skills and abilities needed for effective participation. On the other hand, community or collective empowerment emphasised community support by serving as platform for women's participation in a more organised local government activities.

### **Participation of women in local governance**

Women represent a marginalised group in society who experience gross inequalities of formal power and authority in the public spheres. They are denied equal accesses to and control over resources and as such experience limitations in their participation (Singh, 2006). Like the national government, women are underrepresented in local government. In order to place this study in context, some literature would be reviewed on studies on women in general, studies on women in Africa and studies on women in Ghana.

### **Studies on women in general**

In spite of the international declarations affirming the rights and equality between men and women, available literature shows that women still constitute a disproportionately small percentage of those participating in political decision-making and leadership (Kasomo, 2012). According to the IPU (2006), the percentage of women in local government seats around the world range from a high of 33 percent to a low of two percent. Currently, there are only 10 women district chief executives out of the 124 district chief executives in Ghana (Abaka, 2012). Gaventa and Valderrama (1999) observed that local governance goes beyond female representation. It includes women's participation in social projects activities as well as citizenship activities and

programmes. However, in as much as women's political representation in the local governance is minimal, their participation in social and citizenship activities will equally be minimal (Xu, 2007). Consequently, their male counterparts continue to exert a greater influence and participate in local governance activities. Yet many studies conducted in Nigeria and even Ghana have emphasised on the possible benefits of their equal participation in governance to the nation. The Beijing Platform for Action (1995) emphasised that, the full participation of women in governance is essential for the achievement of both transparent and accountable government, administration and sustainable development in all spheres of life. Therefore women equally have the right to participate in decision making in governance for reasons of equality, democracy and legitimacy. From a Chinese experience, a household survey conducted on community programmes and women's participation by Coady, Dai and Wang (2000) concluded that gender-focused interventions can have substantial social benefits for women, especially, when supported by the necessary legal and institutional framework.

### **Studies on women in Africa**

In a study of local governance among African women, Duke (2010) argued that, women's equal participation inculcate a deep sense of commitment to community goals and objectives. It further heightens a sense of value, self-worth and importance among women, which are positive motivational elements for human beings. To Hong and Maffii (2010), women's active participation equips them with transformative power with which they are able to turn their

lives around. They further postulated that, the socio-economic development of every country cannot be fully achieved without the active participation of women at all the decision making levels in every society. Furthermore, Carr (1999) has suggested that women bring different experiences and perspectives to decision making that are likely to exert positive impact on policy making.

### **Studies on women in Ghana**

Right from birth, the Ghanaian society instills the idea of male superiority and female inferiority on the mind of the child. Even women themselves have been brainwashed to accept this situation and so mistake absolute male protection for privilege. A woman's social position depends on her husband's position and status. If she succeeds in doing something it is her husband who has been the influencing factor since a woman is not assumed to be capable of achieving anything on her own (Deku, 2004). According to Abbam (1988 as cited in Deku, 2004) the time has come when the concept that "every woman is inferior to any man" must change. She note that it is a strong belief among rural folks that a girl needs no formal education since her role in life is to be a wife and a mother and these do not require formal education. Therefore most of them (women) are bogged down with several children and domestic chores from dawn to dusk. She indicated that society needs to change its attitude towards women and accord the due respect. It has been realised that attention was focused on the misconception about women and the need to eradicate such misconceptions. This study seeks to fill the gaps.

In traditional Ghanaian society, women from royal families have played and continue to play an effective role in public affairs. Some women for

instance, in the Northern region- the “Magazia”- an elderly woman, has leadership roles or functions to perform. She is the spokes person appointed to be responsible for organizing women for communal work (Addo-Adeku, 2012). At the national level, the constitution accords women their fundamental human rights. In the first parliament after independence, there was no single woman which therefore led to an enactment of a special act to bring ten women to parliament. However, in practice the participation of women in public life has not been felt very much. Addo-Adeku (2012) spelt out certain factors that inhibit greater participation of Ghanaian women in public life; which include the culture of the country, the nature of nation-building which requires specialization, proper education and training, finance, the gimmicks of politics and political games. To the Ghanaian women, participation in public life could be improved through legislation that would make women play active roles. The appointment of more women into policy making boards, civic education programmes to educate women. She suggested that women’s organisations in Ghana should also play a more crucial role in the training of women for greater and more active participation in society; women should have a keen awareness of national goals and be able to understand national problems.

Offei-Aboagye (2000) posited that, women’s presence are yet to be felt in local governance administration, both as politically appointed heads of the district and as administrators and civil servants. She further observed that the low representation is disheartening given the fact that local government has the greatest opportunity for a more participatory approach to development. Local government is therefore responsible for providing inputs for planning, ensuring



equity in implementation, monitoring for efficiency and effectiveness, and evaluating for impacts.

To conclude, the essence of encouraging women's participation at the local governance level aims at empowering women to take charge of their lives, to build a formidable force to ensure government's responsiveness towards their needs and to foster communities to be more responsible for their development (Rowlands, 1999). Women's participation should be promoted at the local governance level as a mechanism of ensuring justice, efficiency and diversity in decision making (Evertzen, 2001). Therefore, if local government is to meet the needs of both men and women, it must build on the experiences of both genders through an equal representation at all levels in decision making in implementing local government policies.

### **Strategies of enhancing women's participation in local governance**

The continual marginalisation of women in decision making processes has raised a number of considerable efforts and initiatives in a bid to redress the situation. Most feminists and developmental theorists have worked relentlessly to advocate for an all-inclusive form of participation at least at the local government level. As a result, governments, non-governmental organisations as well as individuals at the macro, meso and micro levels have accentuated and implemented policies and strategies to enhance women's participation in local governance. In rural Bangladesh, a 33 percent quota system policy has been implemented. This has been an important impetus to enhance women's political participation at local governance (Ara & Khan, 2006). The provision of an inclusion of directly elected women members has

also created a new avenue for women to participate in decision making processes at the local level. In effect, the 1997 elections had women for the first time to be elected as Parishad members in the reserved seats. Out of the 102 women who contested directly for the position of chairperson, 20 of them were elected in addition to the 592 women elected for the reserved seats. According to Ara and Khan (2006), these policies saw an overwhelmingly increase in women's participation in the 1997 election as 80 percent women cast their valuable votes.

In Cambodia, the implementation of decentralised reforms as well as the introduction of direct commune councils provided new opportunities to enhance women's political participation in local governance (Hong & Maffii, 2010). In addition, the implementation of economic and socio-cultural models based on macro-economic framework for development did not only increase women's participation in local governance activities, but also impacted enormously on their lives, status and well-being (Maffi, 2008 as cited in Hong and Maffii, 2010). These models form part of the local governance activities implemented to substitute the self-subsistence agricultural systems with cash crop production.

The Philippines Plan for Gender Responsive Development (1995-2005) was initiated to incorporate women in social projects both at the national and local level. This was a 30 year government blue print of policies, programmes, projects and strategies to incorporate women in developmental agenda in the Philippine (Drage, 2001). Women were therefore made the major participants and beneficiaries in social development projects at least at the local government level. In 1996 for instance, under the implementation of this

policy, budget for women's development was inaugurated and directive was issued to all government agencies to allocate five percent of their budget to address gender issues at the local level (Drage, 2001).

Aside government policies, civil society organisations (CSOs) have equally played an important role to enhance women's participation at the local government level. In Australia and New Zealand, women's electoral lobby organisations encouraged women to vote, to be active in political parties and to stand for political offices. They also offer support to women candidates by providing training, information and fundraising for women (Drage, 2001). The Aurat foundation in Pakistan is also a non-governmental organisation committed to the empowerment of women in governance roles. They educate women on their citizenship rights and responsibilities, engaging in public meetings, preparation and distribution of information in a bid to increase their citizenship participation at the local level. Most of the civil society organisations organise training for women on their political, social, economic and citizenship participation as well as their leadership skills. In addition, they create awareness among these women and raise their consciousness with the aim of changing their perceptions and attitudes towards their participation in local governance. In Africa, similar initiatives have been implemented to enhance women's participation in local governance. In 1987, West Africa Women's Association was formed. Its major objectives were the following; to contribute to the dissemination of information and development of a community spirit through the organization of colloquia, seminars and other for a dealing with cooperation and emancipation of women across the African continent, encourage states to pay attention to research programmes on

women's working and living conditions to improve women's status, exchange experiences with the view to harmonize social policies towards an improvement in women's participation in decision making (West Africa, 1988).

In 2006, the Rwandan Association of Local Government Authorities (RALGA) and the National Women's Council partnered the Initiative for Inclusive Security to conduct training to increase women's participation during the 2006 local elections. The training was designed to address challenges specific to women's political participation and also conveyed basic information regarding rules and criteria for election that women do not often hear. These include requirements for candidacy, campaign regulations, and plans for decentralization of government. The end result of this initiative was the preparation of more than 2,300 female candidates, which helped Rwanda to successfully fulfil a constitutional quota at the local level (Gomez, 2010). Women indeed captured over 30 percent of the seats in district government and are now one-third of district executives throughout the country, as well as two-thirds of executives in the city of Kigali. Studies done on enhancing women's participation in local governance have equally suggested considerable measures to increase women's participation. Gomez (2010) in her study on increasing women's participation in local government in Rwanda found out that increasing women's participation would require improved social service delivery for women in terms of education, health and infrastructure. The study in addition found out that, women holding elected positions in their local communities can be entry-level to political opportunities for women and provide them with the experience needed to run for national office. Similarly,

women must be encouraged to form associations within their communities. The belief is that such associations can function as feeder systems through which women acquire leadership experience and can also equally provide the organisational infrastructure to contact and encourage female community leaders to run for female office.

In a Cowichan Research Project conducted by Dame (2006) on increasing women's participation in local government processes on Canadian Municipalities, the survey findings proved that a major hindrance to women's participation in local governance processes is the limited access to information regarding local government activities combined with lack of awareness and understanding. Thus, to increase women's participation the study suggested more information on local government activities to help women to be more involved. The study also found out that increasing women participation would require training and education around local government in a more informal process.

Similarly, in a study by Carton (2004) on increasing women's participation in municipal decision making, the findings revealed that there is an equal need for more information about local governance activities and ways for women to access and share. In addition the study suggested role models in government processes as a powerful motivator for, especially, young women to participate. The study however indicated that increasing the number of elected women is not enough to ensure increased women's participation. It is essential to develop additional strategies to engender the political agenda. The study thus proposed identifying the needs of women, formulating strategies for increasing women's capacity for leadership, implementing government level gender

advocacy, organised women's caucuses to promote leadership and national commissions on gender equality and a liaison between women in politics and women's organizations in civil society.

Most developmental theorists are advocating for empowerment as a major tool for enhancing women's participation.

### **Empowerment as a strategy for enhancing women's participation**

To many development theorists, women empowerment is one of the major panaceas to the wider inequalities that exist in decision making institutions across the globe (Hur, 2006; Rowlands, 1999). The Women in Development (WID) and the Gender and Development (GAD) are some of the global approaches, which have placed much emphasis on women's participation in socio-economic development through the processes of empowerment. As such, these approaches have advocated for policies to integrate women into development through diverse programmes aimed at their empowerment. The Beijing platform for action also emphasised the importance of women empowerment to ensure their equal access to and full participation in power structures and decision making. Empowerment can therefore be defined as bringing people who are outside the decision making process into it (Rowland, 1995). To Kabeer (2001), it is the expansion in people's ability to make strategic life choices in context where this ability was previously denied. Hur (2006) provided a more workable definition for the understanding of the study. To him, empowerment is a process which offers the capacity and enables one to gain power, authority and influence over themselves, institutions and societies. From Hur's perspective, Karl (1995) has opined that women

empowerment is a process of awareness and capacity building leading to greater participation, greater decision making power and control and to transformation action. From the feminists' perspective, women empowerment should lead to the liberation of women from false value systems and ideologies of oppression. It should lead to a situation where each one can become a whole being regardless of gender, and use their fullest potential to construct a more humane society for all (Akhtar, 1992 cited in Batliwala, 1994: 131 cited in Baden and Oxaal, 1997). Batliwa (1994) suggested the following as goals of women empowerment; challenge and transform the ideology and practice of women's subordination, to transform the structure and institutions which have upheld and re-informed this discrimination such as the family, ethnicity, caste, economic and political structures and institutions, to gain access and control over material and knowledge resources.

There are four aspects of empowerment which seem to gain much recognition in the literature on women empowerment (Modesale, 2005). Firstly, for empowerment to be feasible one must have been disempowered. Therefore, we speak of empowerment because women as a group are disempowered in relation to men. Secondly, empowerment cannot be bestowed by a third party but rather those to be empowered must claim it. As a result, government or development agencies cannot empower women but can facilitate their empowerment. The third aspect of women empowerment reflects the sense of making decision on matters that affect one's life. According to Modesale (2005), this action can take place either at the individual or collective level. Thus, empowerment interventions should focus on individual self-efficacy for participation and community empowerment.

Finally, empowerment is an on-going process rather than a product. As such, women cannot be said to have been empowered in an absolute sense as people are empowered or disempowered relative to others.

Empowerment as a concept is usually associated with the idea of power. Thus empowerment is closely related to changing power: gaining, expanding, diminishing and losing (Hur, 2006). Power is defined by the Cornell Empowerment Group as the capacity of some persons and organisations to produce intended, foreseen and unforeseen effects on others. Rowland (1995) has identified the forms of power to be, power over, power with, power to and power within. There are many sources of power. Personality, property/wealth and influential organisation have been identified by Galbraith (1983) as critical sources of power. Others have included in the sources of power the clan-dominated nature in societies where a small number of people have vast economic or political power while the majority have little or none (Drage, 2001).

Currently, government and other development agencies have laid down steps to empower women in their participation in decision making institutions by equipping them with the support, knowledge, skills and capabilities needed for their effective participation. The United Nations' Report on Expert Meeting (2005) concluded that, women empowerment must focus on developing capabilities, ensuring equal access to opportunities and developing women's ability to participate in decision making. In addition to this, UNICEF (1993) proposed a framework for women's empowerment. This framework involves welfare, access, conscientisation, participation and control. The welfare level requires the elimination of all gender gap between women and men in



development issues. However, the framework emphasises that improving women's welfare alone will only make them passive beneficiaries of development without influencing it. As such it advocates for the other levels of empowerment as well. The access level also gives women the right to obtain services, products and commodities. At the level of conscientisation, awareness is created among women of their discrimination to enable them take actions to overcome those obstacles. Participation level on the other hand enables women to take part and have a share in resource and power allocation. Finally, the level of control allows women to direct and influence events to protect their interest. Thus the major step in empowering women for increased participation is to provide the facilities needed for local governance participation devoid of gender biases. Also, women's participation could be enhanced by increasing the limited access of women to resources, which includes education, their access to credit facilities, equal opportunities to leadership within the political and other institutional structures. There must also be awareness creation and capacity building programmes among women on the need of their participation in local governance for national development. In addition, women's participation could be enhanced if they are incorporated in decision making to provide diverse views on policies. They must not be passive beneficiaries of programmes but also take part in decisions regarding programme implementation. Finally women must be given equal control in decision making. The continual male domination must be eliminated from political structures, social projects and citizenship activities in a bid to equally provide avenue for women's presence to be felt.

Hur (2006) and Rowlands (1998) have concluded that, empowering women for effective participation requires mostly individual and collective efforts. It is therefore through involvement in groups that women most often begin to develop their awareness and ability to organise to take action and bring about desirable change. Development agencies can support women's collective empowerment by funding women's organisations which work to address the causes of gender inequalities in local governance. They can also foster dialogue between those in position of power and organisation with women's empowerment goals. Empowerment policies and programmes must also build on women's strength to facilitate their personal empowerment through mentorship (Keiffeer, 1984; Rappaport, 1987).

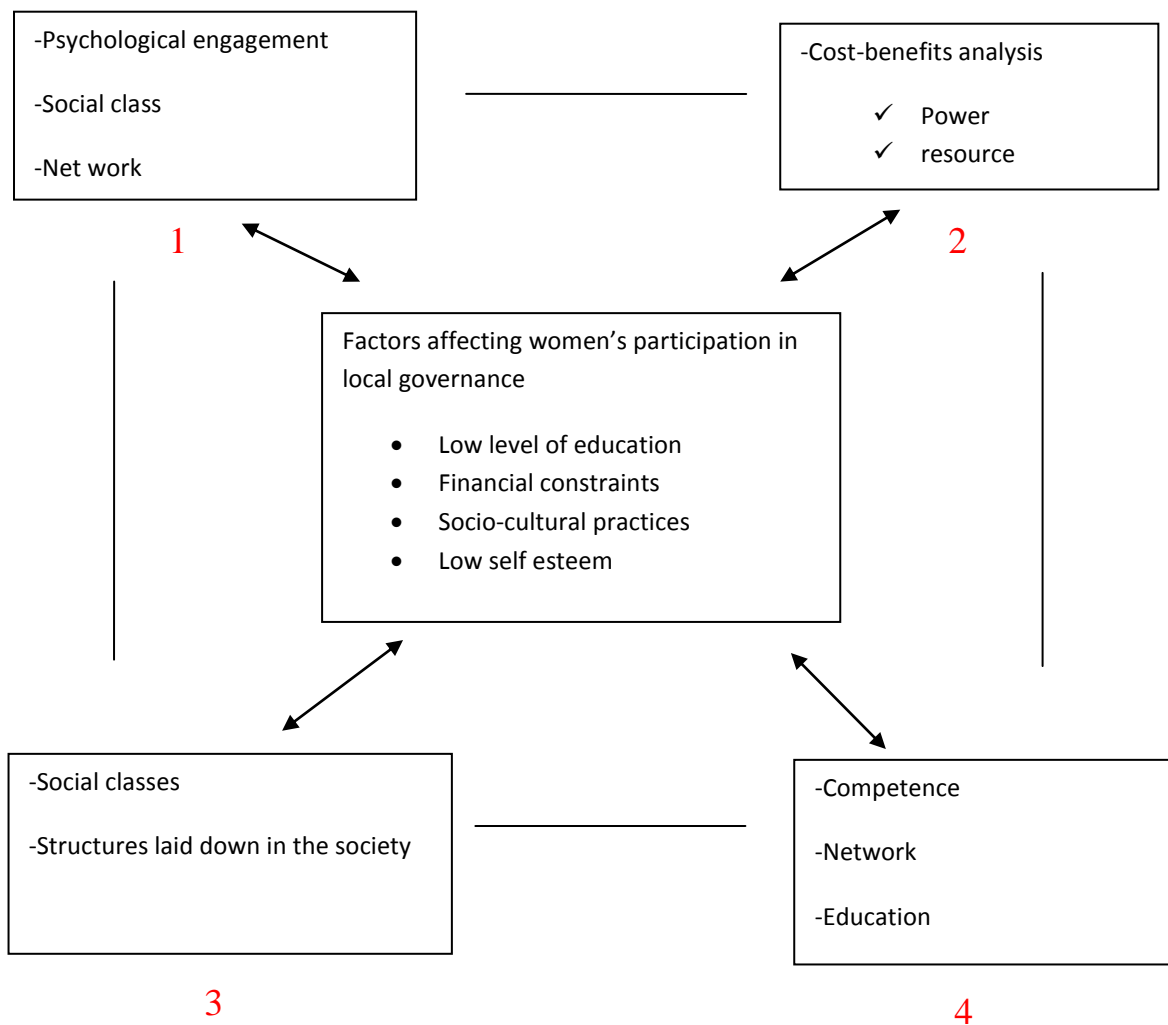
Furthermore, women themselves must take initiatives to develop their abilities and capabilities in order to acquire the requisite skills and the civic attitudes needed for their participation. It is at this point that continuing education has a role to play. In her key note address at the 40th Annual New Year School under the theme, "Development through Adult Education", Bown (1989, as cited in Addo-Deku, 2012) remarked that, adult education can help people acquire knowledge, can conscientise them and can give them the confidence to build up the kind of development adults require. In sum, women empowerment is more than simply opening up access to women in decision making. It must include the processes that lead women to perceive themselves as able and entitled to occupy that decision making space. It must also be personal and collective approach in a bid to bring out the possible results of increasing participation.

## Conceptual framework

Reading the literature has led to the development of the conceptual framework in fig 1, adapted from the theories used in the study. The figure is made up of five conceptual areas represented by shapes; a rectangle in the centre of the diagram, surrounded by four smaller rectangles. The bigger rectangle represents women's participation in local governance, highlighting some factors while the four smaller rectangles constitute the concepts which are realised from the four major theories - civic voluntarism model, structure – agency, rational choice and the empowerment theories. In each of these theories are issues which either enhance or hinder the rate at which people and women for that matter will part take in local governance. These issues found in the theories are outlined in the smaller rectangles and labelled numerically. Smaller rectangle 1-Civic Voluntarism Model, 2-Rational Choice Theory, 3-Structure-agency Theory and 4-Empowerment Theory.

The arrows that link the four smaller rectangles to and from the bigger rectangle depict both the positive and negative factors affecting women's participation in local governance respectively. These positive factors are the situations in the lives of the women in the communities which will enhance their participation in governance in their respective communities, examples, social class, family income, interest in political issues and networks; (Verba, Schlozman & Brandy, 1995). The negative factors on the other hand are the challenges that women face within their communities and are likely to prevent them from participating in governance in their various communities; for instance societal structures laid in place against women, class, race and gender; (Deku, 2010).

Again between each two square boxes, there is a link and also arrows from the link, joining the rectangle in the centre of the diagram. The link from one smaller rectangle to another, shows how these theories are related in one way or the other to helping the study identify the factors affecting women's participation in local governance.



**Fig 1: Conceptual Framework adapted from the theories of Civic voluntarism, rational choice, empowerment and structure-agency.**

## Summary

Participation, whether political, social or citizenry is expected to outdoor the less privileged or the disadvantaged groups to gain access to controlling positions and actively being part of decision-making process. This is because participation starts from the places where individuals reside but this can only happen when the individuals are ready to be part of the decision making processes as Burns (2001) puts it. According to Verba, Schlozman & Brandy (1995), three propositions which are the resource, psychological and the recruitment factors explain how and when an individual will want to take part in decision making. Apart from individual's forms of participation being determined by the above propositions, Giddens' (1976) structure-agency theory suggest that people in a community do not express interest in the development of that community as a matter of accident but are shaped and governed by rules and regulations laid up in the community. This is because human beings are always seeking to maximise their benefits from any activity while minimising their cost. It is therefore imperative that leadership should not continue to be at the top but rather should be broken down so that all will be a part. Thus decentralisation being introduced in Ghana after independence till date has indeed brought the people closer to the governing process hence the populace being part of the decision making process.

Upon the introduction of decentralisation and many mechanisms to bring the populace closer to government, so many platforms have been given women in order to be seen and felt in governance especially at the local front but this leaves much to be desired. Researches one after the other have been conducted to show why women's representation is low and how women can

show up in governance more so at the local level. Xu (2007) expressed that, when the representation of women in terms of social and citizenship participation are elevated, it may be because their involvement in local governance in terms of politics are elevated. Other researches conducted bring out the low patronage of women in local governance and development but have not really considered what causes women to actively get involve in local level development or not. It is in this light the study is conducted.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **Introduction**

This chapter discusses the procedures, methods and approaches employed to gather and analyse data for this study. It primarily comprises of the study population, research design, sample and sampling procedure. It further discusses the data collection methods, the mode of data analysis and the ethical considerations.

#### **Study area**

The 2010 Housing and Population Census put the population of the New Juaben Municipality at 183,727 representing about 6.9 percent of the total population of Eastern Region. This comprises of 88,687 males and 95,040 females. The New Juaben Municipality falls within the Eastern Region of Ghana. The municipality covers an estimated area of 110 square kilometers constituting 0.57 percent of the total land area of the Eastern Region. The municipality has 48 electoral areas.

The Municipality is heterogenous in terms of ethnicity with a high dominance of Akans and Ga-Adangbes, Ewes and the northern tribes also constitute a large part of its population. There is a fair mix of Asantes, Kwahus and Akims with a sizeable number of Akwapims. The Municipality on the other hand is predominantly Christian, constituting a population of 82.8 percent, Moslems 6.1 percent and traditional believers 2.4 percent. These religious inclinations have had a major influence on the dissemination of

information and constitute a significant force in mobilising the people towards developmental activities.

The key sectors of the municipal economy are industrial manufacturing and processing which constitutes about 26.7 percent, the service sector 39.9 percent, agriculture 26.1 percent and 7.3 percent engaged in other socio-economic activities. Whilst majority of industrial establishments are found in the central business area of the municipality, agricultural production is carried out at the small settlements and the peri-urban locations of the district. It is estimated that 26.1 percent of the economically active population is engaged in the agricultural sector.

More importantly, the population breakdown of the New Juaben Municipality indicates that females are more than males. One would therefore expect higher participation of women in governance but that is not the situation. On that score, it is justifiable to conduct a study of such nature in the New Juaben Municipality.

### **Study design**

The study employed the exploratory study design. This design has been chosen based on the objectives of the study and the research questions thereto. It is the most appropriate design that could lead to the drawing of meaningful conclusions from the study because it enables the researcher make explanations based on association of the phenomenon being investigated. In effect, it allows the researcher to provide a careful description, analyses and explanations on



women's participation in local governance in the NJM. The research approach used was qualitative approach because it sought in-depth interviews and a range of observations of all respondents at a time to understand, describe, interpret and gain knowledge of a phenomenon. According to Creswell (2006), qualitative research best helps the researcher to get details about a particular phenomenon. To effectively explore, the research was based on the interpretive school of thought. The unit of analysis for the study was individual respondents sampled from the population of in Asokore, Effiduase and Adweso (the selection was based on population) in the NJM in the Eastern Region of Ghana.

### **Study population**

The population for the study comprised women and men living in the NJM who were 18 years and above and also registered voters of the country. Women and men of the ages of 18 years and above were selected because it is considered as the age at which a person qualifies to vote and assume any public position in the country (Article, 42 of the 1992 Constitution). However, the composition of the target population is as f

ollows: Asokore (4671), Effiduase (4581) and Adweso (3342) as according to the number of women and men 18years and above and are registered voters. These communities were selected because they are the most populated communities out of the 52 communities in the study area where the populations are more heterogenous.

### **Sample and sampling procedure**

Purposive sampling technique was employed because it allowed the researcher to select a sample based on personal judgement, having in mind that the sample will be most useful for the study and also helped to identify particular cases for in-depth investigation in order to get deeper understanding of an issue of interest. Seven respondents each, comprising 5 women and 2 men were selected from the communities. Also, 5 women and 2 men were selected from the Municipal assembly and 2 from the electoral commission to elicit information from, in aid of the research. So, the sample size of the study was 30 respondents. These women respondents selected from the communities were women with high reputation in their various communities in terms of governance and development. The individual men selected were the assembly men of the area. The variation in number of the respondents is as a result of the research's interest in the women in the area. The men were selected in order for different opinions if any.

### **Data sources**

The study made use of both primary and secondary data. The primary data was obtained from the information elicited in the three selected communities and the assembly members in the NJM as at the third quarter of the year 2013.

Secondary information was obtained from books and unpublished theses and dissertations in libraries, Internet, 2010 Ghana Population and Housing Census Report and reports from the municipal offices of the Electoral Commission and the District Assembly.

### **Research instrument**

The interview schedule was structured with both closed and open-ended questions to give room to respondents to express their opinions on the phenomenon. According to Tashakorri and Creswell (2007) interview schedule with both closed and open-ended questions offer a better way of catching the points of view of the informants, which yields detailed information on the phenomenon being studied, hence, its application to the study.

### **Data collection procedure**

A letter of introduction was taken from the Institute for Development Studies of the University of Cape Coast. The letter helped to identify the researcher in situations where respondents expressed doubts about the researcher's identity. This letter was given to the respondents asking permission officially to conduct the research. Additionally, the researcher booked an appointment with the respondents who were interested in assisting to enable them prepare adequately for the interview. These advance arrangements helped facilitate the interview process and make it successful. In the course of the interviews permission was sought from the respondents to tape-record and take notes of the proceedings whenever it was necessary.

The researcher personally conducted the interview for the selected women with the help of three research assistants. Interview with each of the respondents lasted between thirty and sixty minutes at their homes.

## **Data analysis procedure**

The various responses from the interviewees were transcribed from the audio tape recorder onto paper. In view of this, the researcher sorted and identified similar characteristics and responses for analysis. Following this, the researcher cleaned and edited the manuscript by eliminating contradictions in the text. The raw data was organised on the basis of the research questions for which the instrument had been designed. Next was identifying trends in the data.

To Krueger and Neuman (2006) in qualitative analysis the researcher examines, sorts, categorises, evaluates, compares, synthesizes, contemplates and reviews the raw and recorded data with the aim to assemble or reconstruct the data in a meaningful or comprehensible fashion. In view of this, the researcher sorted and identified similar characteristics and responses for analysis. Narrative and thematic analyses were employed to analyse the open-ended items from the fieldwork. A researcher using narratives gives account of what happens and as much as possible and leaves data to speak for itself. Narratives provide rich and concrete details about specific events (Neuman, 2007).

## **Ethical considerations**

The dynamic nature of social research process which involves researchers and respondents requires mutual trust and cooperation, as well as promises and well accepted convictions and expectations (Babbie, 2005). The ethical considerations that guided the study generally bothered on credibility

and ensuring that rights of respondents were protected. At each point in the data collection process, respondents were briefed on the purpose of the study and sought their permission to be part of the research. Although it was frustrating at times getting the attention of respondents, the use of the letter of introduction the researcher obtained from the Institute for Development Studies, University of Cape Coast helped to simplify the issues.

Consent of respondents was also sought before they joined the study. The researcher arranged with respondents the time, date and duration of the interview. Respondents voluntarily expressed their willingness to participate in the study. They were also made aware of the nature of questions, the purpose of the information required of them and how their accurate responses would contribute to the general outcome of the study. The researcher also ensured that information given by respondents was used only for the purpose of the study and not for any other intention.

### **Challenges**

There were a number of problems encountered in the course of the study but these were however overcome through the social skills of the researcher and the help of the research assistants as well as the letter of introduction from the Institute of Development Studies.

Firstly, women were resisting interviews even though they had been selected by the researcher, because they felt it was of no use to be interviewed since other researches have taken place in their communities and have seen no

improvement in the communities. In this case, the researcher with the research assistants had to do some education on the reason for their research.

Secondly, due to the researcher's method of sampling which was the purposive sampling method, not all respondents after they have been selected were readily willing to participate in the research unless well spoken to. So, women respondents were made to understand by the research team on their importance in the research since they are part of the group of people championing development in their communities.

### **Summary**

The study adopted an exploratory study design. Purposive sampling technique was used to draw respondents. A total of 30 respondents were drawn for the study constituting of 20 women and 10 men. Five women respondents were drawn each from the three purposively selected communities and five assembly women from the NJM. Again, 10 men respondents were also drawn, with 2 men each from the selected communities, 2 each from the assembly and electoral commission respectively. Both primary data and secondary information were used in the study.

An interview schedule was the main instrument for collecting primary data. Field data was collected with the assistance of five field assistants. The data was analysed using narrations.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

#### **Introduction**

This chapter presents the analysis of findings based on the data collected and discussions of the findings. All the issues that cropped up from the study conducted on the participation of women in local governance in the NJM in the Eastern Region are identified and discussed. By this, the analysis is mainly presented in narrative forms based on the objectives of the study.

#### **Demographic characteristics of respondents**

The background characteristics of a group of people play an important role in how they interact among themselves and with other people as well as how they perceive issues. The demographic data was collected on age, marital status, highest educational level, occupation and religious affiliation. This was to ensure that the major characteristics of respondents were well represented in the study. This section summarises the demographic characteristics of the respondents.

##### **Age distribution of respondents**

It is perceived that one's age influences the level of involvement in local governance. Often, the higher ones age, the more likely the person will be involved in local governance (Addea, 2010). Age of respondents therefore becomes an important variable in women participation in local governance.

Twenty-seven respondents who participated in the study were within the age groups 35 and 57 years.

The result depicted that all respondents in the study were less than 60 years with a majority of eighteen women and nine men of these respondents being between 35 and 53 years, with the remaining two females and one male respondents being 54 years and above.

#### Marital status of respondents

Marital status is one of the family characteristics that is believed to influence individual's perception and attitude towards participation in local governance (Addo-Deku, 2012). The result indicated that seventeen women and five men respondents who participated in the study were married. In contrast, there were two women respondents who were either not married or widowed with one woman separated from marriage and there were five unmarried men.

According to Addo-Deku (2012), marriage is a sign of maturity and responsibility in the Ghanaian society. For this reason, a married individual is accorded a high level of respect in the society, more especially during decision making.

#### Educational level of respondents

Education broadens one's perspective on global and national issues and allows individuals to gain access to better opportunities and enhance understanding and appreciation of issues within their proper context. It is seen



as a means by which the human resource base of any nation can be developed for sustainable development (Freire, 1973 as cited in Addo-Deku, 2012). To ascertain the educational level of respondents, respondents were asked to indicate their highest educational level attained. This was to further aid in testing the perception that, individual's level of education is known to influence ones involvement in local governance. It was realised that, twenty-five respondents had had education from the secondary, technical or vocational levels and even higher. Although no respondent represented no-formal education among men and women, there were respondents with primary and middle education representing one and two women respondents respectively and one man representing primary education level.

Nine women respondents indicated having a tertiary level education, specifically three Diploma, four Higher National Diploma (HND) and two University degrees, six men also having university degrees.

Therefore, the educational levels of the respondents indicated that, of all twenty women who participated in the study, nine women had had levels of educational attainment above middle school level in the municipality; that is tertiary education. However in general terms, seventeen women had education above primary and middle school. On the other hand, five men had had educational attainment above secondary.

#### Occupation of the respondents

It was evident that, all respondents were gainfully employed in both the government and the private sectors of the economy with respondents

coming from the teaching sector, health sector, security services, self employed and even assembly workers in the municipal assembly.

The outcome of the respondents' occupation in the study therefore depicted that, respondents in the NJM are more engaged in the formal employment sector than the informal employment as only three respondents were seen to be self employed from the informal sector (that is, two were local dish sellers and one seen more as a traditional healer). The remaining twenty-six respondents working in the formal sectors of the economy with three health workers, three security persons, seven teachers, nine assembly workers in the assembly and four business persons.

#### Respondents' length of stay in the community

Another important issue to local participation perceived to influence local governance is the length of stay of an individual in a community. It is believed that the longer a person stays in a community, the more likely the person will be involved in local activities (Addo-Deku, 2012).

It was evident that, at least all the respondents have stayed in their communities for more than a year. Those who have stayed from one to eight years covered a majority of twenty-one respondents as against those who have stayed in the communities for more than six years covering a minority of nine respondents. This will therefore give respondents the upper hand to knowing more about the issues in the communities in which they are.

## Religious affiliation of respondents

Religious affiliation of a citizen is perceived to influence involvement in local governance. There is a common knowledge that some religion do not encourage citizens to participate in local governance while other members affiliated to other religions are encouraged to involve themselves in local governance (Addo-Deku, 2012). The result shows that, the majority (twenty-seven) respondents were Christians with few (three) respondents being Muslims. On the contrary, there was no respondent in the study representing traditionalists. So, data from the field revealed that, women in the NJM are dominantly Christians.

## **Women's understanding of local governance**

The understanding of the concept of local governance is likely to enable individuals to participate well and fully in governance because it is a way through which they exercise their citizenship rights and demonstrate characteristics acquired through citizen education, which is an explicit and continuous study of the basic concepts and values underlying democratic political community and constitutional orders.

In view of these, respondents were asked if they knew the assembly member(s) of their communities. Twenty-seven respondents answered 'Yes' to the question while the three respondents were not so sure of who their assembly members were. Among the twenty-seven respondents, men were nine with eighteen women. With the three respondents, two were women and a man.

The two women were above the age of fifty-four and the man was found between the ages thirty-five to thirty-nine, coming from Asokore. The two women coming from Asokore and Adweso quickly added that ‘ *m’aampe ho asem mpo anka*’ meaning ‘I did not even follow it’. To them, it is because they do stay close to the assembly member, they have not taken notice of him. Women’s age was seen to have a tendency of influencing their knowledge about representatives hence local governance because, they did say sometimes, ‘*these things are better left for the young and vibrant ones, not those of us preparing to die*’. On the contrary, the man who did not know his assembly member expressed that, he was very tight with duties the day voting was going on and that, he has forgotten to follow it. He expressed shyness for not know who his assembly member was.

Using knowing assembly member as a measure of women’s understanding of local governance, the study found out that, there was a link between age and knowledge about assembly members. In effect, women respondents in the middle ages are more likely to participate in social/community activities than women respondents in the younger adulthood and later adulthood, as the greater number (eighteen) of women respondents who knew their assembly representatives were women respondents between the ages of thirty-five and fifty-three years and the remaining minority of two women respondents were aged fifty-four and above. In the same vain, majority of the men who responded ‘Yes’ to knowing their assembly members were within the age group of thirty-five and fifty-three years. Unlike women whose majority was around the ages of forty to forty-four (That is seven women). This is (may be) because relatively younger people may not feel a sense of

responsibility to participate because during the study, women who were available according to the criterion for selecting respondents to take in the research were women who were in their middle ages. Women in the middle ages participate more because of their sense of responsibility and compulsion to participate (O'Neil, 2006).

Never the less, among the men, a greater number of them (six men) were around the ages thirty-five to thirty-nine. This was in disagreement with the assertion of O'Neil (2006).

Taking the responses according to educational qualification, the study revealed that, among the eighteen women who responded knowing their assembly members, seventeen were women with secondary education and women with tertiary education and one woman respondent with middle school certificate, with the two responses from women who have had primary education. Also with the nine men who responded knowing their assembly members, a majority of eight men had education from secondary school and above to tertiary. So, it was revealed that, women with high forms of education other than primary education responded knowing their assembly member.

The study finding supports O'Neil's (2006) study on politics and civic engagement among Canadian youth that, one's levels of education influences citizenship participation. To her, education increases a person's access to information, the skills and mind-set associated with greater civic engagements and the needed civic knowledge for effective citizenship participation. Thus women who possess these characteristics would be more likely to participate in

civic educational programmes than those who do not. Similar finding was also provided by Saltzstein (2003) that women with higher education provide certain attitudes which are meaningful for effective citizenship participation.

#### Voting in the district assembly election

Voting is a form of participating politically to influence governance and influencing public decision-making process thereby securing a particular outcome (Verba & Nie, 1972; Toerell, 2006). It is one of the rights of citizens in the country and at the district level, hence women as well have the right to vote. The willingness of citizens to vote during any election depicts their understanding and willingness to participate in the governance process of a particular area.

When respondents were asked whether they voted in the district assembly elections, the study revealed that a good number of women and men representing sixteen and nine respondents respectively voted in the 2010 District Assembly Elections but those who did not vote represented a minority of four women respondents and one man. Asking respondents to justify their responses, some respondents (two women and one man) indicated they were not available at the time of the elections. For the remaining two women respondents, one woman indicated that, she did not see any benefit from voting even though she is interested in the well being of the community and the empowerment of women. The other woman said she did not hear any information concerning the electioneering activities. Those who did not vote were further asked why they did not take part in the voting and answers to the question by respondents are in agreement with Verba and Nie's (1972)

psychological engagement in the CVM, which talks about the attitudes that incline citizens to become more active. That is, if a person does not have trust in a group or does not have interest, there comes no motivation or so ever to be part.

According to a woman from Effiduase:

*adwuma a akatua biara nni mu de3 mennye ooo (a work which doesn't offer any payment, I won't do it again). I have participated in numerous political activities, going for campaigns, going for meetings and rallies. But I decided to stop because I don't gain any benefit from it so enough is enough m'agyae (I've stopped) (16<sup>th</sup> July, 2013).*

Another woman from Adweso also answered:

*For me I am not even interested in the money they will give me to vote for them. My concern is that we've been voting for these politicians and no improvements have been made to our lives like opening up job opportunities for all of us. Apart from the fishing activities there are no proper job prospects in this large community, so why must we continue to vote? (12<sup>th</sup> August, 2013)*

However, further questioning on why the four women respondents did not vote revealed that, they did not take part in the district assembly election because, they did not have National identity cards, some had registered elsewhere, some also felt they are old to vote in district assembly election.

Conversely, participants who took part in the district assembly elections indicated that, they were called to vote and also some of these respondents thought it wise to choose who has to lead them

An Asokore woman opined;

*I new the three people who contested in my area and among them, two were my JHS class mates who were very bad boys. They have grown with such a character and they want to become assembly men so they can steal from us, NO WAY. So I was even part of the campaign for the one who won (30<sup>th</sup> July, 2013).*

Further, the responses indicated that, participation in district assembly elections is higher among women respondents between the ages of twenty-eight to forty and three and lower among the women within the ages of forty-three and forty-seven. Thus women respondents in their middle ages are more likely to take part in district assembly elections than women respondents in their old ages.

The results are confirmed by the reasons given by the respondents as to whether they voted or not and it was revealed that women in their middle ages participate more in voting activities than those within the younger and older ages. This was because whereas women in their younger ages felt immature to engage in meaningful political activities, those in the later ages felt hindered by the health implications associated with old age. According to a 35year old young woman respondent Effuduase:



*...for interest I really do have, very well in politics and am hoping to be a politician someday to come. But for now, I feel it is not my time yet but will surely pay attention when the time comes and may be, even contest for a political position. I am very young now (17<sup>th</sup> July, 2013).*

Conversely, a 55 year old woman discussant from Effiduase also shared this view:

*Hmmm my young lady, it's my age ooo... my age will not permit me to be part of any meaningful political activity. If I had been a government worker I would be approaching my retirement. Look at me where is my strength? These things should be left for the young women; they have the strength to do some of these things like some of you people (19<sup>th</sup> July, 2013).*

Thus, women respondents' age has a tendency to influence their political participation. Political participation is highly probable among women in their middle ages than those in their youthful ages and old ages.

Age is considered one of the key determinants of variations in political attitudes and behaviours as a person's age determines his/her interest, given the generation he/she may be. The study found that, women respondents in their middle ages (thirty-five to fifty-three) participated more in voting in the district assembly elections than women respondents in their younger ages (those between the ages of eighteen and thirty-four) and later ages (fifty-four and over). It can thereby be seen that, the women respondent voters in the NJM

during the district assembly elections, were women who are in their middle ages.

On the other hand, a man at the office of the electoral commission was of a different opinion. To him, age should not be a barrier to someone's willingness and interest in voting.

In Ghana, age plays a crucial role in decision-making process as a person is guaranteed to vote under the 1992 constitution when he/she is eighteen years of age and twenty-one years to assume public positions (The constitution of Ghana, 1992). Whereas women in their younger ages feel immature to participate in political activities especially voting, those in the middle ages felt a compulsion to participate while the old aged are hindered by the health hazards associated with their old age. The study results are in conformity with a similar study finding by Stein, Leighley and Owens (2005) on electoral reforms in Europe. Their study found that there was a positive relationship between age and political participation. Also, Norris (2003) study on political activism in Europe further established that political participation was low among young people and older people but high among the middle aged. According to him, participation among younger adult was low because they were either "apathetic" (at best) or "alienated" (at worst) from political systems. Furthermore, the findings confirmed O'Neil's (2007) study among Cambodian youth which found that middle adults were more likely to participate because they feel compelled and greater responsibility to inform decisions.

The situation among women in the NJM could be explained from the responses gathered during the study. Participation in voting in the district

assembly election was low among the young adults because they felt immature and unprepared to do so. In the same vein, the older adult felt handicapped by their retirements and possibly the health implications associated with old age.

It was evident from the field that participation on the side of respondents in the district assembly elections increases with one's level of education. With this, it was evident that a majority of the respondents who participated in the district assembly elections were women and men with high education above secondary or middle school education levels as against a few who have attained education lower than secondary.

Formal education produces numerous effects on participation especially in local governance activities. It provides the knowledge, skills and training necessary for both political, social and citizenship participation. Education also provides the benefits of voluntary associations in schools, clubs and other non-political institutions (Verba and Nie, 1995) which serve as avenues or apprenticeship for effective political participation. People develop leadership skills and civic skills as they climb the educational ladder. Furthermore, education provides access to high-income jobs that provide the resources and contacts for political activities. As a result, women who have acquired higher formal education are placed in a more advantageous position to participate more politically than women who have never been to school. Verba et al (2001:286) drawing on decades of research into the factors influencing men and women's participation in the United States of America have concluded that, education is an "especially powerful predictor of political participation". The study findings support the Civic Voluntary Model of Verba et al (1995) and that individuals with high levels of education will participate in politics

than those who have never been to school. Similar findings were provided by Hansen and Rosenstone (1993) that citizens with higher levels of formal education are more likely to engage in political activities. They are of the view that those with higher formal education have greater sense of both internal and external efficacy needed for effective participation. This finding of the study also support outcomes from the study of Ara and Khan (2006) on women's participation and empowerment in Bangladesh, which they concluded that women with higher education are more likely to participate in political activities than those who do not.

The study however is in disagreement with Logwe's (2000) assertion that women's formal education cannot be likened to their level of political participation. In her paper on "Towards Realistic Strategies for Women's Political Empowerment in Africa" Logwe (2000) asserted that, there exists no correlation between the percentage of educated women in a particular country to their percentage in parliament, higher levels of government and even at the local government level. Thus, addressing the limited educational facilities for women to improve their participation would be a misplaced priority. Also, the study contradicted Jayaweera's (1997) study of twenty-three middle and low income countries in Asia which showed the absence of a strong relationship between educational attainment and the number of women in formal politics. The study also disputed Goetz (2003) study that women's political participation does not appear to increase in step with their advances in their education status.

The differences in the findings of the study with other studies may have arisen from the fact that both studies were carried out in different socio-cultural

and economic milieu, hence, the disparities in the findings. However, to enhance women's political participation more literacy and non-formal educational programmes ought to be organising for women to equip them with the knowledge, skills and attitudes they require for their meaningful participation.

According to the results concerning occupation of respondents and how many of these women voted in the district assembly elections, it was revealed that, in a whole, it was evident that, irrespective of the kind of job a respondent did, he or she participated in voting in one way or the other. However, some women respondents voted more than others. Specifically, women in the health service did not take part in voting at all as compared with those women in teaching service (two women) and the self employed (three woman), the security service (one woman), business sector (three women) and the five government appointees.

Meetings organised at the local level to seek opinions of the members of the  
community.

Meeting at the local level is one of the ways of bringing together citizens and government representatives to discuss issues pertaining to the community and the nation as a whole. Usually, such meetings are organised by the Assembly members to seek and discuss issues at the local level. In terms of participation, the more citizens attend such meetings and contribute at the meeting show their willingness to participate in local governance.

It was evident from the study that, more of the women and men respondents eighteen and ten respectively answered yes to knowing that meetings are organised at the local level in the community. For the rest of the respondents (the two remaining women) were certain that such meetings are not organise in their various communities.

Respondents were further asked if they have ever attended such meetings in their respective communities and almost all (seventeen out of the eighteen the women respondents who said yes to knowing of such a meeting in their communities) of the respondents expressed they have been attending such meetings before with eight men. Usually, issues discussed at the local assembly meetings level are supposed to be presented at district assembly meetings. The notion is that when citizens' needs are presented at the district assembly, these needs may be provided.

A question was asked on whether the assembly member has led for a community project during the last four years. A majority of eighteen of the women and 10 men respondents answered in agreement to the fact that the assembly member has led in the provision of community projects but two women respondents were not aware of any developmental projects in the community in the last four years. Out of the eighteen women respondents who new of recent developments led by their assembly members, ten respondents claimed their knowledge was a 'here-say' knowledge from some men friends in the community. Some of the developmental projects brought up in the community in the last four years were outlined by these respondents who answered yes to the question. Projects such as electricity, quality water, public toilets, roads and numerous clean up exercises.

At the local level, decision making is an important factor which needs to be considered in local governance. The results in the study indicated that, most women as community members were not consulted before some of the projects started in their communities. Those who claimed to have knowledge about the inception of projects in their communities were less even though they are actively involved in the development of the community. The remaining majority either did not have knowledge about the inception of any project at all or might have heard it from men friends in their community. Out of this, many of the respondents claimed they do not see themselves as part of the decision making body in their communities. This finding is in conformity to Singh's (2006) finding that aside women's physical presence in social projects, they exhibit limited control and involvement in social, community projects and interventions. Ajayi and Otuya (2006) found out in their study on "Women's Participation in Community Development Projects" in Ndokwa that, majority of women are socially, culturally and politically barred from participation in community development planning and decision-making processes regarding community projects. The finding also affirms a study conducted by Ozor and Nwankwo (2008) on community development programmes in Idaeto local government area of Imo state in Nigeria. Their study found that women are not given equal opportunities for participation in community projects/programmes especially with regards to leadership and decision making roles.

Participation is however not limited to physical presence. Pateman (1970) argued that participation excludes the following situation: when an individual merely takes part in a group activity, where an individual is merely given information on a decision affecting him/her before it is executed, or an

individual being present at a meeting but has no influence. Therefore, to the extent that women in the NJM lack the decision making power to influence decision making regarding projects/programme implementation, they cannot be said to participate actively in social/community implemented projects/programmes. This is as a result of factors such as low formal education and culturally laid down structures. A respondent from Effiduase shared this view during one of the discussion sessions:

*My sister, I only carry stones and sand when I'm asked to during communal works. I have never been consulted or involved in any decision regarding projects implementation...never! And who am I to be consulted before the implementation, I didn't get to their level of education neither do I have the money to be able to influence decisions, so I am not even bothered at all...(16<sup>th</sup> July, 2013).*

The respondents further indicated that, rating the activities of the assembly in the community, average point will be the rate of measurement. However, in the midst of inadequate information to community members prior to the inception of projects, local members from the communities were involved in carrying out the projects.

The respondents who saw themselves as a part of the decision making body in the communities did so for a number of reasons. Among the reasons that respondents gave include voting to elect assembly members and attending meetings. The study in addition found that a significant number of respondents had not campaigned for or contested for any position as a unit committee member. They gave reasons as to why they are not interested. Their reasons are summarised below as follows



*I am not ready to be insulted by anybody*

*I am a busy woman with kids to take care of.*

*I am just not interested.*

Women being part of decision making in their communities.

Humans are faced with different options to make a choice from at certain point in time. It is incumbent upon people to put thoughts together and select logical choice of the available options. This is what happens in every community and in governance as well. It brings together all the actors in a community and not just a part of it. Results from the field indicated that, many women were of the view that, women should be made a part of the decision making process at the local level though a few women disagreed to how important it is to make women a part of the decision making process at the local level. Six out of the ten men respondents were in disagreement with the fact that, women should be made a part of decision making in their communities. The respondents were further asked to give reasons to their answers whether women should be given a chance or not women should be given a part to play in decision making process. According to the respondents in agreement to women being part of decision making process, women are part of the people in the community and the entire human race, therefore, whatever outcome in the community affects them as it does to men, for that reason they must be part. A discussant from the district assembly commented;

*... friends keep telling me I have the leadership qualities to be a leader so whenever we are to elect prefect they mentioned my name as at the*

*time of my school days, it was an encouragement to me knowing that my friends believed in me to be able to occupy that position... as for my family they have really done a lot especially my dad. He was an executive for a political party and after my JHS, he made me work for a political party. During the period I offered advice to people that came to file for positions by telling them which positions they are likely to win should they apply. So at that point I was myself as a leader and that has increased by desire to all the time to partake in decisions at whichever level I find myself so I strongly think women should be given the chance to (3<sup>rd</sup> September, 2013).*

A man from Adweso also commented;

*Mmaa wo abadae a se wode adwuma hye wonnsa a wobe tumi aye para a wonnwene sika die biara ho. Nti se mmaa ka ho bii a, sika wia so be te'. Women are partriotic by nature who will not think of embezzling funs when put in high places. So women should be part of decision in order to reduce embezzlement (19<sup>th</sup> August , 2013).*

Nonetheless, the respondents who would rather wish women are not made a part of the decision making process feel women can not match up to the task that will be given them because of how structures are laid in the society. They therefore suggested the elimination of all barriers that hinders women's interest in the political institutions especially the politics of insults and victimisation. Accordingly, the women in the group agitated for a law to ban

the politics of insults and also to charge the government to arrest the committers of violence that characterises Ghanaian politics. One woman at Effiduase shared this emotional sentiment:

*...My sister, you are in the University so you must have heard what happened to Ursula Owusu of the New Patriotic Party and these are all some of the things why I told you earlier I will not encourage even my daughter into politics. The woman is one of the few women who have openly made their intention known to contest political position. But if she is beaten up like the way people are saying they did and if we are advocating for women's increased participation in politics "na ye kœe anaa ye bae" (literally meaning are we going or we are coming) will women then come out to contest? No my sister. The nature of politics must stop, the insults, violence must all cease and I think there should be a law to address some of these cases otherwise women we will continuously be at the bottom. (17<sup>th</sup> July, 2013).*

A man from the district assembly opined:

*' I know we all are aware that women are talkatives. They talk almost all the time and end up quarrelling because of a minor misunderstanding among them. When women are put in projects, decisions made are mostly delayed because of wrangling. (17<sup>th</sup> July, 2013)*

Women's interests in standing for assembly member.

In order to measure women's confidence in affecting the systems in local governance, emphasis was placed on measuring the internal value of

women concerning how best they can contribute to local development by having interest in being an assembly member. With internal values, the study sought to measure the beliefs about the impact a person may have on the political process as a result of their own skills and confidence.

Numerous women (seventeen women) respondents agreed that they were well prepared to participate in or becoming an assembly member. Although the minority of respondents indicated they were not prepared to participate in or becoming assembly members. This indicates how the level of interest of women in the NJM in becoming front liners in local governance is high. The respondents were further asked to justify their responses and generally those who responded no stated that, they indicated that, they do not have interest in becoming assembly members, fear of being called names and unnecessary propagandas. One woman from Asokore commented

*I am a shy person so I don't talk in public. Because of that I hardly attend forums or educative programmes. Even if they come to churches to talk about some of these things I don't make any contribution so I will find it very difficult to campaign even if I am convinced beyond reasonable measures to contest (2<sup>nd</sup> August, 2013).*

Another woman also from Adweso opined:

*When men speak in our community, they are heard louder than when a woman speak. An example is when projects come to our community, it's only the opinion leaders who are men that are consulted. They take the decision on our behalf and they only communicate it to us through the gong-gong beater that there is going to be this kind of project so we*

*need this or that and that all community members should get involved. This has been the tradition so I am not even bothered going to contest with a man because my fellow women will even vote for a man than a women because our society is structured that, women are weaker vessels (19<sup>th</sup> August, 2013).*

The findings from the field on the understanding of women in local governance revealed that, generally, majority of women respondents understand what is meant by local governance in terms of how they are involved in the activities in their localities. This is because in accordance with Bruce (1999), results from the field showed that, women at the grass root level have some sort of knowledge about local authority and decision-making. As Verba *et al.*, (1995) noted, citizens have numerous ways to show their understanding hence participation in government. Some of these channels opened to citizens to involve themselves in the decision-making processes in the study area included knowledge about assembly representatives, voting in district assembly elections, awareness of meetings organised in their communities, interest of women in communal activities and the official governing of their communities. Even though there ere complains of not being recognised as part of decision-making processes in their communities because, women feel information do not get to them through official means but through ‘hear-say’, it can be said that, women in the NJM understand local governance because about three-quarters (fifteen respondents) on the average responded in agreement to the items that measure understanding of local governance according to this study.

### **Factors that encourage women to participate in local governance.**

Looking at how women would want to play their role in the development of their locality, respondents were asked to list some of the instances that they believe will move them as women to participate in the governing processes in their locality. The study found all respondents raising issues like affirmative action, formal education, establishment of laws which favour women to fight against socio-cultural practices that infringe upon the right of women, empowerment, self-confidence among others. These responses run through all the respondents with no one at all giving an opposite idea or answer.

Further, the respondents were asked to justify their ideas given about what will move a woman to partake in the governing processes in their community. A participant from Adweso shared her view

*'You know, in any group or association in the world now, formal education is very important because you need to know how to read and write if not, you will be taken for a ride .For me, I know I don't have any educational background so I know myself that I can't be in the midst of educated gatherings even though they know me well in this area as one person who is more into human development. I also know I can't go into politics or play any leading role in the community especially the ones that have links with the central government because I don't know book. How am I even to convince people to vote for me when they know "me pen nnka" (my pen doesn't write). They won't even take me serious (19<sup>th</sup> August, 2013).*

Another woman from the assembly expressed;

*“Look at the kind of chiefs and queen mothers that are appearing of late, almost all are Doctors, Professors and so on and so forth. Even look at our Omanhene he is a Professor. This is because they are all from rich homes where their parents could send them to proper schools to become important people in the society. But me, where is the money? My parents were poor peasant farmers from Suhyene who migrated to Oyoko. We had to go to the farm everyday for what the family will eat. My brothers who would have had privileges as boys could not even go beyond middle school level. So you see, poverty also causes this. The woman does not have money and its money that solves all problems, ‘yenkoti aduro mmra a ene ahahan’ It is a share miracle that I find myself here as a member of the assembly (6<sup>th</sup> September, 2013).*

A woman from the assembly opined;

*Our socialisation processes of being a woman therefore a bye-product and a weakling is really causing our local governing process in the sense that very few women would want to venture. And in the few, just a number will succeed because of the notion that a woman who does not have the spirit of subordination will want to enter into politics or be a leader. They begin to call you names like ‘obaa akokonni’ meaning a female cock. I quite remember what the people of Koforidua said about Honourable B.B. Boateng during the days she was contesting for*

*Member of parliament. So, I think there should a law or even laws to protect such determined women from the lips of people. It is not easy here as a member of the assembly but we are managing because, if you do not strive for a change today, no one will be courageous to continue tomorrow (10<sup>th</sup> September, 2013).*

A man from Effiduase opined:

*Women are naturally shy people and I think this is as a result of the belief that we are not supposed to talk among men. So what happens is even if the programme is organise we can't even talk, we don't add anything up to the decisions so I think if we will be taught how to talk in public it will really help us a lot because we have women who have gone to school but still cannot talk in public (19<sup>th</sup> July, 2013).*

### **Factors that hinder women to participate in local governance.**

This section focuses on findings from the field on the factors that hinder women's participation in local governance in the New Juaben Municipality. Responses taken from respondents on certain items that will prevent them from contributing to the decision making process in the local levels.

A majority of respondents felt low level of education is likely to prevent them from participating in local governance. This was followed by a



minority respondents who do not think education is likely to prevent them from participating in local governance.

Concerning work, a very big majority responded that work is likely to prevent them from participating in local governance. On the contrary, few of the respondents responded to the question on whether work is likely to prevent them from participating in local governance.

Consequently the study realised that, a significant number of respondents responded in agreement to the fact that, they seeing involvement in local governance a waste of time is likely to prevent them from participating.

Twelve women and nine men respondents were in agreement that, participation in the community not being compulsory alone is likely to prevent them from participating while just a hand full (eight women respondents) responded no to the fact that they will not be prevented from participation in local governance because it is not compulsory.

For lack of proper management by authorities, majority of respondents (eleven women and nine men) were of the view that, women will be prevented from local governance participation.

More than half of the respondents (twelve women and nine men respondents) were of the view that, women will not participate in local governance if they are not properly informed, this was followed by eight women and one man respondents who were not certain therefore answered sometimes.

Despite the enormous benefits that the society derives from the participation of women in the decision making processes especially at the local level, several factors impinged on their level of participation as in accordance

with what women underscored on the field of study. Analysis of field data unveiled the following as the factors that impinged on women's participation in the local governance process at the studied communities;

#### Level of Education of women

From the study, level of education as an impediment runs throughout the responses given by participants. All the twenty respondents listed education as an impediment to women's participation in local governance. Generally, they were of the view that literacy and therefore formal education is the order of the day which means that, English language and writing are the (will be) modes of communication during these meeting. Respondents were of the view that, education empowers and allows a person to meet different kinds of people so one knows how to handle people. According to a participant from Asokore;

*I am stacked here in this community and can not go anywhere apart from being here because of my inability to speak and write the English language well. So, i am not interested to enter in any thing that has a link with politics, but I know someone who is so much interested but can not do it because she feels she has not attained the level of her prospective competitors. So she always tells herself "I should have gone to school (30<sup>th</sup> July, 2013).*

A woman from Effiduase opined;

*Na anka enye sukuu a, anka nea nkorofu yirekyere yi yentumi nnye bi anaa? Couldn't we have matched these people boot for boot had it not been issues of literacy? (19<sup>th</sup> July, 2013).*

Another respondent from the assembly also shared a view that, women's education should be given utmost priority if they are to participate effectively in citizenship activities. She gave this opinion:

*I think education is very very important when we want to know our rights and engage in civic education activities and programmes. It only takes the educated to be part in contributing to knowledge or policy in Ghana now. Tell me these days how many elderly people whom we consider wise are part of decision making? Even chiefs who are uneducated are sometimes side-lined. Similarly it will only take the educated to know her rights and participate in policy discussions of national importance and not only at the local level. So, it becomes a great barrier before women if they are less in terms of education. I believe that, with a good platform in education, a woman can go higher even to the extent of breaking socio-cultural barriers in the society (3<sup>rd</sup> September, 2013).*

#### Socio-cultural factors

The socialisation process of being boy or girl, that is the values placed on the birth of boys over girls was another issue found from the field to inhibit women from participating in the local governance process. Women respondents were of the view that, women in the various societies are not seen as front liners because of indoctrinations that women themselves have gone through for the whole of live. As a result, some women do not even believe in their fellow women even if they are bold enough to become front liners. Some women do not vote for women candidates or contestants because they have

come to accept the fact that, in the society in which they live, women are voiceless. A male participant from Adweso expressed;

*My sister, a woman is seen a property of her husband and therefore does not owe herself, and again where I come from, it is considered disrespecting on the part of a woman to speak or express her opinion in the midst of men since women are seen as inferior in the society so how do they join men in the governance of the community since they are welcomed? (15<sup>th</sup> August, 2013).*

To another respondent from Asokore, she sometimes feels not to show up in what happens in the community, let alone deciding to contest any person who is interested in becoming an assembly member of representative. This is all because, she knows for sure that, she will not be voted for or elected because there are men in the community who have shown a dying interests in the governance. She said;

*even the men who are known to be the mouth piece of the society are not winning races to be leaders of the community, how much a mere woman who is seen as weakling? (2<sup>nd</sup> August, 2013)*

According to her it is not possible because of the social structures in the society. This response was confirmed by what another woman from the assembly had to say

*a colleague at my work place once called me to his office during a lunch break just to ask me if I would be bold enough to chair a*

*committee about to be formed in the organisation. I quickly said yes and asked why he asked me if I could do it. All that he could say 'but you know that you women do not have much to say in the midst of men, let alone being a head of men because, it is considered as a sign of disrespect on the part of women to express their opinions in the midst of men as men consider women's ideas as inferior'. So what I said was even you? Then he said, 'never mind we will talk later. I just wanted to know. So you see?' (10<sup>th</sup> September, 2013)*

These assertions were backed by other respondents that most women were not even willing to show up in public or community positions and even those who come up boldly against all odds are not assisted or welcomed because of cultural indoctrination.

#### Household chores and family activities

The study revealed that women in the studied community faced a double burden of work that impinged on their efforts to come to the public domain. For most respondents, women household chores and farm attendance took much of their houses left them with very little time to participate in public activities. For a participant from Adweso,

*I am already tired with what I do in the house and at work as a woman. I send my kids to school very early and have to go to work as well. When do I come back home to cook for my family and honour other*

*meetings? It is not possible at all. The little I do here is enough (13<sup>th</sup> August, 2013).*

A woman assembly representative argued that household responsibilities limit the time factor for women to engage meaningfully in political activities. She made these estimations:

*Men should be prepared to share family responsibilities to give women some time to do other things like political activities. You realised a major challenge is that women do not have the time to enter into politics which is considered more time consuming. Family responsibilities and household chores do not permit us so if responsibilities are shared at home, at least women will be free small to engage in other political activities (10<sup>th</sup> September, 2013).*

#### Lack of confidence or intimidation

Again, the study revealed that the socio-cultural background of women have got a negative impact on them as they lack the confidence and courage to participate in public decision making processes. According to a participant from Asokore;

*Most women lack confidence and the courage to raise their views or contribute at the public fora. The women normally discuss their views later when they are on their ways back home from public for a and even those with higher education who should have been in a better position*

*to express themselves at such for a, at times faced the same problem*  
(2<sup>nd</sup> August, 2013).

#### Financial constraints

Women respondents were of the view that, in our societies, majority of females are engaged in the informal activities such as petty trading, artisans and farming. These women found in such jobs do not earn much as compared to their male counterparts who own farms and get higher incomes. Inadequate financial resources has prevented women in the community from taking active part in household, let alone community public decision making processes. A discussant from the assembly opined;

*Before one is voted for as a unit committee member or assembly member, that person has to embark on a vigorous electioneering campaign which involves cost of transportation, logistics and buying of drinks and souvenir to influence voters. Therefore, one has to get enough money in hand so that all these needs could be met* (3<sup>rd</sup> September, 2013).

A woman from Adweso shared her opinion;

*Women most of the times are not found in wage-earning employment for that matter they can't pull their strength financially and you know politics and having anything to do with leadership in our communities now is about money, printing posters, going for rallies and even at a*

*point you have to give money to electorates just for them to vote for you. So when you don't have money what do you do, you won't even go there at all. So women who show interest in politics must be supported financially (19<sup>th</sup> August, 2013).*

### **Strategies to increase the level of women's participation in local governance.**

This section presents the results on how respondents think the issue of low patronage or participation in local governance can be solved. Respondents were asked to indicate strategies that are likely to improve participation in local governance on the side of women in the NJM. It begins with suggested ways by respondents of how respondents think participation in local governance can be increased.

Almost all the respondents in the study underscored the role of education in improving women's participation. Hansen (1993) is of the view that, education provides the skills, external and internal efficacy and greater access to resources which to Verba and Nie (1972) are requisite for effective political participation. Most of the respondents expressed their inability to engage in meaningful political activities because of their low levels of formal education. They thus suggested that, more women will engage and commit to political activities, if women were given more opportunities to acquire higher education. This suggestion is in line with the finding of the study that there is a significant relationship between education and political participation as women with higher education are more likely to participate than those who are not. The



above suggestion also corroborates the basic tenets of the personal empowerment theory which argues that empowering women for increased participation requires both individual and collective efforts. Thus, women as individuals need to develop the capabilities to overcome their psychological and intellectual obstacles and attain self-determination, self-sufficiency and decision making abilities (Becker, Kovach & Gronseth, 2004). To Kabeer (1995) this could be attained through education, which could enhance personal self-development of women by equipping them with the confidence, civic skills, leadership competence and awareness creation of their limited participation in their socio-political environment. In line with this, respondents also suggested that women should be educated on the need to participate in politics; capacity building programmes and specific training schools to be established to train women to be politicians.

A woman assembly representative suggested:

*Women's education is important. Women do not enter into politics mostly because they don't have educational background. If young girls would be encouraged to go to school and if women who do not have educational background but shows interest would be made to go through some education or political lessons, I think it will help. It will also help others to come out to contest for more political positions (Fieldwork, 2013).*

Another assembly representative woman advocated for a special school to be established to train women for political participation. She suggested:

*There should be a course of study specifically for women who may want to be politicians to prepare them for political activities so that right after their completion, they know they are prepared to become politicians. You see becoming a politician involves a whole lot and women must learn all these things (Fieldwork, 2013).*

It must be reiterated that the aforementioned proposition was implemented by the Rwandan Association of Local Government Authorities (RALGA) in 2006 which led to the organisation of political training for women. The end result of this initiative was the preparation of more than 2,300 female candidates which helped Rwanda to successfully fulfil a constitutional quota at the local level (Gomez, 2010).

Another important suggestion for enhancing women's political participation was that women should be encouraged and motivated by family and most importantly by fellow women to help shape their political aspirations. They contended that women should stop being their own enemies and help their fellow women who exhibit interest in contesting political positions. A similar suggestion was raised by Sossou (2011) in her study on Ghanaian women's perception about politics. The importance of motivation for political participation was given a central ground in Verba *et al* (1995) CVM. According to the model, one of the factors for political activity is recruitment by friends and associates in one's interpersonal networks. The model proposes that, people may have the resources and psychological engagement for political activity but still remain inactive unless asked by their network members to take part. Thus to Barkan (2004) if those with the resources for political activity were not so motivated they would be less inclined to take part in political

action. Putnam (1995) in addition opined that such support base could serve as a social capital which is an important mechanism for political participation.

A participant who aspires to be a politician someday from Effiduase shared how encouragements from her family and friends in school have shaped her orientations towards politics. She commented;

*... friends keep telling me I have the leadership qualities to be a leader so whenever we are to elect prefect they mention my name, it's an encouragement to me knowing that my friends believe in me to be able to occupy that position... as for my family they have really done a lot especially my dad. He was an executive for a political party and after my JHS, he made me work for a political party. During the period I offered advice to people that came to file for positions by telling them which positions they are likely to win should they apply. So at that point I was myself as a leader and that increased by desire to be a politician so encouragement from friends and especially the family are really important (Fieldwork).*

A third important finding of the study on ways to enhance women's political participation was financial support. Gyimah and Thompson (2008) have opined that the most crucial factor impeding women's political participation is financial resources. Demographic characteristics of respondents on occupation revealed that most women in the municipality were coming from the teaching services, health services, security services and self-employed engaging in activities such as fish mongering, farming, dressmaking and trading activities. These activities do not raise enough capital for the household

and other purposes as stated by the respondents. Thus with the increasing commercialisation of politics, women in the municipality lack the capital and financial strength to participate as money is required in campaigning and for other logistics necessary for political activities (example, printing of posters, vehicles to facilitate campaign activities, purchase fuel and most importantly picking up nomination forms which requires a huge sum of money). Respondents therefore suggested financial empowerment and assistance from the government and other non-governmental organisation to enable them foot the bills of their political participation. An informant from Effiduase stated that:

*Women most of the times are not found in wage-earning employment for that matter they can't pull their strength financially and you know politics now is about money, printing posters, going for rallies and even at a point you have to give money to electorates just for them to vote for you. So when you don't have money what do you do, you won't even to there at all. So women who show interest in politics must be supported financially (Fieldwork, 2013).*

Furthermore, the study identified the implementation of the quota system and affirmative action as strategies to enhance women's political participation. The Beijing Conference requested the institution of a quota system of thirty percent of all elective office for women. To Dahrelup (2001) this has been the most effective tool to increase women's political participation especially at the local governance level. The Local Government Act (207) provides that, 70 percent of the assembly members are to be elected while 30 percent are to be appointed following consultation with stakeholders in the

district. In addition 50 percent of the appointed members must be women. Respondents thus, questioned the extent to which this policy is being implemented and advocated for a more strict enforcement of the Local Government Act. They suggested that 50 percent women appointments into the assembly must be enforced to ensure more women in decision making in the assembly numerically.

There was a suggestion for a call for a paradigm shift in the perception of politics and the institution of politics itself. They called for the need for women to develop interest in politics. Stroker (1996) was of the view that participation at the local level is achieved only if the local people have an interest in local government affairs. As a result, respondents argued that in as much as women develop interest in politics, their participation could be higher. They therefore suggested the elimination of all barriers that hinders women's interest in the political institutions especially the politics of insults and victimisation. Accordingly, the women in the group agitated for a law to ban the politics of insults and also to charge the government to arrest the committers of violence that characterises Ghanaian politics. One woman at Adweso shared this emotional sentiment:

*...My sister, you are in Accra so you must have heard what happened to Ursula and these are all some of the things why I told you earlier I will not encourage my daughter into politics. The woman is one of the few women who has openly made her intention known to contest political position. But if she is beaten up like the way people are saying they did and if we are advocating for women's increased participation in politics "nna ye kɛ anaa ye bae" (literally meaning are we going or*

*we are coming) will women then come out to contest? No my sister. The nature of politics must stop, the insults, violence must all cease and I think there should be a law to address some of these cases otherwise women we will continuously be at the bottom... (Fieldwork, 2013)*

A related suggestion made was the need for political parties' not to indiscriminately discriminate against women candidates. According to UNDAW report (2005:15), the different types of party organisations with their internal cultures tend to affect the influence of women within the party, thereby limiting their active participation. Leduc and Norris (1996) were also of the view that political parties are the major "gate keepers" in determining who gets elected into political offices. As a result, most respondents suggested that political parties should lobby for more women appointments and discontinue viewing men as more viable and better candidates than women. A woman from Asokore acclaimed;

*If you take political parties positions for example, the chairmanship positions, vice president and the secretary are mostly given to men while financial secretary and treasurers and the welfares are also given to women because those roles are linked to household responsibilities and women are so good at that. By so doing they discriminate against women because they believe that women are just not capable to occupy those positions. I personally recommend the CPP for electing a woman as their chairman; all these ideologies must stop to ensure women are given equal footage in their political participation (Fieldwork, 2013).*

Another way suggested during the study was the need for shared responsibilities in the home. It was argued that household responsibilities limit the time factor for women to engage meaningfully in political activities. Some of the women made these estimations:

*Men should be prepared to share family responsibilities to give women some time to do other things like political activities. You realised a major challenge is that women do not have the time to enter into politics which is considered more time consuming. Family responsibilities and household chores do not permit us so if responsibilities are shared at home, at least women will be free small to engage in other political activities (Fieldwork, 2013).*

In conclusion, enhancing women's political participation would require strict implementation of the quota system, financial empowerment of women, women's higher education, shared responsibilities in the home, political party support and encouragement from recruitments of friends and network of associations.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The concluding chapter of the study reflects on the entire research of evidence of women's participation in local governance in the new Juaben Municipality in the Eastern Region. In view of this, the summary of the study and the main findings based on the specific objectives of the study are elaborated. The chapter also presents the conclusions, recommendations and areas for further studies.

#### **Summary**

Enhancing citizens' participation and enabling local community members to participate in decision making processes in matters that affect their lives is where the important role of local government is seen and felt most. It provides opportunities for an all-inclusive public participation to ensure effective and efficient local and public service delivery. Indeed, most scholars have argued for the implementation of decentralisation and local government policies to foster and encourage more women's meaningful participation; political, social and citizenship at the local level. However, regardless of these, women's participation in local governance cannot be said to be encouraging.

The study explored the factors affecting women's participation in local governance in the NJM in the Eastern Region of Ghana, in order to suggest possible ways of enhancing women's participation for development. Specifically, the study sought to explore women's understanding of local governance. Examine factors that facilitate women's participating for local



governance. Examine factors that hinder women's participation in local governance. Suggest strategies to increase the level of women's participation in local governance.

There was a review of literature on the following theories and concepts: concepts of participation, political, social and citizenship participation, the concept of decentralisation and women's participation in local governance and ways/strategies required to enhance women's participation in local governance. The study was grounded in three major theories; the Civic Voluntarism Model, the Rational Choice Theory and the Empowerment theories.

The study adopted a qualitative study design. Purposive sampling technique was used to draw respondents. A total of thirty respondents were drawn for the study which comprise of twenty women and ten men. Five respondents each from the three purposively selected communities and five assembly women from the NJM. Again, ten men were selected in addition to the twenty women making thirty respondents to get divergent views. Both primary data and secondary information were used in the study.

An interview schedule was the main instrument for collecting primary data. Field data was collected with the assistance of five field assistants. The data was analyzed using narrations.

The major findings of the study were:

- Generally, respondents in the NJM understand local governance with evidence from Verba et al., (1995) and Bruce (1999). According to these two theorists, there are channels through which an individual

shows understanding in governance and these channels are the general exercising of civic rights and demonstration of characteristics acquired through citizen education such as voting, communal meetings, involvement in decision making processes in one's locality and knowledge of assembly representations. The study revealed women's understanding in local governance because; more women in the study knew of meetings in their various communities but refused to attend such meetings. It was revealed again by the study that many women did not find themselves being part of the decision making bodies in the communities and this could be to the fact that, many of them do not even attend meetings in the communities. Even though there were complains of not being recognised as part of decision-making processes in their communities because, women felt information do not get to them through official means but through 'hear-say', it can be said that, women in the NJM understand local governance because about three-quarters (fifteen respondents) on the average responded in agreement to the items that measure understanding of local governance according to this study. The study found a significant number of respondents raising issues like affirmative action, formal education, establishment of laws which favour women to fight against socio-cultural practices that infringe upon the right of women, empowerment, self confidence among others to be measures of factors that will encourage them to participate in local governance.

- Respondents felt the level of education, socio-cultural practices, household and family activities, intimidation and lack of self

confidence and more so, financial constraint are the factors that inhibit women's participation in local governance.

- Women require higher education through non formal programmes, motivation from family and fellow women, access to information on local government activities and incentive packages for their participation especially in social projects/programmes as some of the ways to ensure women's increased participation in local governance.

### **Conclusions**

Women represent the minority group in local governance activities. The study revealed that women's participation at the local level is low even though they exhibited awareness of local governance. They participate mostly in elections as major contributors to successful winning of contestants but are alienated from decision making processes through their own choices and sometimes by factors such as education, finances, intimidation among others. Equally, though women's involvements in community activities were encouraging, their roles during programme and projects implemented were limited to passive membership and merely benefactors, due to the fact, they are not consulted in anyway. In citizenship, there was a limited participation among women both in their knowledge about who leads them and whether they would want to take the mantle of leadership one day, therefore, it can be said that, women's understanding of local governance is low.

In effect, women's participation in local governance in the NJM is at the tokenism stage in Arnstein's (1969) ladder of participation. This is because women participate in local governance activities in the municipality lack the

power to influence decision-making both politically, socially and in citizenship activities. Arnstein argued that participation without the power to influence decision is an empty ritual of frustration of the powerless. Women therefore require higher education, financial empowerment and support, strict implementation of the quota system, women's personal development, incentive for participation and the establishment of civic centres across the communities to be able to enhance their participation in local governance albeit political, social and citizenship.

### **Recommendations**

Undeniably, it is a fact that women's participation in local governance in the NJM is marginal. Women's unequal status in the communities as a result of the structures in the society and through their own choices, give them an unequal access to education, economic and other opportunities offered by local government. Yet women's participation is essential and precondition for bringing women in the mainstream development to augment democratic society. As a result, the study recommends the following to be taken into consideration by policy makers and development practitioners to help improve women's participation not only in local but in national governance.

Programme implementers must define specific roles for women during programme/project implementations. This would ensure their meaningful contributions to community or social development. Similarly, women's roles should not be limited to positions that solely deal with gender issues during project/programme implementations.

Women themselves should work out for their own personal empowerment which has been acknowledged as an effective tool for their participation. They should develop their capabilities to overcome their psychological and intellectual obstacles and attain self-determination, self-sufficiency and decision making abilities through non-formal education.

Government should liaise with educational institutions to establish non-formal educational units in all the district assemblies. This educational unit should be tasked with creating awareness among women on the need for their participation, organizing capacity building programmes and training for women to provide them with the requisite knowledge, skills and competence needed for their meaningful participation in local governance activities.

District assemblies should be provided with information centres for dissemination concerning local government activities to enable women have easy access to improve their participation. Information centres should also be established across the length and breadth of the communities to ensure easy accessibility.

Civil society organisations should carry out advocacy and campaign on the need to view women as partners in development. This would compel political parties to consider women as equally viable as men during election in their political structures and in national elections. This would also reduce the incidence of victimisation of women by their male counterpart during contestations of political positions.

### **Areas of further research**

The study was limited in many areas due to time and financial constraints. The researcher however suggests the following areas for future research work:

- Effectiveness of the quota system in enhancing women's political participation in local governance in the NJM in the Easter Region.
  
- Assessing the role of Non-Governmental Organizations in promoting women's participation at the local government level in the NJM in the Eastern Region.

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**UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST**  
**INSTITUTE OF DEVELOPMENT STUDIES**  
**AN INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR WOMEN IN THE NEW JUABEN**  
**MUNICIPAL ASSEMBLY IN THE EASTERN REGION**

This study is meant to satisfy a requirement for the award of M. Phil in Development Studies from the University of Cape Coast. The study seeks to get information to contribute to the study of the factors affecting women's participating in local governance in the New-Juaben Municipal Assembly in the Eastern Region of Ghana in order to suggest the possible ways of enhancing women's participation for development. Confidentiality of this interview is assured.

Thank you.

**DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF RESPONDENTS**

1. Age .....

2. Marital status

Single [ ]      Married [ ]      Divorced [ ]

Widowed [ ]      Separated [ ]

3. Highest educational level attained



No [ ]                      Yes [ ]

13. Has there been any developmental project in your area during the last four years No [ ]                      Yes [ ]                      Don't know [ ]

14. Name                      some                      of                      them

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

15. Were the community members consulted before the project?

No [ ]                      Yes [ ]                      Don't know [ ]

16. Were some of the local members involved in the project?

No [ ]                      Yes [ ]                      Don't know [ ]

17. Do you see yourself as part of the decision-making body in this community?

No [ ]                      Yes [ ]                      Don't know [ ]

18. How would you rate the activities of the district assembly in this community?

Excellent [ ]                      Good [ ]                      Average [ ]

Bad [ ]                      Don't know [ ]

19. Who organises communal labour in the community?

Chief [ ]    Unit committee [ ]

Assembly member [ ]    Don't know [ ]

20. Do you always take part in communal labour?

Yes [ ]    No [ ]

21. Do you want to be a member of the unit committee?

Yes [ ]

No [ ]

22. Why.....

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

**FACTORS THAT FACILITATE WOMEN'S PARTICIPATING IN  
LOCAL GOVERNANCE**

23. What in your view will encourage women in the community to participate in local governance?

24. Explain your

view.....

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

25. Women should participate in local governance because of their educational status

Strongly Disagree [ ]

Disagree [ ]

Neutral [ ]

Agree [ ]

Strongly Agree [ ]

26. Women participate in local governance because they are unemployed

Strongly Disagree [ ]      Disagree [ ]      Neutral [ ]

Agree [ ]      Strongly Agree [ ]

27. Do you think women should be allowed to take part in decision-making at Home?      Yes [ ]      No [ ]

28. State the reason for your answer.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

29. Do you want to stand as an assembly member in your area?  
Yes [ ]      No [ ]

30. Why?  
.....  
.....  
.....

**FACTORS THAT HIINDER WOMEN’S PARTICIPATION IN LOCAL GOVERNANCE**

31. Which of the following do you think would prevent a woman from participating in local governance

Factor	Yes	Sometimes	No
Education			
Work			
Waste of time			

Not compulsory			
Lack of proper management			
Not being properly informed			

32. In your view, list the factors that are likely to prevent women from participating in local governance

.....

.....

.....

.....

**STRATEGIES TO INCREASE THE LEVEL OF WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN LOCAL GOVERNANCE**

33. Suggest or indicate strategies that are likely to improve participation in local governance on the side of women in the NJM.

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NOTE: Questions 29 and 30 are for only women.