

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN LOCAL GOVERNANCE IN THE
ASHANTI MAMPONG MUNICIPALITY

BY

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DECLARATION

Candidate's declaration

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

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Date:.....

Supervisor's declaration

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

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ABSTRACT

The study examined the factors that prevented women from actively participating in local level governance and politics in the Ashanti Mampong Municipality in the Ashanti Region. To be able to get the views of across section of women on the issue, 230 respondents comprising university lecturers, tutors from Colleges of Education, political party activists, nurses and teachers took part in the study. A self-administered questionnaire, which also served as an interview guide in some instances was the instrument used for data collection. Analysis of data was done manually and electronically. The electronic analysis was done with the Statistical Product and Service Solutions (SPSS) version 12.0.

Results of the study showed that the factors that militated against women's low participation in politics and governance were political, social, economic and cultural. Among the militating factors were inadequate party support, such as limited financial support for women candidates and minimum networking among women within their party. Others were lack of independent decision-making in party politics, women's lack of confidence to run for elections, lack of avenues for orienting young women toward political life and time management constraints. Furthermore, it was found that lack of financial support and cultural barriers were among the factors that prevented women to exercise rights that laws had provided for them. In effect, it was recommended that affirmative action policies should be used by government and political parties to give meaning to women's participation in politics and governance.

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DEDICATION

To my children Cymore-Petra and Percy Miguel Dorgbakaru

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

Cert 'A'	Teachers' Certificate 'A'
CPP	Convention Peoples Party
DCE	District Chief Executive
DVLA	Driver Vehicle and Licencing Authority
FIDA	International Federation of Women Lawyers
GES	Ghana Education Service
JHS	Junior High School
MSLC	Middle School Leaving Certificate
MP	Member of Parliament
NCCE	National Commission for Civic Education
NCWD	National Commission on Women and Development
NDC	National Democratic Congress
NETRIGHT	Network for Women's Rights in Ghana
NPP	New Patriotic Party
NVTI	National Vocational and Technical Institute
PNDC	Provisional National Defence Council
RSA	Royal Society of Arts
SPSS	Statistical Product and Service Solutions
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNDESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
UGCC	United Gold Coast Convention

UN	United Nations
WID	Women in Development
WiLDAF	Women in Law and Development in Africa
WASSCE	West African Secondary School Certificate

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background to the study

New development paradigms perceive good governance and the tenets of democracy as the main road to development. Governance observers are of the view that, for third world countries to develop, participation by both men and women should be enhanced at all levels and in all spheres. This calls for the adoption of decentralized form of governance. For the new development paradigm, indicators of good governance such as rule of law, accountability, periodic elections, free press, equity, fairness and transparency, will enhance development of third world countries and not privatization, de-regulation, free market austerity measures and comparative cost advantage as argued by the old development paradigms (Smith, 1998; Spill, 2004; van Assendelft, Gunther-Canada & Dolan, 2003).

It is against this background that one can say that development is about society, which is composed of more women and children than men. If this is the situation then more women should have been at the forefront of political participation. On the contrary, few women are seen to be taking part in elections due to several reasons, which range from cultural to societal conventions. The current development paradigms have participation (election inclusive) as one of

its main tenets. It therefore stands to reason that, women are accorded a dominant role in the new democracies.

In recent times, political participation is largely seen in elections. With elections, an individual has to declare the intention to contest and vie for positions that are declared vacant by electoral bodies. It is important to note that elections did not start just yesterday, it is an age old phenomena. Election, both voting and standing to be voted for, started at different times in the world. With the third world countries, elections started after each country gained its independence.

Women who constitute more than half the population of the world have been marginalized when it comes to key decision making right from creation. There is ample evidence from Eve, the first woman to be created by God. She was given the role of a supporter of Adam, the first man and the trend continued during the medieval and ancient times (Willis, 2009).

In modern times, globalization and democracy have become bedfellows as some advocates of democracy stress the need for economic development as a precursor to the transition and consolidation of democracy in developing economies. The negative effects of globalization often have an impact on how new democracies are able to perform, especially relating to gender and minority issues. One central question is the impact of democracy on the rights and political participation of women in emerging democracies (Dawuni, 2009).

Many women and women groups have come to the realization that they need to fight for their rights in political participation and governance. This new awakening by women started prior to Ghana's struggle for independence where

the nationalist movements (the various political parties) set up women's wings. The most prominent was the Convention People's Party Women's League. This trend continued to the present times where all the political parties have women wings with women organisers. Aside the women wings of the various political parties, there are some women advocacy groups such as the Network for Women's Rights in Ghana (NETRIGHT), Women's Coalition and Abantu for Development. Their activities have been advocating for women rights particularly enhanced female participation in the governance of the country (Gyimah & Thompson, 2008).

It seems that the role played by women advocacy groups in Ghana is bearing fruits because presently many women are occupying very sensitive position in the country. For instance, the Chief Justice of Ghana is a woman in the person of Justice Georgina Theodora Wood, the Speaker of Parliament is also a woman, Mrs. Joyce Bamford-Addo and many other top ranking government officials.

Ghana's democratisation process has reached a stage where every citizen is given the opportunity to participate fully and this is reflected in the periodic elections that is held country wide. There is the national elections where a president and parliamentarians are selected every four years and there is another local elections where members of the district assemblies are selected from the local areas to represent the local people in a local governance. This latter system is part of the decentralisation type of local governance that had evolved over the

last few years in Ghana. It is within this context that women are consciously given the opportunity to participate fully in politics and governance.

Ideally, the decentralisation concept of governance should have given women greater opportunity to participate in politics but in the words of a local governance expert, Esther Ofei-Aboagye, that has not happened. In a paper presented at an international forum on women participation in local governance, Ofei-Aboagye (2000) says that the various provisions in the design of the decentralisation process in Ghana should have made the participation of women in public decision-making easier. According to her, the provisions include those for a non-partisan local government system, the freedom to use the local language for the business of the assembly and the discretion in creating additional sub-committees. The latter could have provided a sharper focus on responding to the concerns of various sections of the population, including women. But all that had not happen.

Ofei-Aboagye (2000) reveals that the initial participation of women in local government was low and has remained so. She indicates that in 1994, women were made up about only 3 percent of elected members of the various district assemblies; the proportion of women representation through election increased to 5 percent in 1998. This is very interesting given that women constitute just about half of all registered voters in Ghana. Based on the rather unimpressive numbers of elected women in the district assembly, the government of Ghana was compelled to issue a directive in 1998 for the 30 percent of the appointed membership of assemblies for women.

In the same breadth, Armah (2001) recalls that only 3 of the 110 Presiding Members of the district assemblies were women. She recounts some of the challenges women faced participating in local governance. She indicates that women have been constrained from entering local level politics by the lack of finances for campaigning and time constraints needed to manage domestic responsibilities, income-generation activities and political work.

The widely-held perception that political activity is “dirty” and it is not for decent women is also a barrier. Women have also not been voted for because politics is often viewed as belonging to an arena which is best managed by men. Husbands and families are reluctant to have their women in the public eye. Besides, women are presumed to lack public arena skills and some complain of intimidation by male opponents (Dawuni, 2009).

Dake (2009) notes that women are yet to make their presence felt within the local assemblies. In spite of the increases in their numbers provided for by government directives, their performance has not been much publicised. This has been attributed to lack of self-confidence, a limited capacity to communicate in English and a lack of understanding of assembly procedures. Other problems include being shouted at in assembly proceedings or being ignored by presiding members when they (women members) want to make interventions. The short notices for meetings and transportation costs incurred during assembly work have also been indicated as constraints for them.

Again, women members employed in the formal sector also identify difficulties in combining assembly responsibilities with their jobs such as getting

time off to attend to assembly and community business. Elected women also worry about being able to undertake development activities to justify their selection.

Perhaps part of the difficulty of making women's presence felt at the district assembly level is the general scarcity of women in government administration itself, both as politically appointed heads of districts (mayors) and as administrators and civil servants. Out of 152 district chief executives, only eleven are women (7.2%) (Ghanadistricts, 2010).

The situation is similar for women as civil servants and administrators. Women constitute 32 percent of the entire civil service and 24 percent of those in local government with most of them being in the secretarial and clerical classes. Only 12 percent of the decision-influencing category – the administrative class – is female. In 1999, there were only 3 women amongst the 110 district coordinating directors (3.6%). This low representation is disturbing given that the district coordinating directors provide technical guidance to the assemblies. They are therefore responsible for providing inputs for planning, ensuring equity in implementation, monitoring for efficiency and effectiveness, and evaluating for impacts (Dawuni, 2009).

In sum, while the visibility of women in local government has increased, the numbers are still very low – both as administrators and as assembly members/counselors/representatives. The issue is not the numbers of women alone, but their self-knowledge, confidence, clarity of purpose, priorities, commitment and ability to skillfully present their perspectives. Their multiple

roles as wives, mothers, daughters, community workers and income-generators severely limit their time for community interaction and mobilisation.

Women's participation in the district assembly election in the Mampong Municipality is not encouraging since available figure points to that fact. Starting from 2002, in the district assembly election, out of the 27 elected members only two women got elected; whilst out of the 270 unit committee members, only 49 were women. In the 2006 elections, no woman was elected, only men were elected. This forced government to appoint three women out of the eight government appointees. At the 2006 unit committee elections, 56 women got the nod of the electorate as against 214 men. Also records available at the Municipal Electoral Commission Office at Mampong showed that only seven women had filed to contest against 82 men; at the unit committee level only 26 women had filed to contest the vacant 135 seat (Electoral Commission of Ghana, 2010).

Statement of the problem

There is ample evidence that women face several challenges in their attempt to participate appreciably in governance across the world. In May 2008, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) at an international seminar organised in Cameroun on women participation in decentralised governance recounted some challenges women face in political participation. Specifically, UNDP stated that the challenges women leaders in local governments face, including entering local governments and how they can be addressed. This include factors such as resource availability, social and cultural barriers, the

provision of quotas for women's participation, training requirements for both women and men (to change attitudes towards women's leadership in local governments), etc.

Again, how the specific leadership capacity building needs of women and men in local governments can be addressed, including ways to enable women leaders play their roles effectively and to address cultural barriers affecting men's acceptance of women leadership. This assertion confirms that challenges women face in political participation have received wider attention. Some measure had been put in place to enhance their participation yet the situation on the ground does not seem that women participation in governance had appreciated.

It must be stressed that since the inception of the district assembly concept in 1994, the then Sekyere West District did not see any appreciable level of female participation even though, it had gone through four successfully district assembly elections. Even though, it is a fact that the Act establishing the District Assembly did not give preference to any sex (male/female), males occupy the majority of the seats in the District Assembly. It is evident in the four elections held so far that, the electorates prefer males to females because most female contestants were voted out. For example in 1994, out of the seventy-two assembly members elected, there were only four females, the numbers slightly appreciated in 1998 with nine female out of the 72. In the 2002 local elections, the number of female contestants went up to 12 and reduced in 2006 to 10 (Local Government Information Digest, 2007). The trend is not good for women participation.

The concern is that low representation of women in the district assembly in the Ashanti Mampong Municipality has a lot of social and economic repercussion. Even though women constitute more than half of Ghana's population (51%) , women's needs and interest are not well represented in policy and decision-making (The Women Manifesto for Ghana, 2008). It is against this background that, the study intends to find out why and what can be done to improve the situation.

Objectives of study

The general objective of the study was to examine the participation of women in local governance in the Ashanti Mampong Municipality. Specifically, the study:

- Examined the factors militating against women's participation in District Assembly elections in the Ashanti Mampong Municipality.
- Examined the reasons that influence women's reluctance in taking up leadership roles in the local areas.
- Identified ways that can enhance women's participation in the district assembly governance.
- Made recommendations for stakeholders' consideration regarding women's active participation in local governance and politics.

Research questions

- What factors militate against women participation in the District Assembly elections?
- What account for women's reluctance in the leadership contests in the local areas?
- What measures can be instituted by stakeholders to enhance women participation in local governance?

Significance of study

It is believed that the results of this study would assist women advocacy groups in their activities in the Ashanti Mampong Municipality. This is because, the real situation of women participation in local governance and politics would be highlighted and brought into the open. Besides, aspiring women political activists would take some cue from the results to boost their chances of gaining political power.

Again, the results of this study could be used as reference material for future research into women's involvement in governance and politics, particularly at the local levels. Even though there have been several studies on women in governance and politics in Ghana, this study narrows the issue down to the grassroots where women are supposed to make the greatest impact. In short, it would add to the existing literature.

Lastly, the Ashanti Mampong Municipal Assembly would find it a useful source of reference to enhance women participation in the decision making

process of the municipality. Decisions are made based on the availability of information and data and this arguably would serve as a reliable piece of information for officialdom in the municipality.

Scope of the study

This study was restricted to the factors that influenced women's political participation in local governance as it pertained in District Assembly elections in the Ashanti Mampong Municipality. Apart from that, reasons women adduced for not actively participating in local politics and governance were explored. Finally, measures that could be instituted to boost women's participation in local level politics and governance were examined.

Limitations

The limitations of this study were financial and time constraints. As a student researcher, time was limited because the work had to be completed within a stipulated time frame and this did not allow for a sizeable number of people to be contacted for their views. Also, financing of the work was a constraint because for the study to have a wider impact it should have been better for a wide geographical area to be covered for possible comparison of the factors but that was not possible. For instance, the whole of the Ashanti Region should have been studied but funding of the work was unavailable. In spite of these seeming challenges, the results of the study remain valid and reliable because stringent measures were followed in data collection and analysis.

Organisation of the study

The study is organised into five chapters. Chapter One deals with the background to the study, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, research questions, significance of the study, scope of the study, limitations and organisation of the study. Chapter Two is devoted to the review of related literature on female participation in politics and governance. The methodology of the study is discussed in Chapter Three.

Chapter Four takes care of results and discussion. Finally, Chapter Five presents the summary, conclusions and recommendations.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Introduction

This chapter deals with literature that is related to women's participation in politics and governance. The literature review covers the two basic theories of feminism, benefits of women's political participation and the historical background of Ghanaian women involvement in governance and politics: the perspectives of Ghanaian scholars. Other relevant themes reviewed are the factors that influence women's participation in governance, factors that inhibit women's participation in local governance and politics and measures that could be instituted to boost women's participation in politics and governance at the local levels.

Theoretical review of literature

This section of the literature review is principally about feminism and according to Adams (2008), the term feminism can be used to describe a political, cultural or economic movement which is aimed at fighting for more rights and legal protection for women in society. Feminism as a philosophical thought involves political and sociological theories and philosophies, which are concerned

with issues of gender difference, as well as a movement that advocates more gender-specific rights for women and campaigns for women's rights and interests.

Feminism in this context looks at the politics and governance of two aspects of feminism - Liberal and Socialist Feminism. These aspects of feminism are theoretical underpinnings by which some women political thinkers fought for women empowerment in political and governmental involvement.

Liberal feminism has been called the mainstream form of feminism out of all the subtypes (Boucher, 2003). It is said that liberal feminism is a distinctive form, focused on women having the ability to maintain their equality through being responsible for their own actions and choices (Smith, 2000; Wolf, 2003). The ideology of the liberal feminist is that women will transform society, through their own personal interactions with the opposite sex (Stafford, 2004).

Basically, liberal feminist thought are geared towards gender-neutral child-rearing and education, bringing women into occupations and professions dominated by men and breaking through the glass ceiling to positions of authority (affirmative action). Also, the liberal feminist advocates seek to bring more women into politics through equal-representation rules and financial support and promote gender mainstreaming in policies ensuring attention to women's needs.

Socialist feminism is another branch of feminism that focuses on both the public and private spheres of a woman's life. Socialist feminists argue that liberation can only be achieved by working to end both the economic and cultural sources of women's oppression. This aspect of feminism is a dualist theory that broadens Marxist feminism's argument for the role of capitalism in the oppression

of women and radical feminism's theory of the role of gender and the patriarchy (Frader & Sonya, 1996; Hannam & Hunt, 2002).

The crux of what socialist feminists assert is that women are unable to be free due to their financial dependence on males in society. Women are subjects to the male rulers in capitalism due to an uneven balance in wealth. They see economic dependence as the driving force of women's subjugation to men. Consequently, socialist feminists see women's liberation as a necessary part of larger quest for social, economic and political justice where more women are allowed or given the platform to participate in political, social and economic issues in society.

The importance of feminism is that it reawakens women's thought in political participation. It is a philosophical thought that is supposed to galvanise the active participation of women in politics and governance at the local and national level. One point that has to be made clear is that feminism as a theoretical and philosophy thought is not just a movement for the liberation of women, but a broad social movement striving for the equality of each individual in society. Feminists and gender activists emphasise the importance of such values as co-operation, tolerance and the freedom for each person to achieve her or his potential. Therefore it can be declared that feminists are not against men as individuals. What they are against is the oppressive and outdated social structure which forces both men and women into positions which are false and antagonistic. Thus, everyone has an important role to play in the feminist

movement is largely interested in broader participation of women in all spheres of leadership in society.

Benefits of women's political participation

A significant point had been made that every country on the surface of earth deserves to have the best possible leader and that means that women have to be given a chance to compete for leadership positions everywhere. If women are not allowed to compete in the electoral process then countries across the world are denying themselves of great deal of talents (Albright, 2009). The simple issue is that women's role in modern governance and politics cannot be underestimated bearing in mind the benefits that would accrue from there.

There is no denying fact that women around the world often face daunting social, economic and political challenges (Connell, 1987). In the perspective of Leacock (1997), for democratic governments to deliver to their constituents, they must be truly representative, and it should be recognised that women must be equal partners in the process of democratic development. To that extent, political activists, elected officials and constituents, contributions of women are crucial to building a strong and vibrant society. It is therefore essential to support women around the world for a variety of reasons.

It should be noted that women are highly committed to promoting national and local policies that address the socio-economic and political challenges facing women, children and disadvantaged groups (Eisenstein, 1994). In addition to the view what Eisenstein intimated about women in politics, Phillips (1998) observes

that women are particularly effective in promoting honest government. She states that countries where women are supported as leaders and at the ballot box there is a correspondingly low level of corruption.

Moreover, women are generally committed to peace building, as they often disproportionately suffer the consequences of armed conflict. Reconstruction and reconciliation efforts take root more quickly and are more sustainable when women are involved. By helping women become participating members of a democracy, one can look to mitigate conflicts or stop conflicts before they begin (Randall, 1994; Shirin, 2000).

Above all, Connell (1987) and Leacock (1997) believed that women are strongly linked to positive developments in education, infrastructure and health standards at the local level. Where rates of gender development and empowerment are higher, human rates of development and standards of living are also higher, so it is prudent if more women are allowed to participate in local level governance and politics.

Historical background of Ghanaian women involvement in governance and politics: the perspectives of Ghanaian scholars

This part of the literature review focuses on the writings of Ghanaian scholars who have devoted much time deliberating on Ghanaian women's participation in politics and governance of the country. The scholars principally dilated on the extent of women's participation in politics and governance in Ghana since independence to date.

In the first place, Prah (2006) indicates that during the pre-independence era women played some limited role in the politics of their area. Specifically, she recalled that there was no unified state before the imposition of British rule on the then Gold Coast (now Ghana) because it consisted of several ethnic communities with distinct systems of descent and social organisation.

Again, Prah (2006) highlights the fact that women participation in political life in Ghanaian societies was considerable but colonial rule eroded it. Prah cites the views of Tsikata (1989) and Manuh (1991) who emphasise that the issue of women's political involvement in Ghana should be seen within the traditional notion of women's participation in public affairs. Ghanaian women had had a long experience of organization and association in a variety of activities and this informed the extent to which they rallied round the political parties during the anti-colonial struggle and later around the CPP.

Manuh (1991) explains the context within which women were mobilised for the anti-colonial struggle in the Gold Coast. She recalled the super imposition of western values and morality on the traditional order by colonialism, whereby men were seen as heads of households was done to the detriment of women's access to quality health care and formal education. This created unfair practices in workplaces and women became victims of these unfair treatments, especially, those in urban area which left them very little room to manoeuvre. Consequently, the struggle for self-government was launched and it offered the oppressed women the hope to fight along their menfolk for a better life and the fulfillment of their gender interests. So women, particularly urban ones, mobilised behind the

United Gold Coast Convention (UGCC) and later, massively behind Nkrumah's Convention People's Party (CPP) towards 'self-government now' (Ekumah, 1999; Nketiah, 2010).

Tsikata (1989) indicates that during the anti-colonial struggle in Ghana, women were mobilised mainly around economic issues. For example, as far back as 1917 - 1918, they were active in cocoa hold-ups and their participation in those early protests stemmed from their work as retail traders. They felt the threat posed by the monopolistic activities of the European trading firms.

The struggle for which women were mobilised was not a feminist one. In terms of the situation in the country, it was a universal political problem whose solution women had vested interests in. It was no surprising that women traders became staunch supporters of the Convention People's Party (CPP) led by Dr. Kwame Nkrumah (Manuh, 1991; Nketiah, 2010).

Prah (2006) recounts that although there were short periods of civilian rule from 1966 and 1982 because the military took the reins of governance under the National Liberation Council, National Redemption Council, Supreme Military Council I & II and Armed Forces Revolutionary Council. Only two out of the 140 members of the Second Republic (1969- 1972) were women, the Third Republic had only five women out of 140 members. Consequently, the civilian regimes of this period did not show any particular interest in raising the profile of women as Nkrumah had done. Tsikata (1989) describes the period from 1966 to 1981 as an 'apolitical' phase on the women's front. Waylen (1996) makes it clear that during

this period women's organisations were non-political rather several professional women's groups were formed.

Other Ghanaian scholars had stressed that the frequent changes of government and the domination of the military could explain the low ebb of women's political activities during the 1966 – 1982 period. They pointed out that militarised states strengthen male domination in political and social life (Enloe, 1987; Mama, 1995). The various military regimes during the period under review did not support any mass women's organizations.

Manuh (1991) analyses the relationship that existed between women's political participation and state under the Provisional National Defence Council. She indicated that during the earlier times of the PNDC military rule there existed a kind of political fundamentalism that viewed women's economic activities with resentment and that sought consign them to the home and the care of children. Manuh makes it clear that this political fundamentalism was reinforced by patriarchal ideology within the society and its pre-determined notions of the proper role of women. In consequence, Ghanaian women were accused of immorality, prostitution and other social evils during periods of crises. "This is what happened during the first years of the PNDC rule" (p.43).

The historical account of women's participation in politics and governance cannot be complete if the influences of outside forces were not mentioned. Women's liberation movements in the West had gained some impetus by the late 1960s, and that the UN Women's Decade did so much to raise feminist consciousness globally. This new awakening did not lose on Ghanaian women,

particularly the professional middle class. It is not very surprising that the Ghana branch of FIDA (International Federation of Women Lawyers) was established in 1974 with the aim of improving the situation of women and children in the country and strengthening their position in the overall developmental process (Mensah-Kutin, Mahama, Ocran, Ofei-Aboagye, Okyne & Tsikata, 2000).

Mensah-Kutin et al. (2000) state that by 1985, the National Council for Women and Development in collaboration with FIDA Ghana had established a free legal aid programme for women. They emphasised that though, the NCWD was set up through a UN resolution, the support and advocacy to see it through came from professional women including some lawyers. The fact is legal feminist activism has continued to grow in Ghana to this day.

The role of international donor agencies during the 1970 (and after it) is also significant. With the establishment of the NCWD came the acceptance and implementation of the Women in Development (WID) paradigm as the main framework within which activities towards the promotion of the improvement of the status of women take place. This was the paradigm within which the donor agencies worked, and it was accepted and institutionalized probably in order that the ‘much needed’ funding would be obtained. This paradigm continues to dominate much state backed activities and projects for women and children today.

With the inception of democratic rule in 1992, it was thought that women participation in governance was going to improve, particularly, when the New Patriotic Party assumed the reins of government. It was thought that the NPP was more democratic and were more disposed to women’s participation in governance

and politics but that had remained an illusion (Prah, 2006). Armah (2001) adds that women constituted only 3.5 percent of elected positions of District Assemblies by August 2001 and in the unit committees, their numbers were insignificant. Armah recalled that out of the 15 Chief Directors in the sector ministries, there was no woman among them. With the directors in these ministries, only 25 women can be counted among the 138 people. Clearly, these statistics are an indication of how Ghana as a country has over the years relegated women issues to the background (Prah, 2006; Harrison, 2004).

Since Ghana's return to constitutional rule in 1992, the lot of women in governance and politics had improved slightly. Dake (2009) reveals women occupied 13 percent of overall Ministerial and Deputy Ministerial positions under the first term of Kufour's government. There was a slight improvement in the President Kufour's second term whereby 4 out of 25- representing 16 percent of substantive Ministers of States were women. In 2010, 6 (24%) out of 25 ministerial nominations under the new administration were women. Though a great improvement from previous situation, it is still not near an equitable representation of women. Another area of positive change is the higher number of Ministries headed by women in the previous administrations compared to today. Ministries headed by women in the last Kufour administration included Ministries of Fisheries; Women and Children's Affairs; Lands, Forestry and Mines; and Tourism and Diasporian Relations. When that situation is compared to 2010 appointments, women occupy the Ministries of Justice and Attorney-General; Tourism; Trade and Industry; Environment, Science and Technology; Women and

Children's Affairs; and Ministry of Youth and Sports. These appointments include some new high-powered faces such as nominees Zita Okaikwei and Betty Mould Iddrisu. However, only one female out of ten has been appointed to as a Regional Minister. While this is a slight improvement, compared to zero in the last administration, it remains a matter to be addressed (Dei, 2009).

On women representation in parliament, Odame (2010) makes some comments. He welcomed the historic election of Mrs. Joyce Bamford-Addo as the first ever female Speaker of the Parliament of Ghana. Odame writes, “it is a laudable achievement for women and our democracy” (p.5). He further indicated Ghana would celebrate and wish Madam Speaker the very best but it is ironical that that the Speaker is presiding over a parliament with one of the least impressive records on women’s parliamentary representation in the world. Only 20 members of the 230 members of the House are women- a 2.2 percent drop from the previous House. In 2008, when women constituted 10.9 percent of parliament, Ghana ranked as number 100 out of 137 in the 2008 Inter Parliamentary Union world ranking- with only 25 women out of 230 MPs. Sadly, Ghana has since sunk further on the global ranking with the unfortunate reduction of female MPs in the new parliament.

Ahenkora (2010) laments that women advocacy failed to make progress in the last election but women participation actually fell. “Ghana today, is far below both Sub-Saharan Africa and the world averages of 18 percent and 18.4 percent respectively. Ghana is also below every other regional average, which ranges from 9.7 percent for Arab States- to 41.4 percent for Nordic countries” (p.6).

Data from the Electoral Commission of Ghana shows women's parliamentary representation in recent elections in Table 1.

Table 1: Women representation in parliament from 1992 to 2008

Year	No. of women parliamentarians	No. of members of parliament
1992	16(8.0%)	200
1996	18(9.0%)	200
2000	19(8.5%)	200
2004	25(10.9%)	230
2008	20(8.7%)	230

Source: Electoral Commission of Ghana (2010)

Table 1 clearly shows that participation of women in the parliamentary elections of Ghana has not been appreciable over the years. This is because in 1992 only 16 women won seats out of 200 seats that were available. The trend did not change so much in 1996 when number of women appreciated by 2 to reach seats). In 2000, the number of women increased by one person and 2004 when the number in parliament was increased to 230, women representation reached 25 but decreased in 2008 as displayed in Table 1. The situation of women's parliamentary representation today is the worst under the country's new democracy. This is a smack in the face of Ghana's political parties that boast of being custodians of democratic principles but have more than failed to take women's participation seriously. Only the Convention People's Party (CPP) had a deliberate voluntary quota allocation for women in this election. This is also a

serious call to the women's movement to reconsider its approach and strategies on the issues (Dei, 2009).

On the trend of women's participation in local level elections, Dake (2009) observed that the previous Government of the NPP did well. For instance, 50 percent of the 30 percent government appointees to District Assemblies were reserved for women. This is laudable, but women's representation in overall local government structures and in District Chief Executives (DCEs) positions remained inexcusably low. According to the Institute of Local Government Studies (2010), in Ghana, after two decades of the assembly system in Ghana, women, up until 2006, had not made up more than 10 percent of assembly membership. However, there has been a gradual improvement in elected membership of local assemblies from 2.9 percent in 1994 to 5 percent in 1998 to over 10 percent in 2010. Dake (2009) reveals that in 2003 Dake and Herlands undertook a study whose report reveals that the situation of women's leadership in Ghana showed that only 6%- i.e. a mere seven out of the 110 DCEs appointed by the then President were women. It remained less than 11 percent throughout the Kuffour government. This is an area that the current President must do better as he has the authority to handpick Municipal, District and Metro Chief Executives for districts that they do not have Chief Executives (Odame, 2010).

Factors that inhibit women's participation in local governance

Several researchers and scholars have written extensively on factors that inhibit women's participation in politics and governance in general and local

government in particular. Some of these factors were outlined by Ofei-Aboagye (2000) in the introduction to this study.

Shvedova (1994) underscores the fact that women around the world at every socio-political level find themselves underrepresented in parliament and far removed from decision-making levels. While the political playing field in each country has its own particular characteristics, one feature remains common to all: it is uneven and not conducive to women's participation. Women who want to enter politics find that the political, public, cultural and social environment are often unfriendly or even hostile to them. Even a quick glance at the current composition of political decision-makers in any region provides evidence that women still face numerous obstacles in articulating and shaping their own interests.

To dig deeper into the obstacles women face in political participation, Rai (1994) poses two pertinent questions and they are: 'What are the obstacles women face in entering parliament' and 'How can women better cope with these hindrances'. He also categorizes the problems women face into three areas: political, socio-economic, and ideological and psychological (or socio-cultural).

Norris and Lovenduski (1997) indicate that with the political obstacles, men dominate the political arena; men formulate the rules of the political game; and men define the standards for evaluation. The existence of this male-dominated model results in either women rejecting politics altogether or rejecting male-style politics. On their part, Rule and Zimmerman (1994) stress that among the prominent political obstacles that women face are the prevalence of the

“masculine model” of political life and of elected governmental bodies; lack of party support, such as limited financial support for women candidates; limited access to political networks; and the prevalence of double standards; lack of contact and cooperation with other public organizations such as trade (labour) unions and women's groups; the absence of well-developed education and training systems for women's leadership in general, and for orienting young women toward political life in particular; and the nature of the electoral system, which may or may not be favourable to women candidates.

On the socio-economic obstacles women face in political participation, Shvedova (1994) and Dahlerup (1991) recount that the economic crisis in countries with so-called “developing democracies” has intensified the risk of poverty for women, which, like unemployment, is likely to be increasingly feminized. They established the fact that socio-economic conditions play a significant role in women's legislative recruitment within both long-standing and new democracies. It goes without saying that the social and economic status of women in society has a direct influence on their participation in political institutions and elected bodies. For example, researchers point to the correlation between women's legislative recruitment and the proportion of women working outside the home, as well as the percentage of women college graduates. Socio-economic conditions take second place to electoral systems in women's legislative recruitment within established democracies (Reynolds & Reilly, 1997; Rule & Zimmerman, 1994).

With the ideological and psychological hindrances, Shvedova (1994) and Martland (1998b) stress the point that when a woman becomes a politician she does not cease to be a woman. It is this womanhood which should be placed first, since it contains different creative potentials and intellectual strength. Ideological and psychological hindrances for women in entering parliament include gender ideology and cultural patterns, as well as pre-determined social roles assigned to women and men. Also, women's lack of confidence to run for elections and perception of politics as a “dirty” game as well as the way in which women are portrayed in the mass media constitute a psychological hindrance to female participation in politics and governance (Shvedova, 1994).

Tibanijuka (1970) as cited in Martland (1998a), states that “women have tried to enter politics trying to look like men” (p.21). Tabinijuka stated again that posture of women pretending to be men would not work; rather, women are supposed to bring their differences, emotions, ways of seeing things, even their tears to the process.

Arowolo and Abe (2008) emphasise that in many countries such as Nigeria and Ghana, traditions continue to be emphasized and often dictate, women's primary role as mothers and housewives. A traditional, strong, patriarchal value system favours sexually segregated roles and so-called “traditional cultural values” militate against the advancement, progress and participation of women in any political process.

On his part, Ako-Nai (2003) indicates that societies all over the world are dominated by an ideology about “a woman's place”. According to this perception,

women should only play the role of “working mothers”, which is generally low-paid and apolitical. In addition, in some developing societies, men even tell women how to vote. This is the environment that many women face – one in which a certain collective image of women in traditional, apolitical roles continues to dominate. The image of a woman leader requires that she be asexual in her speech and manners, someone who can be identified as a woman only through nonsexual characteristics. Often it is supposed to be unacceptable, or even shameful in the mass consciousness, for women to be open about their feminine nature. In fact, the more authoritative and “manly” a woman is, the more she corresponds to the undeclared male rules of the game. That is why women politicians in general and women MPs in particular, have to overcome this difficulty of feeling uncomfortable in the political field – as though they are somewhere where they do not belong, behaving in ways that are not natural to them.

Most often, women internalize many of these ideas and end up feeling a sense of guilt when they cannot correspond to this almost impossible image. This sense of guilt is inextricably tied to a sense of having to be apologetic either for her own womanhood or for betraying her sense of womanhood, when women ought to be proud of both. Until they reconcile (or make the choice) between certain collective images, dominant stereotypes and their own feminine nature, their lives will be difficult and it will be hard for them to accommodate these clashing expectations. A woman should be prepared for the fact that when she becomes a politician, she does not cease to be a woman. It is this womanhood

which should be placed first, since it contains different creative potentials and intellectual strength. The ability to make decisions and implement them is not a gender-specific trait, but a common human one; in other words, a man holding power is natural and a woman holding power is natural too – or ought to be (Martland, 1998a, 1998b; Reynolds & Reilly, 1997; Shvedova, 1994).

From the global perspective, the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) (2008) organised an international conference in Yaoundé, Cameroon where several issues relating to women's participation in politics and governance were discussed by scholars across the world. The UNDESA seminar outlined some of the challenges. These challenges were categorized under three main headings in the manner as Shvedova (1994) did earlier in this section. The first set of challenges termed political challenges were spearheaded by Arowolo and Abe (2008). They emphasized that the political challenges women face in accessing leadership positions and getting re-elected within political parties include lack of willingness/confidence to stand for elections, lack of support by other women, low level of education/political education/inadequate awareness of laws, lack of exposure, lack of public speaking skills, lack of campaign tactics, lack of experience in lobbying and negotiations within the party, lack of self-confidence hampering full participation, lack of networking among women within their party and time management constraints. Other factors are the lack of independent decision-making in party politics, lack of interest in politics, lack of affirmative action policies within parties, sexual complications/harassment, under-representation in parties resulting in lack of

influence in decision-making, marginalization and sidelining of women, and multiple responsibilities preventing women from fully participating in party meetings – all these prevent women from active participation in politics.

The second set of the challenges had to do with economic empowerment and are highlighted by Aiyede (2006). They comprise lack of financial support (high priority), problems women face in owing land and accessing credit, legal status of women with regard to family and marriage: for instance, family succession laws exclude women from owning property, and difficulties in reconciling work and family responsibilities

A third set of challenges women encounter in political participation are in the form of social beliefs, cultural traditions and discriminatory stereotypes. These, are discussed by UNDESA (2008) manifest in the form of rejection of a woman, both by her family and her husband's family, cultural barriers that prevent women from exercising rights that laws have given them, tribalism (it is situation where women are disempowered because of belonging to a minority tribe and ethnicity), lack of respect from women's leadership. Naturally, men do not accept women's leadership therefore they do everything in their power to divide women. When women fight each other, they become more vulnerable. Other socio-cultural challenges include lack of confidence, discriminatory practices, unequal division of labour between women and men, especially with regard to domestic and care responsibilities for children, elderly and the sick and lack of nurseries and kindergartens for early child development. These challenges are encompassing and some had even been highlighted by other scholars and

researchers in this literature review. The UNDESA seminar (2008) did not leave these challenges hanging, appropriate were made recommendations as well.

Measures to boost women's participation in politics and governance

This section is a direct sequel to the factors that inhibit women's participation in politics and local governance. In that exposition, UNDESA (2008) underscored some of the challenges that women face in political participation. At that UNDESA seminar, some strategies were recommended and they are worth reviewing as part of this section of the literature review. Among others, scholars at the UNDESA conference emphasised that the strategies that could be used to deal with political, social and the economic challenges women face in political participation.

Firstly, on the political challenges, Chaligha (2001) makes some recommendations. Among the recommendations are that there should be mutual support among women in politics and governance; there should be an establishment of women's commission within the ministry of local government/president's office (depending on the local context); there the adoption of laws on affirmative action within political parties; and there should be enforcement of existing laws on rights of citizens. Also, political parties should build capacity for women within their ranks; there should be support for women's economic empowerment and that political parties should enhance women's upward moves through the party hierarchy.

Regarding strategies that could be used to deal with economic challenges, Khan and Ara (2006) outline some measures. Firstly, they admonished that governments should make and implement legislation to provide and protect land ownership for women and remove or revise discriminatory laws on property rights. Also, there should be participatory budgeting where by local governments could make budgets that are gender sensitive. Besides, government could create funds for women elected leaders, candidates and business women. Above all, in providing support to women, development partners as well as governments should maximize direct collaboration and dialogue with women themselves in order to reduce administrative costs involved in providing such support through intermediaries.

Lastly, Bekele (2000) makes some recommendations on the strategies to adopt to ease the challenges women face concerning social beliefs, cultural traditions and discriminatory stereotypes. The strategies proposed are that women should form women's caucuses to push/lobby for the inclusion of affirmative actions. Secondly, governments and civil society should abolish discriminatory laws, stereotypes and explain the difference between cultural and religious values. Family law should be put in place or implemented where it exists. Then also, issues of early and child marriages should be stopped and if possible criminalized. Moreover, there should be political will to support, with the assistance of international organizations, families that send girls to school and give them subsidies or food rations. Again, governments are urged to disseminate information among local communities by introducing information centers to

address socio-cultural discriminatory practices/norms and create a more conducive environment for women to be respected.

More also, participants at the UNDESA seminar emphasized the importance of networking and partnerships to be formed or enhanced to support women leaders. In the light of that it was recommended that gender commissions should be formed to ensure women's participation and the achievement of women's leadership targets. Also, women should form alliances with civil society, business women, religious leaders, and others (from the local, the national, the regional to the global level) and that women's network should be supported through email and Internet (McDonagh, 2009).

It should be underscored that given the urgency of the challenges and some of the strategies discussed, participants at the UNDESA forum resolved that in order not to lose the momentum created by the seminar elected women leaders in local governments should establish a network at national and regional levels to bring them together and provide a forum through which issues and challenges confronting them in their work can be addressed in a sustainable manner. Consequently, local governments, central governments and international development partners should support this endeavour especially in its initial stages (Silverberg, 1998).

Apart from the issues discussed, affirmative action in politics is another great step that can be used to boost women's participation in local governance. According to Sam (2010), affirmative action generally is a deliberate attempt at reforming or eliminating past and present prejudice using a set of public policies

and initiatives designed to help on the basis of colour, creed, geographical location, race, origin and gender among others.

Additionally, WiLDAF Ghana (2010) stresses that affirmative action policies can be in the form of laws, customs and social policies and can be both voluntary and mandatory efforts by different levels of government, private sector, and civil society to combat discrimination and low presence. The intention is to afford equal opportunities to all groups including women. It is sometimes also generically referred to as positive discrimination or preferential policies.

Affirmative action is both a principle and a policy which when practised effectively serves as a stop gap measure to address a systemic problem over time. It aims at correcting an anomaly and ensures that the solution, as interim as it may be, is also systemic and transparent to ensure that the principles and objectives underlying its adoption are achieved (Hollenbaugh, 2006; Sam, 2010).

In practicality, the advocates of affirmative action argue that government and political parties should consciously push women into positions of trust taking into consideration their competence and willingness to serve their communities. There are a lot of positions that women can be appointed into. For instance, government has 30% vacant places to be filled in the local assemblies. Besides that more women could be appointed to be become Metropolitan/Municipal/District Chief Executives in addition to ministerial positions. Specifically, political parties can push women through the higher echelons within their ranks (Allah-Mensah, 2005; Sam, 2010).

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter discusses the methodology used for the study. It comprises a description of the study area, the research design, the population, sample selection techniques, design of instruments for data collection, pre-testing of instruments data collection and analysis procedures.

Study area

The study area is the Ashanti Mampong Municipality. The municipality was formerly known as Sekyere West District but the Sekyere Central was carved out of it. It has an estimated population of 55,000 people with women forming 51.3 percent and men 48.7 percent (Ghanadistricts, 2010). There are 16 towns and villages in the municipality. They are Ashanti Mampong, which the municipal capital, Asaam, Jeduako, Birem, Benim, Amoamang, Adidwan, Ninting, Kyirimfaso, Krobo, Kyairase, Dahoo, Nkwanta, Bosofour, Abuontem and Kyekyewere.

The Mampong Municipal Assembly has one Urban Council, two Town Councils and five Area Councils as well as 120 Unit Committees. The assembly's administrative machinery is headed by a civil servant – the Municipal

Coordinating Director – under the overall supervision of the Municipal Chief Executive. The Ashanti Mampong Municipality is the same as the Mampong Constituency.

The Ashanti Mampong Municipality was carved from the former Sekyere West District. The municipality boasts of three tertiary institutions namely: College of Agriculture Education of the University of Education, Winneba, Mampong Technical College of Education and Saint Monica's College of Education. Besides, these higher institutions of learning, there are four senior high schools, three in Mampong Township and one at Kofiase. Additionally, there are several basic schools. All these mean that there are several female teachers, especially in the female only schools.

Apart from the educational institutions, the Municipality hosts the Mampong Divisional Police Headquarters, Circuit and Magistrate courts. More so, there are several decentralised departments such as the Electoral Commission, National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE), Ghana Education Service (GES), Driver Vehicle and Licencing Authority (DVLA), Ghana Library Board, Social Security and National Insurance Trust, Mampong Municipal Hospital and Midwifery Training School just mention a few. Again, these indicate that the area represents a sizeable number of Ghanaians, both professionals and non-professionals.

Research design

The descriptive survey design was used for this study because it is oriented towards the administration of the status of a given phenomenon rather than towards the isolation of causative factors” (Osuala, 1992). Also, Ary, Cheser and Asghar (1990) say, “survey is an important and frequently used method of research in the social sciences” (p 407). Kerlinger (1979) stresses that descriptive surveys sample populations in order to discover the incidence and distribution of and the interrelationships among sociological, psychological and educational variables, which are the centre of this study.

From what Osuala (1992) says a descriptive survey is used because it is oriented towards the administration of the status of a given phenomenon rather than towards the isolation of causative factors. In this study the causative factors are relevant but they do not take precedence over the phenomenon of female participation in local governance. However, what account for their continuous low participation is imperative and relevant to the consideration of the descriptive survey.

Target population

The target population for this study was composed of all women (27,527) of voting age in the Ashanti Mampong Municipal area. But respondents for the study were selected from an accessible population of 364 from among the organisers of the two main political parties [which are NDC (93) and NPP (93)] in the municipality, women assembly members (3) - both elected and government

nominees, female nurses (59) of the Municipal Hospital and tutors of the Midwifery Training School. Other members of the accessible population were: female Heads of Basic Schools (79), female tutors (37) of the four Senior High Schools and female tutors of the Mampong Technical College of Education and Saint Monica’s College of Education. The population is a mixture of political activists and professional women. Together they contributed useful information to the study. Table 2 presents the distribution of the accessible population used for the study.

Table 2: Distribution of the accessible population

Type of respondents	Expected Number of respondents
NDC women organisers	93
NPP women organizers	93
Female headteachers	79
Nurses	59
Females tutors	37
Assembly women	3

Source: Field Survey (2010)

Sampling techniques

The sample for the study was 239 respondents. The breakdown of the sample was 10 female nurses, 20 female head teachers, 20 female tutors, 3 female government nominees of the Ashanti Mampong Municipal Assembly and 93 each

of women organisers of the New Patriotic Party and National Democratic Congress. Distribution of the sample is displayed in Table 3. The methods that were used in selecting the respondents are the purposive and the simple random sampling. The 3 female government nominees, the 186 political party activists were selected purposefully as can be seen from the table. These respondents are politicians who are actively involved in politics and were able to contribute immensely to the study.

Table 3: Distribution of the sample for the study

Type of respondents	Actual number selected	Sampling procedure used
NDC women organizers	93	Purposive
NPP women organizers	93	Purposive
Females tutors	20	Simple random
Female headteachers	20	Simple random
Nurses	10	Simple random
Assembly women	3	Purposive

Source: Field Survey (2010)

From Table 3, it is clear that nurses, female head teachers and tutors were selected through the simple random sampling method. First the names of each category of respondents were written and placed in a bowl. Afterwards, the lottery method was used to select the requisite number with the help of two research

assistants. In all cases, the names were collated and put together before the selection process commenced.

Data collection instrument

A self-administered questionnaire was the instrument used for data collection. It had three sections, in which Section A was made up of the background information on respondents and Section B dealt with factors and reasons that militate against women participation in politics and governance. Lastly, Section C was devoted to the measures that would be instituted to facilitate women participation in local governance and politics.

The questionnaire comprised nine main items with item 4, 5, 6 and 7 dealing with the political, social, economic and cultural factors that militate against women's participation in local politics and governance. Item 8 was devoted to the reasons that prevent women from participating in local governance. Lastly Section C contained item 9 with its sub items which had to do with the measure to boost women's participation in politics and governance. All the items in the questionnaires were in the form of close-ended questions. Items 1, 2 and 3 were developed to capture the age, occupation and educational qualifications of respondents and these three items were close-ended. Apart from the fact that items 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9 had alternative responses, open-ended questions were formulated at the end whereby respondents could add other information if they so deemed necessary. Mainly, the sub-items under items 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9 were statements or propositions. To the propositions, respondents were made to

indicate their level of agreement or disagreement or state whether the suggestions were workable or unworkable in the case of Sections B and C in that order.

The questionnaire was used as an interview guide in circumstances where the respondents did not have time to respond to questionnaire. In such instances, this researcher and four her assistants administered the questionnaires as if they were interview guides.

Pre-testing of instrument

The questionnaire was pre-tested within the Sekyere Central District with its headquarters at Nsuta. This district was part of the former Sekyere West District before it was carved out in 2007. Some of the features of this district were similar to that of the Mampong Municipality. A sample of 50 respondents made up of women organisers of political parties, nurses, female tutors of the two senior high schools and female head teachers within the district was used. One month was used to complete the pilot test. The pre-testing exercise was undertaken from the 1st June 2010 to the 30th June 2010.

Data collected was analysed manually and electronically. The manual analysis was in the form of editing of responses to check for clarity of expression and similarity of responses. After that, all responses were coded giving each of them numerical value which facilitated the electronic analysis by the aid of the Statistical Product and Service Solutions (SPSS) version 12.0. A reliability test was run afterwards to measure the reliability coefficient as required of a

dissertation like this. The result of the reliability coefficient was 0.8500 which indicated that the instrument was reliable for collecting for the study.

Data collection procedures

The norms of data collection required that, the researcher introduces himself/herself with an introductory letter. In view of this, the researcher obtained an introductory letter from the Director of the Institute for Development Studies. When the letter had been obtained copies were made and used.

Four research assistants were used for the main data collection so that it was comprehensively done. A period of two months was used for data collection, which commenced on the 25th July 2010 and ended in 20th September 2010. All respondents were approached and the rationale for the study explained to them, however, nine (made up of 4 NPP and 5 NDC women organisers) of the political party respondents could not be reached for the interview this indicated that 230 respondents participated in the study.

Data analysis procedures

Data collected were edited for clarity of expression as was done during the pre-testing stage. As the editing process was going on, similar responses from the open-ended items were grouped to reflect the objectives of the study. After the editing was over, all the responses were coded by giving them numerical values which were used for the input into the variable view of the Statistical Product and Service Solutions software version 12.0. The coded responses were then keyed

into the computer one by one till the last response. The next thing that was done was the keying of the actual responses from respondents which had been numbered and coded for easy processing. After all the input processes were completed, frequency tables were processed and used for the discussions in Chapter Four. The SPSS was used to run crosstabulated responses for some selected variables such as the educational qualifications of respondents, which were cross checked with responses on the causes of the low female participation in local governance, among others.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Introduction

This chapter presents the results and discussion. After the presentation of the results, the discussions follow with the relevant literature support. The presentation is done in two main parts – the first part deals with the background information on respondents and the second part is devoted to responses on factors that influence women participation in politics in general and local government elections in particular. In addition to the factors, reasons accounting for few women’s involvement in national and local politics in Ghana were examined. Finally, measures to be instituted to boost women’s political participation in all fronts are looked at.

The sample for the study was 239 respondents but at the end of data collection, 230 responded. Nine of the sampled respondents could not be reached for various reasons. This gave a return rate of about 96.0 percent.

Background information on respondents

Three issues each were explored on the background of respondents. These were age, occupation and educational level of the respondents. Responses on the ages of respondents are presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Distribution of respondents by age

Age in years	Frequency	Percent
Below 30	63	27.3
30 – 39	72	31.3
40 – 49	45	19.6
50 – 59	40	17.4
60 or more	10	4.4
Total	230	100.0

Source: Field Survey (2010)

It is seen from Table 4 that the ages of 58.6 percent of the respondents fell below 40 years. This means that these respondents are younger and may not participate fully in politics because they are now nurturing a family. This observation is true in so far as family life and child bearing are concerned. On the other hand, the table shows that a cumulative of 41.4 percent of the respondents were 40 years or older. In comparison to the first category of respondents, this category is relatively older, may be more active in politics and governance because they may have settled with family life and child bearing. The second background information on respondents was concerned with their occupations. Table 5 presents responses on the occupation of respondents.

Table 5: Occupation status of respondents

Type of occupation	Frequency	Percent
Trader	70	30.4
Teacher	65	28.3
Farmer	30	13.0
Caterer	23	10.0
Hairdresser	17	7.4
Seamstress	15	6.5
Nurse	10	4.4
Total	230	100.0

Source: Field Survey (2010)

Table 5 shows that traders and teachers constituted the bulk (58.7%) of the respondents for this study. There were 70 traders out of 230 respondents and teachers numbered 65. In short, all the women captured for the study were in one occupation or the other.

The relevance of the occupational status of respondents is that, one needs to be economically sound to participate actively in politics. A viable economic venture means a reliable and sustained source of income. If a situation is such that one has to struggle to meet basic life needs, it would be difficult to participate fully in governance and leadership contests. It is therefore, reasonable to have an occupation which gives one some sort of economic independence (Aiyede, 2006).

The third and last background information on the respondents had to do with their educational levels. Table 6 presents responses on the levels of formal education respondents attained.

Table 6: Educational levels of respondents

Level of education	Frequency	Percent
MSLC/JHS	35	15.2
WASSCE/SSSCE/NVTI/’O’ Level	40	17.4
RSA III/’A’ Level/Diploma	30	13.0
Teachers’ Cert ‘A’	25	10.9
First Degree	45	19.6
Second Degree	20	8.7
Advanced Fashion	15	6.5
Advanced Catering	20	8.7
Total	230	100.0

Source: Field Survey (2010)

Table 6 shows that all respondents had formal education ranging from the basic to tertiary levels. With reference to Table 4, the type and level of education respondents possessed or attained correspond with the profession or occupation. For example, the 65 teachers possessed Diploma in Education, Teachers’ Certificate ‘A’, First and Second Degrees. Regarding nurses, they held diploma in nursing and degree in nursing; caterers were holders of Advanced Catering Certificate and the seamstresses possessed Advanced Fashion and NVTI

Certificates. A critical look at the qualifications of the respondents showed that they can read and write and this means that they have the abilities to partake in political discourses but most of them do not participate in politics as the case may be.

Factors that influence women's participation in politics

This section presents the discussion on the factors that influenced female participation in politics and governance generally and local level governance in particular. The factors have been categorised into four, namely: political, economic, social and cultural. Responses to each of them are presented in a table followed by the relevant discussions.

The items in this section were in the form of declarative statements by which respondents were made to indicate their degree of agreement or disagreement. The response categories were: 'Strongly Agree', 'Agree', 'Disagree' and 'Strongly Disagree'. For ease discussing the results of the study throughout this section, the response variables are collapsed into two. Thus, 'Strongly Agree' and 'Agree' become 'Agree'; and 'Disagree' and 'Strongly Disagree' become 'Disagree'.

Political factors

Table 7 presents responses on political factors that influence women's participation in local governance. In the first instance, it is seen that 70 percent of the respondents agreed that there was limited party support in the form of limited

financial support for women candidates. Though local level elections in Ghana are supposed to be non-partisan, political parties sponsor candidates but then women are hardly supported in that direction. Even though the majority agreed that there was limited financial support for women candidates in comparison with male candidates, 30 percent of the respondents disagreed.

In a related issue, the table shows that 80 percent of the respondents agreed that lack of networking among women within their parties is a factor that influences their low participation in local governance. If there were proper networks among the women in municipality, they could lobby for more women to be supported financially to contest and win in the District Assembly election. Most respondents agreed that networking within parties serve good purpose for attracting sponsorship for candidates who would want to contest for elections at various levels of governance. It is also a fact that without a party financial support, one's success at the local level elections would be impossible, therefore, women need financial support of their parties to be able to contest and win elections.

Table 7: Political factors that influence women’s participation in local governance

Political factors	Responses				Total
	SA N(%)	A N(%)	D N(%)	SD N(%)	
Limited party support (e.g. limited finance for women candidates)	69(30.0)	92(40.0)	46(20.0)	23(10.0)	230(100)
Limited access to political networks	0	69(30.0)	138(60.0)	23(10.0)	230(100)
Lack of experience in lobbying and negotiations within the party	0	92(40.0)	138(60.0)	0	230(100)
Lack of networking among women within their party	46(20.0)	138(60.0)	46(20.0)	0	230(100)
Lack of independent decision-making in party politics	46(20.0)	138(60.0)	46(20.0)	0	230(100)
Lack of affirmative action policies within parties	23(10.0)	92(40.0)	115(50.0)	0	230(100)

Key: SA - Strongly Agree, A – Agree, D - Disagree & SD – Strongly Disagree

Source: Field Survey (2010)

It has been established that networking within parties is good. In Table 7, 70 percent of the respondents disagreed that there was limited access to political networks. The majority of the respondents confirmed that political networks abound within and across parties and therefore, women could take advantage of it.

Similarly, the table shows the 60 percent of that respondents disagreed that women lack experience in lobbying and negotiating within their parties. These respondents were of the view that women possess the requisite lobbying skills and experience and if they so wish they could use them. What this means is that lack of lobbying skills seem not to be a factor that inhibits their active participation in local governance.

Table 7 reveals that 80 percent of the respondents agreed that there was lack of independent decision-making in party politics. Earlier in this presentation, it has been stressed that local government elections are supposed to be non-partisan but everything points to the fact that there have been political under currents across the board. In view of this, if a woman contests the elections without support from a party, her chances of winning is slim. However, if she receives the support of a party, she is likely to succeed. This point is in line with the issue of independent decision making, whereby the individual could decide to contest without tacit approval from the party she belongs. Necessarily, a contestant in the local elections should receive support from the totality of the party otherwise, she may not win.

Table 7 also indicates that 50 percent each of the respondents agreed or disagreed that lack of affirmative action within political parties is one of the

political factors that influence low female participation in local governance. Affirmative action is a situation where conscious efforts are made to push more women to fore front of politics and governance. To the half of the respondents, this action has not been much felt whilst the remaining half dissented.

All the political factors discussed above had been raised by scholars such as Rule and Zimmerman (1994), Shvedova (1994). Specifically, Rule and Zimmerman (1994), Norris and Lovenduski (1997) and Ofei-Aboagye (2000) state that among the prominent political obstacles that women face are lack of party support, such as limited financial support for women candidates and limited access to political networks.

Social factors

Table 8 presents responses on social factors that influence women's participation in local governance. The first factor considered under this subsection was women's lack of confidence to run for elections. About 80 percent of the respondents agreed that sociologically, women lack confidence to contest elections. This means that for an individual to contest election, that person should have confidence that he/she would win or court the attention of the majority of the citizenry to his/her part. Shvedova (1994) asserts that low female participation in governance comes partly as a result of lack of self-confidence. Twenty percent of the respondents disagreed that women lacked confidence to contest local elections that was why some stood and won against all odds.

Table 8: Social factors that influence women’s participation in local governance

Social factors	Responses			
	SA N(%)	A N(%)	D N(%)	Total N(%)
Women’s lack of confidence to run for elections	138(60)	46(20)	46(20)	230(100)
Lack of exposure, lack of public speaking skills, lack of campaign tactics	0	184(80)	46(20)	230(100)
Low level of education and inadequate awareness of laws	0	138(80)	92(20)	230(100)
Multiple responsibilities prevent women to fully participate in party meetings	115(50)	69(30)	46(20)	230(100)

Key: SA - Strongly Agree, A – Agree, D - Disagree & SD – Strongly Disagree

Source: Field Survey (2010)

Secondly, Table 8 indicates that another 80 percent of the respondents agreed with the assertion that lack of exposure, lack of public speaking skills and lack of campaign tactics are some of the social factors that negatively influence women’s participation in local governance. For someone to be successful in local government elections or politics, that person needs to have public speaking skills, should possess campaign tactics and also have exposure among the electorates.

Another 80 percent of the respondents consented to the fact that low level of education and inadequate awareness of laws are social factors that influence

low women's participation in local governance. It is an acceptable fact that elections are governed by laws which contestants should be familiar with. The level of education of women vis-à-vis their awareness of the legal framework have been seen to influence their involvement in governance generally and politics in particular. There are laws relating to mobilisation of funds for political activities and elections, eligibility and functions of political office holders.

Lastly, Table 8 shows that 80 percent (50% + 30%) of the respondents agreed that the multiple responsibilities that women have prevent them from fully participating in political party activities. This finding is in consonance with most of the issues raised in Table 4 particularly those related to party support, limited networks and lack of independent decision making within parties.

Economic factors

Scholars have said that the benefits that would be derived from active female participation in politics and governance is enormous (Gyimah & Thompson, 2009). Politics and governance are about the economic wellbeing of people. In view of this, economic factors that influence female participation in governance were briefly explored.

From Table 9, three economic factors that influence women's participation in local governance were identified by the respondents. Regarding the issue of time management as an economic factor in participation in local governance, 50 percent each of the respondents agreed or disagreed with the proposition. It was the conviction of half of the sampled respondents that time management

challenges inhibit active women participation in local level elections and governance.

Table 9: Economic factors that influence women’s participation in local governance

Economic factors	Responses			
	SA N(%)	A N(%)	D N(%)	Total N(%)
Time management	23(10.0)	92(40.0)	115(50.0)	230(100)
Lack of financial support	23(10.0)	92(40.0)	115(50.0)	230(100)
Challenges to women’s access to land and credit	0	92(40.0)	138(60.0)	230(100)

Key: SA - Strongly Agree, A – Agree, D - Disagree & SD – Strongly Disagree

Source: Field Survey (2010)

There is no doubt that political activities and governance issues demand a lot of time from participants which most women cannot have because of family commitments. On the same score, half of the women did not think they had problems with time management and therefore it was not a valid excuse to prevent them from participating fully in governance. Even though a 50 percent of the respondents did not see time management as a constraint, Shvedova (1994) as well as UNDESA (2008) affirm that time management constraint is an economic factor that influences active women participation in politics and governance at various levels of society.

Table 9 also shows that 50 percent a piece of the respondents either agreed or disagreed that lack of financial support was an economic factor that negatively influenced their local governance participation. In support of the fact that financial support is an economic challenge, Gyimah and Thompson (2009) stress that money serves as a constraint to women's effort in participating in the local governance process in the Nadowli District in the Upper West Region of Ghana. For someone to be elected as an assembly member, that person has to embark on a vigorous electioneering campaign which involves cost of transportation, logistics and buying of drinks (pito) to influence voters.

On the third issue, Table 9 shows that the majority (60%) of the respondents disagreed that challenges to women's access to land and credit were an economic constraint to their participation in governance. Even though the larger proportion of the respondents did not subscribe to access to land and credit as a factor, Aiyede (2006) finds that this factor has some degree of impact on the participation of women in governance. There is no doubt that some amount of money is required for an individual to actively participate in elections and get elected. Sometimes, it is imperative for the contestant to mobilize funds including borrowing, that is where land or property could be used as collateral and in most traditional Ghana, women do not own land or property to be used as such. It therefore becomes a constraint to the mobilisation of finance.

Cultural factors

Table 10 presents responses on the cultural factors that influence women's participation in local governance. The cultural factors and social factors are interrelated but the former is more localised. The table shows that 60 percent of the respondents agreed with the assertion that the gender ideology and cultural patterns that assign predetermined social roles to men and women is a cultural factor that influences women's active participation in local governance. In Ghana, some localities do not accept that women should be political leaders and in such circumstances, it is difficult for a woman to contest and win local elections or even get appointed to serve in governance. Because of formal education, some traditional beliefs have given way to modern thought on politics and governance, that is, why some respondents disagreed that the gender ideology is not tenable in their view.

In a closely related issue to the one above, Table 10 indicates that 60 percent of the respondents agreed that there are some cultural barriers that prevent women from exercising rights that modern laws give them. In modern societies, the laws do not discriminate against gender which is contrary to traditional norms and ethics. Even though the laws of Ghana allow everyone to participate in governance, culturally women are not given the leeway to partake in governance as men do for some of the reasons discussed in earlier.

Table 10: Cultural factors that influence women’s participation in local governance

Cultural factors	Responses				Total
	SA N(%)	A N(%)	D N(%)	SD N(%)	
The gender ideology and cultural patterns that assign predetermined social roles to men and women	69(30.0)	69(30.0)	92(40.0)	0	230(100)
Cultural barriers that prevent women to exercise rights that laws give them	92(40.0)	46(20.0)	92(40.0)	0	230(100)
Tribalism – women are disempowered because of belonging to a minority tribe and ethnicity	23(10.0)	92(40.0)	92(40.0)	23(10.0)	230(100)

Key: SA - Strongly Agree, A – Agree, D - Disagree & SD – Strongly Disagree

Source: Field Survey (2010)

Fifty percent of the respondents agreed that tribalism inhibits women active participation in local governance. They indicated that the issue of tribalism disempowers women because they belong to a minority ethnic group. On the same score, 50 percent disagreed that tribalism was a strong cultural factor. They thought that because of education and modern scientific and technological advancement, tribalism is no more an issue in governance rather the competence of the individual is paramount. UNDESA (2008) observed that tribalism is a major inhibiting cultural factor for women's participation in politics and local governance.

Reasons underlying women's reluctance to participate in local governance

Beyond the factors that militate against women's active participation in local governance, there are some underlying reasons. These reasons are the focus of this section, which also serve as responses to research question two of the study. Table 11 presents the views of respondents.

In fact, in Ghana, it is becoming an acceptable fact that for someone to succeed in politics and governance, that individual should have contacts with existing public institutions and/or trade unions which are mass organisations. Table 11 shows that 60 percent of the respondents supported the view that most women lack contact and cooperation with other public organisations such as trade (labour) unions and women's groups (Lartey, 2003).

Table 11: Reasons that prevent women from participating actively in local governance

Reasons	Responses				Total
	SA	A	D	SD	
	N(%)	N(%)	N(%)	N(%)	
Lack of contact and cooperation with other public organizations such as trade (labour) unions and women's groups	23(10.0)	115(50.0)	46(20.0)	46(20.0)	230(100)
Absence of well-developed education and training systems for women's leadership	69(30.0)	115(50.0)	46(20.0)	0	230(100)
Lack of avenues for orienting young women toward political life	46(20.0)	115(50.0)	69(30.0)	0	230(100)
The nature of the electoral system may or may not be favourable to women candidates	0	115(50.0)	115(50.0)	0	230(100)
Women's perception of politics as a "dirty" game	46(20.0)	115(50.0)	69(30.0)	0	230(100)

Table 11 continued

The way in which women are portrayed in the mass media	0	115(50.0)	115(50.0)	0	230(100)
Lack of support by other women	46(20.0)	115(50.0)	69(30.0)	0	230(100)
Sexual complications/harassment	69(30.0)	46(20.0)	115(50.0)	0	230(100)
Under-representation in parties resulting in lack of influence in decision-making, marginalization and sidelining of women	23(10.0)	69(30.0)	138(60.0)	0	230(100)
Legal status of women with regard to family and marriage: for instance, family succession laws exclude women from owning property	46(20.0)	46(20.0)	138(60.0)	0	230(100)
Difficulties in reconciling work and family responsibilities	69(30.0)	46(20.0)	115(50.0)	0	230(100)
Double rejection of a woman both in her family and in her husband's family	23(10.0)	46(20.0)	161(70.0)	0	230(100)
Lack of respect from women's leadership	69(30.0)	69(30.0)	68(30.0)	23(10.0)	230(100)

Key: SA - Strongly Agree, A – Agree, D - Disagree & SD – Strongly Disagree

Source: Field Survey (2010)

In their study in Russia, Rule and Zimmerman (1994) found that the success of women's participation in politics and governance depends on political and social networking. Furthermore, they intimated that networking in politics and governance is very important since an individual's ability to use the network within a political party can win him/her the support of his/her colleagues. Without such contacts, one's success in local politics would depend largely on the cooperation one receives from the local people.

In Table 11, 80 percent of the respondents agreed that the absence of well-developed education and training systems for women's leadership was one of the reasons that worked against women's participation in governance. This reason has socio-cultural background because elsewhere it has been established that women's leadership in governance is not accepted even though the laws of the country allows that. However, because of traditional beliefs and orientation there are very limited avenues upon which young women could be trained to assume political leadership in adult life.

In expositions of Rufai (2011), in Ghana's tertiary school environment, the contest for leadership positions among students is enough grounds on which young women are given the opportunity to receive training for big time politicking and governance in the larger society. It is on the basis of this that 20 percent of the respondents disagreed that that there was absence of well-developed education for training young women for political leadership.

Similarly, 70 percent of the respondents subscribed to the proposition that lack of avenues for orienting young women toward political life is one of the reasons that prevent many women from participating in local governance. This view point is equally held by Rule and Zimmerman (1994). They posit that there is the absence of well-developed education and training systems for women's leadership and that there are no clear ways of orienting young women toward political life. It must be reiterated the view point of the majority in this case and that of Rule and Zimmerman (1994) are not entirely true because as was stated earlier, in Ghana's tertiary institutions opportunities are always created for both male and female to acquire some degree of political experience whilst contesting for leadership positions and participating in the administration of the institutions. This normally comes in the form of course prefects, social organisation's leadership, church leadership and students' union leadership. It should be admitted that at the lower levels of education, not so many girls are given the opportunity to serve in leadership positions and so if they do not go beyond the basic or second cycle levels, they may not have the chance to taste any form of leadership training before they decide to contest for local level elections.

Furthermore, Table 11 shows that 70 percent of the respondents agreed with the perception that politics is a "dirty" game. On the other hand, a few (30%) did not agree to that perception since they explained that politics gives birth to governance which also leads to development in society.

Additionally, Table 11 shows that another 70 percent of the respondents agreed that lack of support by other women prevented most women from

participating in local governance. It is a point that have been made before as part of the political factors that militate against women since women in political parties fail to network properly since there are more women in Ghana than men (Ghana Statistical Service, 2011). From this revelation it is expected that participation in politics and governance should have dominated by women.

All the reasons discussed above received the support of most respondents but the remaining reasons were not strong enough to prevent women from participating in local governance. This does not mean they did not work against women in anyway. For instance, Table 11 shows that 50 percent each of the respondents agreed that the way in which women are portrayed in the mass media, sexual harassment and difficulties in reconciling work and family responsibilities somehow work against women. On the same score, 50 percent disagreed that sexual harassment and family responsibilities were strong inhibiting factors.

In addition to the above, there were other reasons that have limited impact on women participation in local governance but could not be discounted. A case in point is the double rejection of a woman both in her family and in her husband's family (UNDESA, 2008). Politicking and governance demands a lot of time and this takes the women away from her family responsibilities most of the time. When this happens she is likely to loose respect from her husband's relations and sometime from her own family. In situations like these, women would prefer to keep their families rather than go politicking which is bound to end one day. This leads to under-representation of women in political parties resulting in lack of influence in decision-making, marginalization and sidelining of

women generally. The literature on Ghanaian women in leadership positions confirms this assertion. To this end, Ofei-Aboagye (2000), Gyimah and Thompson (2009) lend credence that women are under represented in governance at the local as well as national levels.

Measures that would facilitate women participation in local governance and politics

Research question three explored the measures that would enhance women's participation in local governance. Table 12 presents the 12 propositions that were formulated for respondents' consideration. The response categories were 'Workable' and 'Unworkable'.

As seen from Table 12 that 80 percent of the respondents noted that the building of mutual support among women in politics and governance is a workable measure that could help boost women's involvement in politics and governance at the local level. Consistently, it was seen that there was lack of cooperation and support among women. Women had been seen to form the majority in most societies in the world and if they were to cooperate with one another, they would easily make it in governance by getting elected to leadership positions. In the same way, advocates of affirmative action argue that government and political parties should consciously push women into positions of trust taking into consideration their competence and willingness to serve their communities (Allah-Mensah, 2005; Sam, 2010).

Table 12: Responses on the measures that would boost women’s participation in local governance

The suggested measures	Responses		
	Workable N (%)	Unworkable N (%)	Total N(%)
Mutual support among women in politics and governance	184(80.0)	46(20.0)	230(100)
Establishing of women’s commission within the ministry of local government	207(90.0)	23(10.0)	230(100)
Adoption of laws on affirmative action within political parties	184(80.0)	46(20.0)	230(100)
The enforcement of existing laws on affirmative action	230(100.0)	0	230(100)
Political parties should build capacity for women within them (supporters, members, candidates, elected women)	207(90.0)	23(10.0)	230(100)
There should be support for women’s economic empowerment	230(100.0)	0	230(100)
Political parties should enhance women’s upward moves through the party hierarchy	207(90.0)	23(10.0)	230(100)

Table 12 continues

Creating funds for women elected leaders, candidates and business women	23(10.0)	207(90.0)	230(100)
Women should have confidence in themselves	230(100.0)	0	230(100)
Establish community infrastructures including nurseries and kindergartens where both men and women share their responsibilities on child's development	184(80.0)	46(20.0)	230(100)
Women should form women's caucuses to push/lobby for the inclusion of affirmative actions	207(90.0)	23(10.0)	230(100)
Women should form alliances with civil society, business women, religious leaders, and others (from the local, the national, the regional to the global level)	230(100.0)	0	230(100)

Source: Field Survey (2010)

Along the same line of thought, all respondents agreed that women should form alliances with civil society, business women, religious leaders, and others (from the local, the national, the regional to the global level) so as to enhance their chances to winning elections. This measure is in line with a challenge where women lack support from organized groups both locally and nationally or better still internationally. It has been observed that women with connections with social organizations tend to have wider support and thus get elected.

On top of the measures that emanate from women's own initiative is the issue that women should have confidence in themselves. With this measure, Table 12 shows that all respondents agreed it was a workable idea. Lack of confidence among women had been a bane to political success and active and massive participation in governance at the local level. Confidence building can come in the form of more education, economic empowerment and modification of cultural beliefs. These view points are shared by Ofei-Aboagye (2000) and Chaligha (2001).

The measures that have been discussed so far had been those that are supposed to be championed by women themselves. The remaining are to be instituted by government, civil society organizations and political parties. In Table 9, 90 percent of the respondents agreed that government should establish a women's commission within the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development. It should be stated that Ghana has a Ministry for Women and Children Affairs (MOWAC), which takes care of issues relating to women and children. However, a lot more needs to be done by the MOWAC regarding

women's participation in local governance by lobbying for more women to be appointed into positions of Metropolitan/Municipal/District Chief Executive.

Also, Table 12 shows that all respondents believed that another workable intervention should be enforcement of existing laws on affirmative action. Affirmative action is simply a coordinated effort to get more women into leader positions. Dake (2009) advocates for the implementation of the existing legal framework towards enhancing women's participation in local governance and politics.

Funding of political activities has become a big challenge for women who would opt for leadership positions. Therefore, it was proposed that women's economic empowerment should be given serious consideration. From Table 12, all respondents accepted that it was a workable option for active women's participation in local level governance. When women are empowered economically, they would be able to fund the activities leading to elections and eventually get elected or appointed if they are leading members of the ruling party.

In line with the funding of women's political activities, 90 percent of the respondents disagreed that the creation of separate fund for women elected leaders, candidates and business women was not a workable measure. They rather suggested that it would be more workable for more women to be empowered economically so that they would not only contribute to the funding of party activities but also contribute to local development efforts. They continued that existing affirmative actions have not been implemented let alone set aside funds

for women political activities. In short, they were skeptical of that move even if it had worked elsewhere but not in Ghana.

The last measure that government can institute to boost women's participation in local governance and politics is the establishment of community infrastructures including nurseries and kindergartens. The table shows that 80 percent of the respondents agreed with that proposition and explained that it was very laudable remedial measure. Furthermore, it would afford most of the nursing mothers the opportunity to meet their responsibilities pertaining to their children's development. Women have had to bear the brunt of sending their children to far away schools before going to work, return to fetch them and go home to prepare house chores. These and many others do not give them ample time to attend meetings where decisions are made without their inputs. If they have supporting infrastructure, they would probably have some time to partake in meetings of civil society organisations and/or political parties to be able to impact on the proceedings. The issue of family responsibility being an inhibiting factor to women's active participation in local governance has received the attention of many feminist writers such as Dawuni (2009) and Sam (2010).

Political parties also have a role to play in getting more women to participate in governance at the local level. Based on this, 80 percent of the respondents, as seen from Table 12 were of the view that the adoption of laws on affirmative action within political parties is a workable measure. The issue of affirmative action is a topical issue in Ghana in many sphere of life as observed by Sam (2010).

In line with the affirmative action measure, 90 percent of the respondents agreed that political parties should build the capacities of women within their ranks. It was observed earlier that lack of adequate political education on the part of women work against their effort in winning elections, such that if their capacities were built they would be more sharpened to become winnable candidates. It is not only the building of capacities that should be done but also political parties should enhance women's upward moves through the party hierarchy. Table 12 indicates that the majority (90%) of the respondents intimated that pushing women through the top hierarchy of political party leadership is a way of enhancing women's participation in governance at the local levels.

Summary of discussion

This chapter presented the results of the study that were concerned with factors that influence women's participation in local governance in the Ashanti Mampong Municipality. Three main issues came to the fore but a little background information on respondents were looked at. The background variable measured on respondents included their educational levels, occupation and age. All three variables were relevant to the issues discussed. Firstly, the factors that influenced women's participation in local governance were found to be three main kinds, which are political, economic and social-cultural. Beyond these factors, there were underlying reasons that tend to prevent women from actively participating in local politics and governance. Primary among the political factors was that women lack contacts and there was not networking among women folks.

Economically, women did not have access to credit to make their businesses flourish as the case should have been. Socio-culturally, society does not accept women's political leadership.

In view of the underlying reasons, some suggestions were proposed for consideration. The foremost proposition was that affirmative actions initiated by governments and civil society organisations should be implemented with women's political empowerment in view. Owing to that every effort must be made to ensure that women are appointed to positions of authority taking into consideration their competence and area of specialisation.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

This chapter deals with the summary of the study and the conclusions arrived at from the findings. It also presents the recommendations made from the findings for remedial measures to be effected by stakeholders in women empowerment.

This study examined why few women participate in local governance in the Ashanti Mampong Municipality. Three objectives formed the basis for data collection. They include an examination of the factors that militated against women participation in district assembly elections; the reasons that influenced women's reluctance in taking up leadership roles in the local areas; and the identification of the ways that could enhance women participation in the district assembly governance in the Ashanti Mampong Municipality.

The literature review covered areas that concerned liberal and socialist feminism. Other areas reviewed in the literature included benefits of women's political participation, historical background of Ghanaian women involvement in governance and politics: the perspectives of Ghanaian scholars, factors that inhibit women participation in local governance, and measures that could help boost women participation in politics and governance.

The methodology was concerned with how data was collected, how respondents were selected and the research design adopted for the study. Data were analysed both manually and electronically and they were done using descriptive statistical tools such as frequencies, tables and percentages. In view of that the results were presented in tables and discussed with relevant literature supporting the findings.

Summary

The main results of the study are presented in three parts to conform to the three objectives. The first objective showed that the factors that influenced female participation in local governance were political, social, economic and cultural in nature.

- The political factors were: limited party support in terms of limited financial support for women candidates, lack of networking among women within their party and lack of independent decision-making in party politics.
- The social factors were: women's lack of confidence to run for elections, lack of exposure, lack of public speaking skills, lack of campaign tactics, low level of education and inadequate awareness of laws, multiple responsibilities prevent women to fully participate in party meetings.
- The economic factors were in the form of: time management and lack of financial support.

- The cultural factors were: the gender ideology and cultural patterns that assign predetermined social roles to men and women and cultural barriers that prevent women to exercise rights that laws give them.

The second objective of the study was concerned with the reasons that prevent women from participating in local elections and governance. The main reasons were:

- Lack of contact and cooperation with other public organisations such as trade (labour) unions and women's groups;
- Absence of well-developed education and training systems for women's leadership;
- Lack of avenues for orienting young women toward political life;
- Women's perception of politics as a "dirty" game;
- Lack of support by other women; and
- Lack of respect from women's leadership.

The third objective identified workable ways upon which women participation in local government elections can be enhanced. From the results, the most workable measures are as follows:

- There should be mutual support among women in politics and governance;
- Establishment of women's commission within the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development;
- Adoption of laws on affirmative action within political parties and the enforcement of the existing laws on affirmative action;

- Political parties should build capacity for women within them (supporters, members, candidates, elected women, etc.);
- There should be support for women's economic empowerment, political parties should enhance women's upward moves through the party hierarchy;
- Women should form women's caucuses to push or lobby for the inclusion of affirmative actions; and
- Women should form alliances with civil society, business women, religious leaders, and others (from the local, the national, the regional to the global level).

Conclusions

Active participation of women in politics and governance has become a topical issue across the world. It is believed that when more women partake in politics and governance, particularly at the local level, it would go a long way to boost development issues. In view of that realisation, several fora and academic writings had been used to discuss and deliberate on the way out of involving more women in politics at all levels of governance. It is on the basis of these assertions that findings of the study are situated. Most of the factors and reasons that account for low women participation in governance are confirmed by literature. Even though, most of the solutions are general in nature, they can be adapted to the local situation to make women's involvement in politics and governance more effective.

Firstly, it was seen that the factors that militate against the women of the Ashanti Mampong Municipality attempt to participate fully in local politics and governance is global in nature. This was because the social, political, economic and cultural factors cut across the world as adduced by scholars.

Similarly, the study revealed that the reasons the women of the study area gave for not actively participating in local politics are well documented by feminist writers and scholars in Ghana and political watchers. For instance, UNDESA (2008) recall that the gender ideology and cultural patterns that assign predetermined social roles to men and women and cultural barriers that prevent women to exercise rights that laws of a state assigns to women.

In view of the factors and reasons that inhibit women activity participation in politics, some measures were suggested for implementation by local and central authorities. It must be emphasised that these suggested measures are in tandem with those that were outlined in the literature.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made based on the results of the study:

- Political parties should give adequate financial support to women who would opt to contest local level elections by paying for adverts and campaign bills,
- Women should network among themselves to enable their voices heard in the decision-making process in their party politics,

- Women should develop certain social skills, which include public speaking, developing self-confidence and learn the intricacies of politicking,
- Women should disabuse their minds that politics is dirty,
- Women should be empowered economically and financially by ensuring that they are gainfully employed in the formal and informal sectors according to the skills they possess,
- Family members should assist women who would opt to go into politics in the housekeeping roles so that they would have adequate time to participate fully in party activities,
- Governmental and non-governmental organisations should assist more women financial to campaign for political office at the local levels; and
- The affirmative action policies should be practicalised by government and political parties to give meaning to women's participation in politics and governance by appointing more women into leadership positions.

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APPENDIX

QUESTIONNAIRE/INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR RESPONDENTS

Dear respondent, this questionnaire/interview guide is for the purposes of an academic research. It digs into the reasons why there is low female participation in governance and politics. Your candid views are required to make this exercise a success; you are therefore entreated to objectively supply answers to the questions posed in this questionnaires. Thank you for your cooperation.

Instructions: Please tick [] or provide the appropriate answer(s).

SECTION A: Bio Data

1. Age

Below 30 years []

30 – 39 years []

40 - 49 years []

50 - 59 years []

60 years or more []

2. Occupation

Teacher []

Nurse []

Farmer []

Trader []

Other, specify:.....

3. Educational level

MSLC/JSS	[]	[]
SSSCE/‘O’Level/RSAII	[]	[]
‘A’ Level/RSA III/DBS	[]	[]
Teachers Cert A	[]	[]
First Degree	[]	[]
Second Degree	[]	[]
Other, specify:		

SECTION B: Factors militating against women participation in district level elections in Ghana

Tick [√] to show your level of agreement or disagreement with the following factors that militate against women’s participation in political activities.

4. Political factors

- Limited party support, (in terms of limited finance) support for women candidates.

Strongly Agree [] Agree [] Disagree [] Strongly Disagree []

- Limited access to political networks.

Strongly Agree [] Agree [] Disagree [] Strongly Disagree []

- Lack of experience in lobbying and negotiations within the party

Strongly Agree [] Agree [] Disagree [] Strongly Disagree []

- Lack of networking among within their party

Strongly Agree [] Agree [] Disagree [] Strongly Disagree []

- Lack of independent decision-making in party politics

Strongly Agree [] Agree [] Disagree [] Strongly Disagree []

- Lack of affirmative action policies within parties

Strongly Agree [] Agree [] Disagree [] Strongly Disagree []

Others, state:

5. Social factors

- Women's lack of confidence to run for elections.

Strongly Agree [] Agree [] Disagree [] Strongly Disagree []

- Lack of exposure, lack of public speaking skills, lack of campaign tactics.

Strongly Agree [] Agree [] Disagree [] Strongly Disagree []

- Low level of education and inadequate awareness of laws.

Strongly Agree [] Agree [] Disagree [] Strongly Disagree []

- Multiple responsibilities preventing women from fully participating in party meetings.

Strongly Agree [] Agree [] Disagree [] Strongly Disagree []

Others, state:

6. Economic factors

- Time management

Strongly Agree [] Agree [] Disagree [] Strongly Disagree []

- Lack of financial support

Strongly Agree [] Agree [] Disagree [] Strongly Disagree []

- Challenges to women's access to land and credit

Strongly Agree [] Agree [] Disagree [] Strongly Disagree []

Others, state:

7. Cultural factors

- The gender ideology and cultural patterns that assign predetermined social roles to men and women.

Strongly Agree [] Agree [] Disagree [] Strongly Disagree []

- Cultural barriers that prevent women to exercise rights that laws give them

Strongly Agree [] Agree [] Disagree [] Strongly Disagree []

- Tribalism – women are disempowered because of belonging to a minority tribe and ethnicity

Strongly Agree [] Agree [] Disagree [] Strongly Disagree []

Others, state:

8. Reasons underlying women’s reluctance to participate in local governance

- The lack of contact and cooperation with other public organizations such as trade (labour) unions and women's groups.

Strongly Agree [] Agree [] Disagree [] Strongly Disagree []

- The absence of well-developed education and training systems for women's leadership.

Strongly Agree [] Agree [] Disagree [] Strongly Disagree []

- Lack of avenues for orienting young women toward political life.

Strongly Agree [] Agree [] Disagree [] Strongly Disagree []

- The nature of the electoral system, which may or may not be favourable to women candidates

Strongly Agree [] Agree [] Disagree [] Strongly Disagree []

- Women's perception of politics as a “dirty” game.

Strongly Agree [] Agree [] Disagree [] Strongly Disagree []

- The way in which women are portrayed in the mass media

Strongly Agree [] Agree [] Disagree [] Strongly Disagree []

- Lack of support by other women.

Strongly Agree [] Agree [] Disagree [] Strongly Disagree []

- Sexual complications/harassment.

Strongly Agree [] Agree [] Disagree [] Strongly Disagree []

- Under-representation in parties resulting in lack of influence in decision-making, marginalisation and sidelining of women.

Strongly Agree [] Agree [] Disagree [] Strongly Disagree []

- Legal status of women with regard to family and marriage: for instance, family succession laws exclude women from owning property.

Strongly Agree [] Agree [] Disagree [] Strongly Disagree []

- Difficulties in reconciling work and family responsibilities.

Strongly Agree [] Agree [] Disagree [] Strongly Disagree []

- Double rejection of a woman both in her family and in her husband's family

Strongly Agree [] Agree [] Disagree [] Strongly Disagree []

- Lack of respect from women's leadership.

Strongly Agree [] Agree [] Disagree [] Strongly Disagree []

Others, state:

Section C: Measures that would facilitate women participation in local governance and politics.

9. Indicate whether you think any of the underlisted measures are workable or unworkable.

i. Mutual support among women in politics and governance

Workable [] Unworkable []

ii. Establishing of women’s commission within the ministry of local government

Workable [] Unworkable []

iii. Adoption of laws on affirmative action within political parties

Workable [] Unworkable []

iv. The enforcement of existing laws on affirmative action

Workable [] Unworkable []

v. Political parties should build capacity for women within them (supporters, members, candidates, elected women, etc.)

Workable [] Unworkable []

vi. There should be support for women’s economic empowerment

Workable [] Unworkable []

vii. Lastly, political parties should enhance women’s upward moves through the party hierarchy.

Workable [] Unworkable []

viii. Creating funds for women elected leaders, candidates and business women.

Workable [] Unworkable []

ix. Women should have confidence in themselves.

Workable [] Unworkable []

x. Establish community infrastructures including nurseries and kindergartens where both men and women share their responsibilities on child's development

Workable [] Unworkable []

xi. Women should form women's caucuses to push/lobby for the inclusion of affirmative actions

Workable [] Unworkable []

xii. Women should form alliances with civil society, business women, religious leaders, and others (from the local, the national, the regional to the global level)

Workable [] Unworkable []

xiii. Other measures, specify them:.....

.....

.....

.....