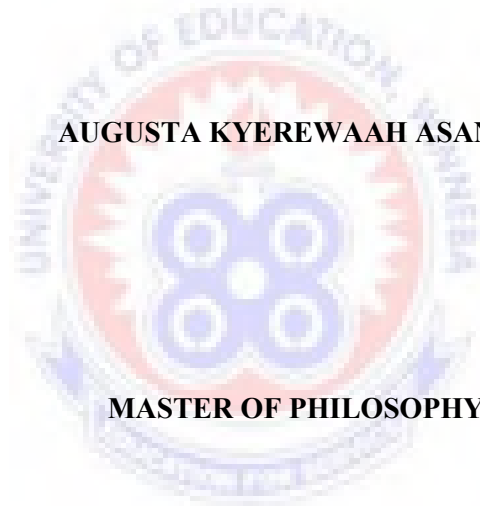


UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

**WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN LOCAL LEVEL GOVERNANCE IN SELECTED
DISTRICTS IN THE CENTRAL REGION OF GHANA**

AUGUSTA KYEREWAAH ASANTE



MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY

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**AUGUSTA KYEREWAAH ASANTE
(8180140022)**



**A Dissertation in the Department of Social Studies Education,
Faculty of Social Science Education, Submitted to the School of
Graduate Studies, In Partial Fulfillment**

**of the Requirement for the Award of the Degree of
Master of Philosophy
(Social Studies Education)
in the University of Education, Winneba**

AUGUST, 2020

DECLARATION

Student's Declaration

I, Augusta Kyerewaah Asante, declare that this thesis, with the exception of quotations and references contained in published works which have all been identified and acknowledged, is entirely my own original work, and it has not been submitted, either in part or whole for another degree elsewhere.

Signature:.....

Date.....

Supervisor's Declaration

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of this work was supervised in accordance with guidance for supervision of thesis as laid down by School of Research and Graduate Studies, University of Education, Winneba.

Dr. Lucy Effeh Attom (Supervisor)

Signature:.....

Date.....

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The content of this work has been made possible through the effort, time, support and expertise of a number of people. First of all, I am highly indebted to all the authors whose works I quoted either directly or indirectly. I also wish to express my profound gratitude to my supervisor, Dr. Lucy Effeh Attom, for her painstaking efforts, insight, guidance and professional expertise, and to my internal assessor, Dr. Joseph Ignatius Obeng for his critical proof reading.

I owe a great debt of gratitude to Professor Yaw Ofosu-Kusi, Dean, School of Management Science, University of Energy and Natural Resources, Sunyani, for his guidance, constructive criticisms and invaluable suggestions. I am very grateful to Mr. Samuel Poatob, a lecturer in the Department of Social Studies Education, for his time, encouragement and guidance. I thank all these people for their immense contributions which have culminated in no small way to the completion of this thesis.

Special thanks also go to Nkansah Isaac, for propping me on anytime despair crept in. I am grateful to David for leading me to all the women Assembly members in the various districts. I also wish to thank all the women Assembly members and their husbands, for availing themselves for the study. Finally, I wish to acknowledge the encouragements of my mother, Lucy Boateng, my father, Henry Owusu Asante, my siblings and all my friends that enabled me to complete this study.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my parents, Henry Owusu Asante and Lucy Boateng for their support.



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Content	Page
DECLARATION	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iv
DEDICATION	v
TABLE OF CONTENTS	vi
LIST OF TABLES	ix
LIST OF FIGURES	x
ABSTRACT	xi
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Background to the study	1
1.2 Statement of the problem	7
1.3 The Purpose of the Study	8
1.4 The Objectives of the Study	9
1.5 Research Questions	9
1.6 Significance of the Study	9
1.7 Organization of the Study	10
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW	12
2.0 Introduction	12
2.1 The Meaning of Decentralization	12
2.2 Dimensions of Decentralization	13
2.3 Decentralization in Ghana	20
2.4 Local Government System in Ghana	24
2.5 Theories of Gender	27
2.6 Socio-Economic Factors that affects Women's Participation in Local Level Governance	54
2.7 Cultural Barriers that affect Women's Participation in Local Level Governance	57

2.8 Religious Barriers that affect Women’s Participation in Local Level Governance	65
2.9 Avenues that Support Women’s Participation in Local Level Governance	66
2.9 Conceptual Framework	71
2.10 Summary	72
CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY	75
3.0 Introduction	75
3.1 Research Design	75
3.2 Method of Data Analysis	79
3.3 Trustworthiness of the Study	80
3.4 Ethical Consideration	82
3.5 Chapter Summary	83
CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION	84
4.0 Introduction	84
4.1 Background Information of Respondents	84
4.2. Socio-Economic Factors	90
4.3. Cultural Barriers	97
4.4 Religious Barriers	102
4.5 Existing Avenues that Support Women in Local Level Politics	105
4.5 Enabling Factors	108
4.6 Challenging Factors	115
4.7 Chapter Summary	120
CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	122
5.0 Introduction	122
5.1 Summary	122
5.2 Major Findings	123

5.3 Conclusions	124
5.4 Recommendations	125
5.5 Suggestions for further studies	126
REFERENCES	127
APPENDICES	144



LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1: Demographic Data of Participants	85
2 : District of Participants	89



LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
Figure 1: The Local Government Structure	26
Figure 2: Conceptual Framework	71



ABSTRACT

Calls for more female participation in politics have been featured strongly in developed and developing countries since 1975, when the United Nations made women's issues a priority. However, women still face challenges in their quest to participate in local level politics. The objectives of the study were to examine the socio-economic factors that affect women's participation in local level governance; identify the cultural barriers that affect women's participation in local level governance; determine the religious barriers that affect women's participation in local level governance; and to explore the avenues that exist to support women in local level governance in the Central Region of Ghana. The qualitative approach was employed for this study, and an interview guide was used to gather data from 11 women assembly members and two husbands of two women assembly members, making a total of 13 participants. The participants were sampled using purposive, snowball and convenient sampling techniques. The data was analysed thematically. The study identified lack of self-confidence, limited funds, unsupportive family, abuse and harassment, political affiliations in the Assembly and unsupportive religious organizations as the socio-economic, cultural and religious barriers to women participation in local level governance in Agona West, Gomoa West and Gomoa Central districts in the Central Region of Ghana. The findings from the study also showed that though there are some avenues such as NGOs, NCCE and Abantu for development that support women in local level politics, such avenues are not enough and, therefore, more of such avenues should be created in every electoral area. While patriarchal beliefs still abound in society, some women have been empowered through education and have been able to build strong social capital to resist patriarchy and overcome barriers to involve themselves in local politics. The study recommend that special development fund should be set up by the government to support Assembly women to perform their roles and responsibilities within their communities. Such funds may help them fulfil their promises, which may encourage them to seek re-election that may maintain the few elected Assembly women in the District Assemblies. In addition, Civil society and Non-governmental organizations should support women to participate in local level governance in the Gomoa West, Agona West and the Gomoa Central Districts in the Central Region of Ghana.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the study

Women's position in the political sphere was invoked by women activists in the United States as early as 1848, when they convened the first women's rights Convention in Seneca Falls, New York (Ballington, Davies, Reith, Mitchell, Njoki, Kozma & Powley 2012). The Activists created a Declaration of Sentiments, demanding equality and called for women's suffrage because women contribute to the development of society (Ballington *et al.*, 2012). Since then, political participation of women in governance systems have been one of the major issues in the international community.

International advocacy for gender equality increased to reduce gender differences, particularly when the United Nations organized Conferences on women. In the early days of the activism, the International Conferences were held every 5 years and then every 10 years in selected countries, including Mexico in Mexico City, in 1975; Denmark, Copenhagen, in 1980; Kenya, Nairobi in 1985; and China, Beijing in 1995 (Hobbs, 2011; Horn, 2013; UNWOMEN, 2016).

Since the 1980s, there have been constant calls to address gender inequality and the need to achieve equal status between women and men in political representation in local and national governments (Boex & Simatupang, 2015; Kaliniuk & Schozodaeva, 2012; Urbinati, 2006). Each international conference has been larger and more significant. For instance, the first World Conference on Women (WCW) that took place in Mexico in 1975 occurred at the same time with the International Women's Year celebrations, and the United Nations Celebration of the Decade for Women (Moghadam, 2003). It was during the first of such conference in 1975 that the organizers opened a global

dialogue on gender equality, and thereby launched a new era in global efforts to promote the advancement of women (Ballington *et al.*, 2012). As a result, the UN General Assembly's aim to ensure gender equality recognized three key objectives: the elimination of discrimination; increasing the participation of women in development; and increasing the contribution of women to world peace.

During its conferences on women held in 1975, 1980 and 1985, the UN also mandated governments of member countries to formulate national strategies to promote equal participation of women in all facets of life. After the UN designated 1975-1985 as the Decade for Women, 127 Member States responded by establishing some form of political machinery, through institutions to deal with the promotion of related policy, research and programmes. This initiative was broadened on 18 December 1979, when 189 member states signed the United Nation's Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) to comply with the UN conventions on gender equality (Hayes, 2005; Njogu & Orchardson-Mazrui, 2013). CEDAW was a landmark international agreement which continues to be a valuable vehicle for each country to use to achieve progress for women and girls in all areas of society to advance female's empowerment (Fraser & Kazantsis, 1992; Njogu & Orchardson-Mazrui, 2013). Hence, women's leadership and effective participation have increasingly been on the agenda of governments, bilateral and multi-lateral agencies, and nongovernmental organizations such as feminist movements and women's rights groups (Brenya & Akuamoah, 2015).

Evidence from programs and research indicates the vital role women play as key actors and decision makers in the development process across a wide range of sectors (Brenya & Akuamoah, 2015). However, in most countries, political space for women's

participation have been circumscribed. In the political sphere in particular, there is a growing momentum among governments to foster and ensure women's participation and leadership in governance structures. Establishing quotas for women's representation at different levels of governance has been a strategic tactic in achieving this goal in many countries. The possibility for citizens to participate in the management of public affairs is at the very heart of democracy. In the majority of countries however, the political arena remains largely dominated by men, and is even an exclusively male bastion in some countries (Brenya & Akuamoah, 2015). This neglects a fundamental principle of democracy, which the Inter-Parliamentary Union which adopted the Universal Declaration of Democracy incorporated in the document. The declaration indicates that the achievement of democracy presupposes a genuine partnership between men and women in the conduct of the affairs of society in which they work in equality and complementarity, drawing mutual enrichment from their differences. Political participation could be influenced by many factors such as sex, caste, social status, education, income, age and family background (Brenya & Akuamoah, 2015). It has been observed that the process of development has failed to improve the social position of the underprivileged section in general and women in particular (Brenya & Akuamoah, 2015). Greater participation in development is, therefore, considered as an important factor in reversing the ongoing trend that signifies unequal social, economic and political position of men and women (Brenya & Akuamoah, 2015).

There have been several efforts by international organizations to boost women's participation in politics. For instance, the Beijing Conference agreement, known as the Platform for Action, dubbed women in power and decision making, is one of the vital areas of concern. It made two essential commitments to change. First, it called for

measures that would ensure women's equal access to, and full participation in power structures and decision making. Political quotas or positive measures are examples of these. Second, the Platform urged states to increase women's ability to participate. Training on leadership, public speaking and political campaigning, for instance, can embolden women to compete, win and be good leaders who can inspire others (Brenya & Akuamoah, 2015).

Representation and participation of women in political position vary within and among countries. In its decision on the Universal Declaration on Human Rights and Women's Rights, the United Nations incorporated in their goals, conventions, resolutions and treaties, tasking member countries to ensure gender equality by having fair representation of women in decision making positions and governance systems. Improvement in women's political status and representation at all levels of decision making is also seen as fundamental for the achievement of both transparent and accountable government and sustainable development in all areas of life (United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 1995). The role of women has become discernible in every sphere of life. In Sweden and Rwanda, for example, there is a remarkable progress when it comes to women's representation and participation in governance (Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2013). In fact, equal representation of men and women in decision-making bodies in the local level administration of countries can be used to measure the country's level of development (Jayal, 2005). According to Kurebwa (2014), fair representation of women and men in the local government system is also very important to ensure potential development change among the people at the grassroots level administration.

In Ghana, the call to enhance gender equality in political decision making began in the 1960s when the first President of the First Republic, Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, through a Parliamentary Act, appointed 10 females into the National Assembly. By the 1980s and early 1990s, the call for an increase in women's representation had been intensified in the whole of sub-Saharan Africa (Manuh, 2011). However, gender inequality across all elected and appointed positions persisted (Paxton, Kunovich, & Hughes, 2007). After one and half centuries since women's rights convention in Seneca Falls in the United States, women's representation in the decision-making process in many parts of the world is still dismal. For example, in Saudi Arabia, after four years of the granting of equal voting rights, which was in September, 2011, it was only in 2015 that the women in the country were allowed to register to vote for the first time (al-Yami, 2015). This implies that women were under represented in the decision-making processes during the period when women were not elected into political positions ((Paxton et al., 2007). In an African country such as Senegal, women have not realized the same gains in political decision-making positions as has observed in Rwanda, Mozambique and South Africa (Bauer & Britton, 2006). Similarly, in Ghana, women are not equally or fairly represented in the District Assemblies even though they constitute a majority of the population (Baah-Enumh, Owusu, & Kokor, 2005; GSS, 2012; Tsikata, 2009). The under representation of women in governance is a matter of grave concern. For instance, the 2010 District Assembly elections in Ghana recorded 412 (7.95%) female representatives, which is not even up to ten percent of the total number of 6093 persons elected into the 216 District Assemblies (Yobo, 2012).

Efforts have been made at international conferences to rectify the situation by calling on all nations to bring gender equity into all decision- making bodies. Ghana has been active in this regard and has been a signatory to many of the international conventions

which call for increased participation of women in decision-making at all levels. In compliance, therefore, programs have been developed to promote women's involvement in the decision-making process. For example, the then National Commission on Women and Development (NCWD) was set up in 1975 to ensure that the objectives of the International Women's Year and those of the UN Decade for Women were achieved in Ghana. Thus, between 1975 and 1986, Ghana initiated programs, projects and activities to increase the level of women's participation in public life at the local and national levels, to enhance their access to formal education and professional training, to improve upon their standard of living and their status in society by increasing their income earning capacity. These programs were aimed at generating in women, the confidence in their own capabilities; enhancing their self-esteem by making them participate actively in and contribute effectively to the development of their individual communities (Awumbila, 2001).

Although few women have been elected to the District Assemblies, there is limited literature on the barriers to the participation of women in governance at the district assemblies when it comes to how different women are. Earlier researchers have tended to concentrate on obstacles to women's participation in local and national politics to the neglect of the heterogeneity of women and their diverse needs. Although there is enormous literature on the causes of women's low representation in national and local governance by scholars such as Ballington (2012), Brenya and Akuamoah (2015), Offei-Aboagye (2000), and Cracknell, Groat and Marshall (2014), this current study attempts to make a contribution by presenting and analyzing lived experiences of women with different socio-economic backgrounds and cultural and religious prejudice they sometimes face. But, in particular, this current study focused on women who have contested and won District Assembly elections, those who have contested and lost and

past members of District Assemblies in the study area, specifically Agona West, Gomoa West and Gomoa Central districts. The study looked at the challenges the women encounter as females in a political sphere usually dominated by men, and how they navigate the adversities and challenges to fulfil their personal aspirations as well as make contribution to the development of their communities.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Statistically, population census around the world show that there are more women than men in the majority of countries. The most recent population census in Ghana for example, found that women constitute 51.2% of the total population (Ghana Statistical Service (GSS), 2012). Besides, there is greater visibility for women now as their's roles have become increasingly public, thereby, increasing the proportion of women in the labour force. This development is attributable to many factors, but the most prominent is the fact that women have better and increasing educational opportunities now than ever before (Brenya & Akuamoah, 2015). Nevertheless, women make up just under half of the civil and public services, despite their educational opportunities (Abdul-Razak, Prince & Iliasu, 2014) and despite their potential to make meaningful contributions to the social, economic and political development of the country. This awareness has engendered efforts by governments, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), multilateral institutions and individuals at the micro and macro levels, to actualize those potentials (Brenya & Akuamoah, 2015). In fact, the quest for equal participation and creation of gender-sensitive policies in local governance and decision-making processes can only be realized through greater access and empowerment to women. Unfortunately, women are under-represented in politics, and they constantly face a number of obstacles that range from cultural exclusions to the resistance of key political institutions and

mechanisms to creating gender balanced local administrations (Brenya & Akuamoah, 2015).

While some works have already been done on limited access of women to political office (Ballington 2012, Brenya & Akuamoah 2015, Offei-Aboagye 2000, and Cracknell, Groat; Marshall 2014), we know less about limited access of women from different social, economic, cultural and religious background taking into accounts women from Islamic background as against women from Christian background, married women as against unmarried and literates as against illiterates. People see women as homogeneous beings, (Ballington 2012, Brenya & Akuamoah 2015, Offei-Aboagye 2000; Cracknell, Groat & Marshall 2014), but women are heterogeneous in nature and, therefore, what may be a barrier to a Muslim woman may not be a barrier to a Christian woman and vice versa. There is, therefore, the need to look at the barriers that affect women's representation and participation in local governance, taking into consideration the heterogeneity of women. In the Agona West, Gomoa West and Gomoa Central districts in the Central Region, there are barriers that hinder women from participating in local politics and the researcher seeks to identify and examine such barriers since there is paucity of literature in such districts.

1.3 The Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine women's participation in local level governance in selected districts in the Central Region of Ghana.

1.4 The Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study were to:

- i. examine the socio-economic factors that affect women's participation in local level governance in the Central Region of Ghana.
- ii. identify the cultural barriers that affect women's participation in local level governance in Central Region of Ghana.
- iii. determine the religious barriers that affect women's participation in local level governance in the Central Region of Ghana.
- iv. explore the existing avenues that support women as they participate in local level governance in the Central Region of Ghana.

1.5 Research Questions

The study was guided by the following:

- i. What are the socio-economic factors that affect women's participation in local level governance in the Central Region of Ghana?
- ii. What are the cultural barriers that affect women's participation in local level governance in the Central Region of Ghana?
- iii. What are the religious barriers that affect women's participation in local level governance in the Central Region of Ghana?
- iv. What are the existing avenues that support women as they participate in local governance in the Central Region of Ghana?

1.6 Significance of the Study

Development cannot be realized without the very significant component of women's contribution to governance, development and gender issues (Muleya, 2012). Almost all progressive societies have well-documented stories of the contributions women make

towards development as they aspire to decision-making offices (Mahamadu, 2010). The outcome of this study will, therefore, assist to identify the various factors that support women's political activities and their success at the local level in the Central Region. The study seeks to contribute to the existing literature on women's participation in governance at the district assemblies by identifying the issues associated with the quest for equal representation of females and males in decision-making positions. The study presents an account of the experiences of women navigating politics within socio-cultural institutions to empower themselves politically. It is also hoped that the present study will encourage other women to pay attention to successful women in government, which may attract them to have the interest in local politics. This study will also encourage policy makers to make policies that will help empower women to be represented and participate fully in local government politics to encourage them to contribute their quota to national development.

1.7 Organization of the Study

The thesis has been organised in the following way. Chapter One concentrates on the introduction to the study and it covers the background to the study, problem statement, purpose, objectives, research questions and the significance of the study. Chapter Two focuses on a review of literature related to the study with emphasis on decentralization programme of Ghana, overview of local level governance in Ghana. It also discusses the gender theories, among others. A conceptual framework for the study derived from the theoretical discussions is also presented in Chapter Two. Chapter Three presents the methodology employed for this study. It specifically, discusses the research design, population, study area, sample and sampling procedures, data collection instruments, data collection procedures, methods of data analysis, trustworthiness of the study and ethical considerations. Chapter Four presents the findings and discussion of the study.

The focus is on presenting the results obtained through the administration of the research instrument. Chapter Five is about summary of the study, conclusions drawn and recommendations made in relation to the study as well as a suggestion for further studies.



CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter concentrated on a review of relevant literature related to the study and contains information gathered from books, online sources and varied documents. It provides the researcher with the necessary background knowledge on the study. It is organized under sub-headings, including the concept of decentralization in Ghana, overview of Local government system in Ghana, theories of gender, socio-economic, cultural and religious barriers, avenues the exist to support women as they participate in local level governance as well as the conceptual framework of the study.

2.1 The Meaning of Decentralization

The concept of decentralization is difficult to define, due to the different meanings attached to it, the context in which it is used and the characteristics of the person or institution using it (Rondinelli & Cheema, 1983). Jutting, Corsi, Kauffmann, McDonnell, Osterrieder, Pinaud and Wegner, (2005) broadly defined decentralization as embracing the transfer of power and resources from higher tiers to lower tiers of government. Johnson (2001) defined democratic decentralization as meaningful authority devolved to local units of governance that are accessible and accountable to the local citizenry, who enjoy full political rights and liberty. Smith (1986) referred to the concept as reversing the concentration of administration at a single center and conferring powers on local government. Koehn (1995, p.72) maintained that “fundamentally genuine decentralization involves the process of transferring power”. Decentralizing governance is the restructuring or reorganization of authority so that there is a system of co-responsibility between institutions of governance at the central,

regional and local levels according to the principle of subsidiarity, thus increasing the overall quality and effectiveness of the system of governance, while increasing the authority and capabilities of sub-national levels (UNDP, 1997).

Other authors view decentralization as a process. Falleti (2004) defined decentralization as a process of state reforms. It is a series of political reforms aiming for the transfer of responsibilities, resources and authority from higher level to lower levels of state. Decentralization does not include the transfer of authority among non-state actors (Falleti, 2004 cited in Ozmen, 2014). The World Bank defined decentralization as the process of transferring responsibility, authority, and accountability for specific or broad management functions to lower levels within an organization, system, or programme. Decentralization is, thus the transfer of administrative and financial authority and responsibility for governance and public service delivery from a higher level of government to a lower level. The precise dimension or ambition, appellation, level of responsibility, and set of government authorities involved varies widely by different countries (World Bank, 2016).

2.2 Dimensions of Decentralization

Decentralization can be categorized into four main types involving a variety of forms, namely political, administrative, fiscal and market (Litvac, Jennie & Jessica, 1999). Each type of decentralization has a unique characteristic, policy implication and conditions for success (Naab, 2005).

2.2.1 Political Decentralization

Political decentralization aims to give citizens and their elected representatives more power in public decision making. It is often associated with pluralistic politics and representative government, but it can also support democratization by giving citizens

or their representatives more influence in formulating and implementing policies (Furniss, 1974; Harrigan, 1994). Advocates for political decentralization assume that decisions made with greater participation will be better informed and relevant to diverse needs in the society than those made only by national political authorities. Political decentralization concept implies that, the selection of representatives from local electoral jurisdictions allow citizens to know their political representatives better and this allows elected officials to know the needs and desires of their constituents better. Political decentralization often requires constitutional or statutory reforms, development of pluralistic political parties, strengthening of legislatures, creation of local political units and encouragement of effective public interest groups (Naab, 2005).

Political decentralization is the transfer of powers and resources to sub-national authorities which are “(a) largely or wholly independent of the central government and (b) democratically elected” (Manor 1995, Pp. 81-2). A fully developed system of political decentralization in Ghana is a situation where local people in the districts and regions elect their own legislative and executive personnel so that those units will be able to hire, pay and dismiss administrative personnel without reference to central authority (Antwi-Bosiako, 2010).

Administratively, political decentralization empowers citizens to “play a larger role in regional governance... including conflict resolution” (Duncan, 2007 p. 727). This empowerment, unfortunately, is lacking in the current political process, where the executive has the exclusive power to appoint district and regional leaders. The literature affirms that political appointees are subject to the whims (Klingner & Nalbandian, 1998) of the central government. Generally, empirical studies tend to favor political decentralization over centralization in terms of innovation, leadership accountability

and responsiveness (Taylor, 2003). This assertion, according to Taylor, has become a sort of accepted wisdom among social scientists. Nevertheless, given the theoretical support by social scientists, a general correlation between political decentralization and innovation is yet to be firmly established.

2.2.2 Administrative Decentralization

Administrative decentralization seeks to redistribute authority, responsibility and financial resources for providing public services among different levels of government. It is, thus the transfer of responsibility for planning, financing and managing certain public functions from the central government and its agencies to subordinate units or levels of government. These levels include semi- autonomous public authorities or corporations; or area-wide, regional or functional authorities.

2.2.2.1 Forms of Administrative Decentralization

There are three major forms of administrative decentralization with different functions and these are deconcentration, devolution and delegation. These are explained below:

(i) Deconcentration

Deconcentration refers to a central government that distributes the responsibility to provincial organization within the scope of a particular policy. According to Schneider (2003), this transfer function affects the geographical distribution of authority, but does not significantly change the autonomy of the entity that receives the authority. Under deconcentration arrangements, the central government retains authority over the field office, and exercises that authority through the hierarchical channels of the central government bureaucracy. Deconcentration allows only moderately more autonomy than centralized systems. Deconcentration is a form of network of central power and sub-state institutions, comprising the elites of those constituencies. Assibey (2000) was

of the view that deconcentration is a power sharing strategy where power is transferred from central operating agencies to regional ones. The central government under such a concept uses the local governments to improve efficiency and effectiveness of delivering services (Cheema & Rondinelli, 1983). Rondinelli (1981) argued that deconcentration takes place as long as the central government disperses certain responsibilities of services to the regional and local governments. Deconcentration involves the least amount of autonomy, delegation slightly more, and devolution the most (Schneider, 2003).

(ii) Delegation

Delegation is the transfer of policy responsibility to local governments or semi-autonomous organizations that are not controlled by the central government, but remain accountable to it (Schneider, 2003). According to Ayee (2000), delegation seeks to transfer services and responsibilities from central government agencies to specialized organizations with some degree of autonomy. Governments delegate responsibilities when they create public enterprises or corporations, housing authorities, transportation authorities, special service districts, semi-autonomous school districts, regional development corporations or special project implementation units. These organizations usually have a great deal of privacy in decision making. They may be exempted from restrictions on regular civil service personnel, and may be able to charge users directly for their services.

(iii) Devolution

Devolution is the transfer of authority for decision-making, finance and management to quasi-autonomous units of local government with corporate status. Compared to the other two forms of administrative decentralization, devolution provides the greatest

degree of autonomy for the local units. The local unit is only accountable to the central government because the latter can impose its will by threatening to withhold resources or responsibility from the local units (Schneider, 2003). In a devolved system, local governments have clear and legally recognized geographical boundaries over which they exercise authority and within which they perform public functions. It is this type of administrative decentralization that underlies most political decentralization.

2.2.3 Fiscal Decentralization

Financial responsibility is a very important part of decentralization. For private organizations and local governments to discharge their decentralization functions effectively, they must have an adequate level of revenue either locally raised or transferred from the central government. They must also have the authority to make decisions about expenditures. The fiscal dimension involves intergovernmental fiscal relations where central government or higher levels of government shift some responsibilities, constitutional and statutory powers of expenditure, taxation and budget to lower levels of government for execution of programmes and projects (Ozmen, 2014; Worldbank.org, 2016).

Fiscal decentralization refers to a series of policies designed to increase the financial autonomy of sub-national governments (Falleti, 2004 cited in Ozmen, 2014). If local governments and private organizations are to carry out decentralized functions effectively, they must have adequate revenues transferred from the central government as well as the authority to make expenditure decisions (Rondinelli, 1999 cited in Ozmen, 2014). According to Naab (1999), there are many forms of fiscal decentralization which include self-financing or cost recovery through user charges; co-financing or co-production in which users participate in providing services and

infrastructure through monetary or labor contributions; expansion of local revenues through property or sale taxes. It also includes indirect charges; inter governmental transfers of general revenues from taxes collected by the central government to local governments for general or specific uses; and authorization of municipal borrowing and mobilization of national or local government resources through loan guarantees.

Under a fiscally decentralized system, there is more effective and productive use of resources because the local authorities can determine consumer preferences more easily and offer goods and services that satisfy those preferences. Also, local governments are easily held accountable by the citizenry (Durmus, 2006 cited in Ozmen, 2014). In many developing countries, even though local governments or administrative units have the legal authority to impose taxes, the tax base is very weak, and the dependence on central government subsidies is so ingrained that no attempt is made to exercise that authority (Litvack *et al.* 1999). Fiscal decentralization is usually considered more important and difficult to pursue among the types of decentralization. But as pointed out, fiscal decentralization is the fuel that runs the engine of decentralization. According to Berg (2004), the success of decentralization reforms hinges on the way fiscal decentralization is designed and implemented. Fiscal decentralization, according to Bardhan (1997), largely involves assignment of expenditures and revenues to lower-level governments. Fiscal decentralization comprises the assignment of responsibilities, including sectorial functions, as well as the assignment of own-source revenues to sub-national governments (Smoke, 2003).

2.2.4 Market Decentralization

Market decentralization refers to the creation of conditions that allow goods and services to be produced and provided by market mechanisms sensitive to the preferences

of individuals. The most complete forms of decentralization from a government's perspective are privatization and deregulation (Naab, 2005). This is where governments shift responsibility for functions from the public to the private sector allowing functions that had been exclusively the responsibility of government to be carried out by private businesses, community groups, cooperatives, private voluntary associations and other non-governmental organizations.

According to Naab (2005), privatization and deregulation are usually accompanied by economic liberalization and market development policies. Privatization can range in scope from leaving the provision of goods and services entirely to the free operation of the market public-private partnership in which government and the private sector cooperate to provide services and infrastructure. Privatization can be referred to as allowing private enterprises to perform functions that had previously been monopolized by governments. It can also contract out the provision or management of public services or facilities to commercial enterprises. There is a wide range of ways in which duties can be organized within the public sector through the capital market with adequate regulation or measures to prevent situations where the central government bears the risk and allows private or organizations to participate. Privatization also transfers responsibility for producing services from the public to the private sector through the divestiture of state-owned enterprises.

Deregulation reduces the legal constraints on private participation in service provision and allows competition among private suppliers for services that in the past had been provided by the government or by regulated monopolies. In recent years, privatization and deregulation have become more attractive alternatives to governments in

developing countries. Local governments are also privatizing by contracting out service provision or administration.

2.3 Decentralization in Ghana

Decentralization is an essential component of democratic reforms in many parts of the developing world. The decentralization process has been vigorously promoted in Africa and other parts of the developing world mainly by donor agencies or countries (Chibba, 2009; Green, 2010). The history of decentralization in Ghana is traced back to the introduction of indirect rule by the British colonial authorities in 1878, lasting until 1951 (Ayee, 2000). During this period, the colonial administration ruled indirectly through the native political institution (i.e. the chiefs), by constituting the chief and elders in a given district as the local authority, with powers “to establish treasuries, appoint staff and perform local government functions” (Nkrumah 2000, p. 55). Nkrumah (2000) further made the interesting observation that, under indirect rule, downward accountability of chiefs to the people was replaced by upward accountability to the colonial authorities “the democratic ideals underlying chieftaincy in Ghana, which made chiefs accountable to their peoples, began to suffer as the recognition by the central government was more crucial to the chief than the support of his people” (Nkrumah 2000, p. 57). Thus, there were some echoes here, as well as obvious differences, with relations in the contemporary period between central and local government in Ghana, dispelling any lingering notions of a necessary association between decentralization and democracy, and confirming how decentralization can be used as a political mechanism by ruling political elites to reinforce their control. In the post-independence period from 1957 onwards, local government was generally weak and subject to the centralization of power that was typical of the post-colonial state in Africa (Tordoff, 1997).

Attempts at decentralization reforms were introduced at different times, for instance, in 1974, under the military regime of Lt. Col. Acheampong, generally characterized by deconcentration, and aimed at strengthening central government control at the local level (Nkrumah 2000, p. 58). A historical aspect was the decentralization reforms introduced in the early period of Rawlings' military rule (1981-92). In 1983, Rawlings' PNDC government announced a policy of administrative decentralization of central government ministries, alongside the creation of People's Defense Committees (PDCs) in each town and village. The PDCs, made up of local PNDC activists as self-identified defenders of the 'revolution', effectively took over local government responsibilities, though often limited to mobilizing the implementation of local self-help projects (Nkrumah 2000), while the deconcentrated ministries played a more significant role. Ayee (2000) noted that despite the PNDC's populist rhetoric, its interest in decentralization reflected that of previous regimes, that is, an interest in the administrative decentralization of central government and not the devolution of political authority to the local level. Additionally, Ayee (2000, p. 49) further perceived a key feature of local governance in the pre-1988 period as a dual hierarchical structure in which central and local government institutions "operated in parallel", but with encroachment at times by better-resourced central government on the roles and responsibilities of under-resourced local government.

Ghana's current programme of decentralization was initiated prior to the national democratic transition in the early 1990s. In 1988, the PNDC government introduced a major piece of legislative reform, the Local Government Law (PNDC Law 207). This created 110 designated districts within Ghana's ten regions, with non-partisan District Assembly (DA) elections held initially in 1988/89 and subsequently, held every four

years. In addition to the two-thirds of DA members elected on an individual, non-party basis, one-third was appointed by the central government, along with a Chief Executive for each district (Pinkney 1997). The stated aim of the 1988 Local Government Law was “to promote popular participation and ownership of the machinery of government... by devolving power, competence and resources/means to the district level” (cited in Map Consult, 2002, p. 35). Oquaye (2001, p. 36) suggested “this decentralization exercise was largely introduced to satisfy donor demands”, but Ayee (2000) imputed different, self-serving motives. In his view, the real reason for the PNDC’s decentralization policy was an attempt to increase their legitimacy and simultaneously to rid themselves of political problems (Ayee 1994 as cited in Pinkney 1997). Ghana introduced decentralization in 1988 with the ultimate purpose of supporting participatory governance and improving service delivery and financial management to facilitate the achievement of a rapid socio-economic development (Ohene-Konadu, 2001).

The devolution of power, authority and financial resources to local units of government has been promoted as part of efforts to overcome the inefficiencies associated with the centralized system of governance (Smoke, 2003; Muriisa, 2008). In the past three decades about 75 countries have attempted decentralization, however reasons for decentralization vary from one country to the other (Ahmed, Devarajan, Khemani & Shah, 2005). For instance, according to Akudugu (2012), decentralization has been pursued with the aim of bringing governance and development decision-making process closer to the ordinary citizen at the subnational level.

Aside governance, decentralization and the resultant local government has a developmental role, particularly at the sub-national level. Under the decentralization

framework, local governments become the principal agents of development at the local level. Also, decentralization has been promoted as part of efforts to enhance service delivery (Chikulo, 2007; Muriisa, 2008). Others see it as tool of poverty reduction (Asante & Ayee, 2008). It is believed that local governments are more inclined to design and implement pro-poor economic policies or programs than central governments. Local governments are thus facilitators of local development (Eckardt, 2008). Clearly, when well promoted, decentralization enhances governance and socio-economic development at the local level. Nonetheless, there is a gap between expectation and reality as far as decentralization is concerned. Although the contribution of decentralization has been acknowledged in certain areas, much more is expected from the process and its local government units, especially in the promotion of socio-economic development (Chinsinga, 2008; Crawford, 2008; Dijk, 2008). This has been blamed on a number of structural factors that confront the local government units.

Walle (2001) pointed out that democratization is always a complex process involving the interaction of agency and structural factors, domestic and international ones, and economic and noneconomic ones. Sometimes, the assignment of responsibilities to District Assemblies is done without regard to the complex set of challenges they face. In some instances, it has been realized that, the legal instruments that set up the decentralized units even constrain their potential (Olowu, 2003; Chinsinga, 2008; Steiner, 2008). In addition, the tendency of powerful local elites to use their knowledge or power to the disadvantage of the masses also affects the performance of local governments as far as decision making and service delivery are concerned (Olowu, 2003; Smoke, 2003; Hussein, 2004).

In some areas, poorly articulated fiscal decentralization or the absence of it has been blamed for the poor performance of local governments (Chinsinga, 2008; Steiner, 2008). Since finance is the life-wire of local governments, poor funding affects their capacity to effectively perform their expected functions (Steiner, 2008; Akudugu, 2012). Clearly, without properly defined fiscal decentralization, political and institutional decentralization would have little impact. Poorly articulated roles and resource deficiencies can cripple local governments and undermine incentives for local officials and elected representatives to perform effectively (Smoke, 2003). The inability of many local government authorities to effectively mobilize revenues locally compounds the situation. This has led to calls on central governments to give more meaning to the decentralization process, by promoting authentic fiscal decentralization or financially empower the local government units (Akudugu, 2013).

2.4 Local Government System in Ghana

Various commissions and committees from 1949 to 1982 reformed the local government system and made recommendations that underscored the importance of which the various governments attached to ensuring women's participation, empowerment and capacity building at the local level. These reforms in the local government systems resulted in the promulgation of the Local Government Law 1988, PNDC Law 207. Parliament amended the local government law 1988 (PNDC Law 207) in 1993, resulting in the passing of Act 462, 1993. The Act 462, 1993 continued to be strongly influenced by the PNDC Law 207 aimed at ensuring more equitable participation of ordinary people in governance at the local level (ABANTU for Development, 2003; Faguet, 2005). The Act 462, 1993 was also influenced, to a large extent, by Ghana's 1992 Constitution. Thus, Article 240 of the 1992 Constitution established the Local Government System. For instance, the Article 240 (1) of the

Constitution directs the State to have a system of Local Government Administration which should, as far as practicable, be decentralized. The provisions stated in Article 240 of the 1992 Constitution and Act 462 of 1993 were discussed by the government to indicate how they impacted on development at the local level. Consequently, section 10, 1-3 of Act 462 sanctioned the district assemblies, which were the highest administrative authorities at the local government level, to be responsible for the overall development of the communities through the exercise of deliberative, legislative and executive powers (Ofei-Aboagye, 2004; Boateng & Kosi, 2015). The Assemblies in all the regions of the country were to perform specific functions including planning, financing, budgeting, infrastructural development and internal security. As a result, people's habitation, markets, food, essential services, sanitation, environments, social interactions and even civic duty became the business of the District Assembly (Ofei-Aboagye, 2004). However, there is unequal representation of women in the decision-making processes associated with the business of the assemblies. The 16 administrative regions of Ghana, comprise Ashanti, Central, Eastern, Greater Accra, Northern, Upper East, Upper West, Volta, Savannah, Oti, Ahafo, Western North, Bono, Bono East, North East and Western. Each region has a Coordinating Council that is the highest regional administrative body. The regions are divided into metropolitan, sub-metropolitan, municipal and district assemblies (MMDAs) (AU, 2012). Unless expressly stated, the mention of a district in this study means either Metropolitan, Municipal or District (Ahwoi, 2010). As at 2017, the number of districts was 216 to function under the local government system. The President of Ghana appoints the Regional Minister to head the Regional Coordinating Council (RCC) to be responsible for the coordination and harmonization of plans and programs of MMDAs under the local government system. The local government system and structure are directly linked

to the central government in an intricately balanced five-tier system of public administration and the allocation of functions (Ahwoi, 2010).

The President in consultation with traditional authorities in various elected areas appoints 30 percent of members of the District Assemblies (Institute of Local Government Studies [ILGS], 2010; Sana, 2011). Half of the 30 percent appointed positions are to be reserved for women, which does not happen all the time as no legal instrument backs the directives. The remaining 70 percent of members of MMDAs are directly elected by universal adult suffrage during Metropolitan/Municipal/District Assembly elections (DAEs) for a four-year term in office. The government, in consultation with the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development (MLGRD) establishes a Metropolitan Assembly in each urban area with a population over 250,000 and a Municipal Assembly with a population of 95,000 or more. The local government structure is outlined in Figure 1 below:

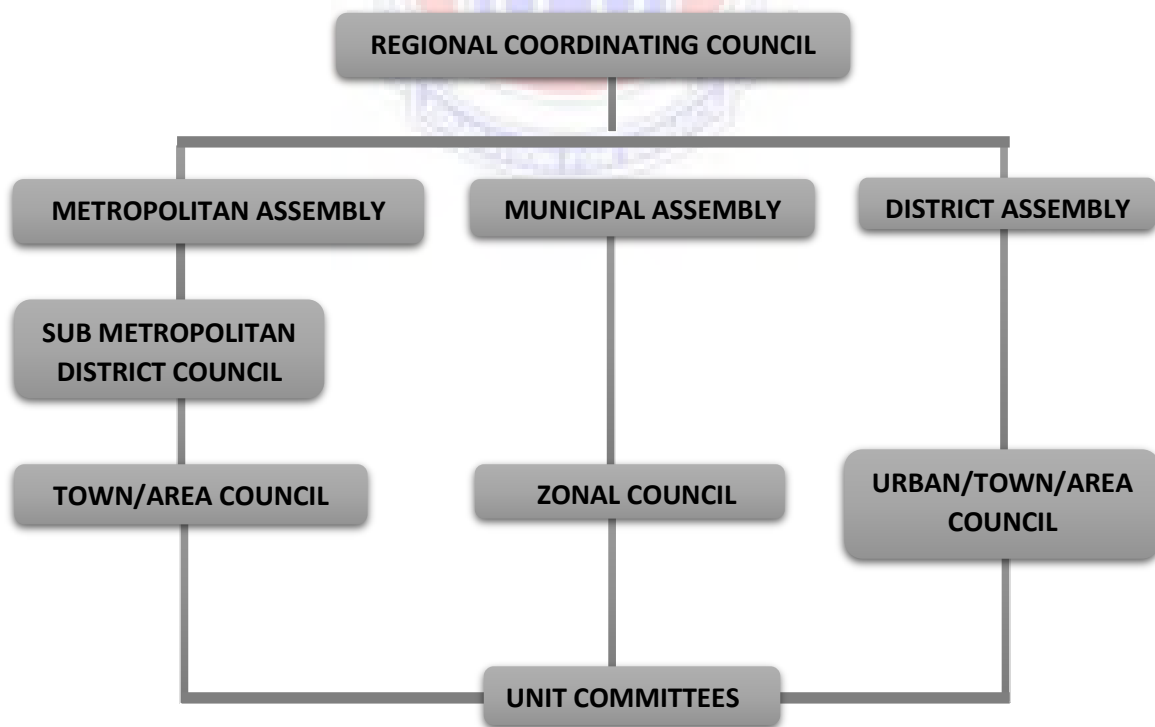


Figure 1: The Local Government Structure

Source: Introduction to Ghana's Local Government System, ILGS, 2008

2.5 Theories of Gender

Research on women and gender theories is oriented towards encouraging learning and action for an equitable world. The application of knowledge of such theories in a study can improve the well-being of people (Parpart, Connelly & Barriteau, 2000). Gender theories in development connote that women's political development is to bring about equal participation in politics, which could be enhanced through empowerment and their social capital to resist the obstructing factors in society.

2.5.1 The Social Capital Theory

Getting access to political power requires long-term investment in relationships, building constituencies and creating supporters who would not only vote but would also take the initiatives, and address the concerns of a candidate (Birch, 2003). Many approaches have been proposed to explain political participation, and one is the Agency Theory, which focuses on traditional mobilizing of organizations in civic society (Norris, 2002). Putnam's account of political participation emphasized the role of social capital, which falls into agency theories regarding social networks and active citizenships including parties, unions, and voluntary associations (Norris, 2002).

The idea of the Social Capital Theory can be traced to the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and has been in use for over a century (Adam & Roncevic, 2003). The theory was first published in a book in 1916 in the United States. Lyda Judson Hanifan (1879-1932) has been credited with the introduction of social capital as a concept and theory (Kreuter & Lezin, 2002; Putnam, 2001). The practice and ideas behind the use of the theory as discussed in her work described how in some part of the United States, neighbours commonly worked together for social benefits, including supervising community schools so that their children could attend and acquire an education (Keeley,

2007). Since then, and as a result of the writings of Bourdieu (1986), Coleman (1988) and Putnam (1993), the Social Capital Theory has gained popularity (Claridge, 2004; Walters, 2002). Putnam, a political scientist, also discussed social capital and its development within political sociology, emphasizing civic responsibility, participation and associational life for the health of democracies (Putnam, 1993). Putnam's concept is regarded as having contributed to a revival of intellectual interest in civil society (Walters, 2002).

Concerning its origin and contemporary situation, the Social Capital Theory combines the very modern language of networks with a much older register of a community. As a key concept in the social sciences, social capital is subject to competing definitions (Walters, 2002). Lollo (2012) asserted that when examining major definitions of social capital, the same ideas reoccurred across time but also reflected their timing, such as in the seventies (Loury, 1977). Others reflected ideas in the eighties (Bourdieu, 1980; Coleman, 1988), the nineties (Burt, 1997; Knack & Keefer, 1997; Putnam, Leonardi & Nanetti, 1994), and within the millennium (Macke & Dilly, 2010). Although different authors approached social capital with varied explanations, the focuses remained on relationships, social networking, links, norms, rules, shared values, trust, understanding and community. Social capital can be the resources available in, and through personal and business networks, and relationships (Muir, 2000). The resources also include information, ideas, tips, clues, leads, business opportunities, financial capital, power and influence, emotional support, goodwill, trust and cooperation. Moreover, due to different explanations claimed to the theory, there have been disagreements about the use of the term 'capital,' as being a capital resource in a social relationship (Kilpatrick & Falk, 1999; Hofferth *et al.*, 1999; Inkeles, 2000).

Walters (2002) posited that the concept of social capital portrays an individual's networks and a community level phenomenon, where at the community level, the concept is a property (capital) of relations between the people in the community taken as a whole. Accordingly, social capital can arguably be built out of a norm, or an accepted rule, about how people should treat each other (Putnam, 2000). Baker (2000) suggested that 'social' as in 'social capital,' meant that this 'capital' resource was not a personal asset and that no single person owned it because the resource resided in networks of relationships. Macke and Dilly (2010) defended the social capital concept and refined it to include 'collective capital' and 'personal gains.' Thus, according to Macke and Dilly (2010), social capital is the set of characteristics of a human organization that encompasses the relations between individuals or groups; the standards of social behavior; and the mutual reciprocity that makes actions possible because they were based on collaborative processes.

2.5.2 Types of Social Capital

Based on different characteristics and functions, literature have classified social capital into different groups. The most common forms of social capital in literature include structural and cognitive social capital; bonding, bridging, and linking social capital; strong and weak social capital; and horizontal and vertical social capital (Humnath & Kumi, 2009).

2.5.1.1 Structural and Cognitive Social Capital

Structural social capital is related to the pattern of social networks and other structures such as associations, clubs, cultural groups, and institutions supplemented by the rules, procedures and precedents that govern them. Cognitive social capital consists primarily of a set of shared norms, values, attitudes, and beliefs of individuals relating to trust,

reciprocity, and cooperation (Uphoff & Wijayaratra, 2000). The objective and externally-observable structural social capital facilitates mutually beneficial collective actions through established roles and durable social networks supplemented by rules, procedures and precedents (Uphoff, 2000; Hitt, Lee & Yucel, 2002). The structural social capital provides certain benefits to actors, such as finding a job, obtaining information or accessing resources (Burt, 1992; Tsai & Ghoshal, 1998). The subjective and intangible cognitive social capital predisposes people towards mutually beneficial collective action through shared values and attitudes (Uphoff, 2000). Putnam (1993) argued that participation in social networks and voluntary organisations forms habits of cooperation, solidarity, and civic-mindedness. Besides, it fosters development and spread of trust. Social capital is, thus, understood both as a structural and a cognitive dimension (Paxton, 2002; Van Oorschot, Arts & Glissen, 2006). These structural and cognitive forms are often interconnected and reinforcing (Uphoff & Wijayaratra, 2000). This dual characteristic often creates problems in measuring social capital that focuses on one, but not both dimensions.

2.5.1.2 Bonding, Bridging and Linking Social Capital

From a social cohesion perspective, recent literature puts social capital into three important forms, namely bonding, bridging and linking social capital (Putnam, 2000; Woolcock, 2001). Bonding social capital denotes ties among people who are very close and known to one another, such as immediate family, close friends and neighbours. Often people in bonding networks are alike on key personal characteristics (e.g., class, race, ethnicity, education, age, religion, gender, and political affiliation). It is more inward-looking, protective, and exercising close membership, and therefore good for under-girding specific reciprocity and mobilising informal solidarity (Van Oorschot *et al.*, 2006). Bonding promotes communication and relationships necessary to pursue

common goals. Moreover, it influences creation and nurturing of community organisations, like self-help groups and local association.

Bridging social capital refers to more distant ties of like persons, such as loose friendships and workmates. Often people in bridging networks differ on key personal characteristics. Bridging is more outward-looking, civically engaged, narrows the gap between different communities and exercising open membership, and is, therefore, crucial to organising solidarity and pursuing common goals (Van Oorschot *et al.*, 2006). Bridging is crucial for solving community problems through helping people to know each other, building relationships, sharing information and mobilising community resources.

Linking social capital refers to ties and networks among individuals and groups who occupy very different social positions and power. Linking social capital may involve networks and ties of a particular community with states or other agencies. These different forms of social capital can serve different functions. Bonding with closely-knit people can act as a social support safety net; bridging ties with people across diverse social divides can provide links to institutions and systems and enables people and communities to leverage a wide range of resources than are available in the community. Bonding generates ingrown and thick trust that is useful for ‘getting by’ in life, as opposed to the bridging of expansive and thin trust that may be useful for ‘getting ahead’ (Anheier & Kendall, 2002; Woolcock, 2001). In practice, social ties may constitute ‘bonding’ in one respect and ‘bridging’ in another. This distinction is helpful to think about different types of social relationships among people in the community and their likely differential outcomes (Field, 2003).

2.5.1.3 Strong and Weak Ties

Granovetter (1985) explained social capital according to the strength of social ties. Strong ties refer to close, persistent, and binding relationships, such as those that exist with families and close friend group. Weak ties, on the other hand, refers to more causal, temporary and contingent relationships, such as those that exist with people from different backgrounds and friends from different social niches. Strong ties come from affection, willingness to help, and great knowledge of each other. Strong ties create great solidarity and offer personal support, whereas weak ties are used more for informational support. Weak ties link people to the broader communities and to a wider range of potential resources (Erickson, 2004). It can serve as channel in mobilizing resources, ideas, and information to promote collective actions in the community.

2.5.1.4 Horizontal and Vertical Networks

Social capital is also explained by making a distinction between horizontal and vertical networks (Woolcock & Narayan, 2000). Horizontal social capital refers to lateral ties between people of similar status and power in a community, vertical social capital on the other hand refers to ties between people of different hierarchy and unequal power among people. While horizontal social capital operates through shared norms and values, vertical social capital operates through formal hierarchical structures. Similar to bonding and bridging, horizontal social capital encompasses diverse groups of people and it serves to establish connection and a common goal among community members through civic engagement. Similar to linking, vertical social capital establishes link of citizens to community leaders and decision makers, and creates environment for social change through laws and policies.

There are other types of social capital which include formal (membership in clubs, social groups, and organizations) and informal (informal social connection with extended family, friends, neighbors, and workmates) (Pichler & Wallace, 2007); and open (civically-engaged and open membership) and closed (protective and exercising closed membership) (Heffron, 2000). These different types, characteristics and functions of social capital reveal some of the ways in which social capital differs. A thorough insight on these varieties of forms of social capital is helpful in a better conceptualization and measurement of social capital. These several forms of social capital also suggest that social capital can be operationalized and measured in variety of ways.

2.5.3 Importance of Social Capital

Social capital is an existing resource at a community level where the theory represents a property (capital) of relations among the people in the community. At the individual level, social capital is taken as a complete resource that people can use to their advantage. Putnam (2000) explained that networks, norms, rules and trust facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit. Thus, there is general agreement about the qualities (e.g. trust) of the social relationships that infer social capital. Furthermore, social capital underlies important social goals described in concepts such as social support, social resource integration and social cohesion.

Porter and Lyon (2006) argued that social capital could shape regional development patterns. Thus, social capital encourages societal wellbeing; the functioning of modern economies and stable liberal democracy. As a way of ensuring liberal democracy, social capital is an essential foundation for cooperation across the political sector, and power

differences occur as a result of differences in bridging links (Fukuyama, 2001; Porter & Lyon, 2006).

Also, Narayan and Cassidy (2001) and Putnam *et al.* (1994) argued that increased social capital can lead to a lower rate of crime and improvement in the effectiveness of institutions of government because of the inter-connectedness. Besides, perceptions of community governance, public institutions and political involvement stem from the fundamental dimensions of social capital. Moreover, concerning economic wellbeing, there is optimism and satisfaction of life. For instance, social capital is a necessary variable in public health and educational attainment since interconnectedness ensures that institutional systems for these services do function (Subramanian, Lochnerb & Kawachi, 2003).

Furthermore, social capital is both a community-level phenomenon and a property of an individual's networks. According to Bourdieu (1980), social capital can be understood at the individual, group and community levels. For the relational nature of social capital, there are both private benefits for individuals and mutual benefits for the individual and other team members occurring at the meso (group) levels of interactions. That is, the society, community and groups influence an individual's development in society. For instance, Mugane's (2007) study on local politics showed that a political aspirant with economic empowerment could participate in democratic governance. Also, the study reported that participation in a social group increases the feelings of efficacy, trust and self-actualization on the part of the individual that provides a social base for democracy.

In Mugane's (2007) study of women's groups, it was observed that they met and contributed money to support members who were aspiring to participate in political

activities at the local level in Kenya. The trust among members made them to contribute towards the successful election of member candidates for political positions. Mugane's study further described how the trust and the active engagement of the women in the group were the mechanisms through which those women's groups could subsequently influence political decisions through the election of their members to local government. Furthermore, in Ghana, the Christian Mothers' Association and Women's AGLOW Fellowship encourage their members to engage in political decision-making positions (Boateng, 2017).

2.5.4 Women in Development (WID)

Women in Development (WID) was a liberal feminist movement, which emerged in the 1970s, and it elevated the recognition of women's consciousness and abilities. By the 1970s it had become very clear that women were being left out of development. They were not benefiting significantly from it and in some instances, their existing status and position in society was actually being made worse by development. The WID approach saw the problem as the exclusion of women from development programs and approaches. As a result, the solution was seen as integrating women into such programs. WID saw women as a group lacking the opportunity to participate in development. The main task, therefore, was to improve women's access to resources and their participation in development. Instead of characterizing women as 'needy' beneficiaries, the WID perspective saw women as partners in the development of society. WID held that no longer should women be seen as passive recipients of welfare programs, but rather as active contributors to economic development (Kaliniuk & Schozodaeva, 2012).

The WID approach, therefore argued for the integration of women into development programs and planning as the best way to improve women's position in society. There was, for instance, a major emphasis on income-generating projects for women as a means of integration. Welfare-oriented projects dealing with small income-generating projects and activities mostly aimed at women's reproductive role, where nutrition education and family planning were a main feature.

The WID approach, although it had limitations, increased the visibility of women in development issues. WID was successful in helping secure a prominent place for women's issues at the United Nations (UN) and other international development agencies. For example, the UN declared 1975 to 1985 the Decade for Women, and one of the major achievements of the decade was the establishment of women in development structures or machineries. In Zambia, for instance, it was during this time that the Women's League of the then ruling political party, United National Independence Party (UNIP), was formed as the national machinery to address women's development issues. The Women's League developed a program of action and a campaign to promote the integration of women in the development process at every level. Over time, it was felt that women's integration into development was not taking place due to the lack of an established structure within government to plan, coordinate and monitor the implementation of a policy to integrate women.

A WID Unit was established in 1986 at the National Commission for Development Planning, the central planning and coordinating body of government. The unit was later elevated to a full department. Its focus was the integration of women in development, and to ensure that ministries and other implementing bodies worked towards the improvement of the socio-economic conditions of women as the way to

ensure their total integration in development. Although the WID approach made demands for women's inclusion in development, it did not call for changes in the overall social structure or economic system in which women were to be included. Consequently, WID concentrated narrowly on the inequalities between men and women and ignored the social, cultural, legal and economic factors that give rise to those inequalities in society.

WID tended to focus on women almost exclusively and assumed that women were outside the mainstream of development. Hence, 'women as partners of development' and 'actors in government' became the catchphrase in the 1970s. However, by the end of the 1970s, concerns were raised to include gender relations in development. There was disagreement among WID advocates and, development practitioners, and other feminists for critiquing WID for isolating and concentrating only on women's issues. Tensions emerged because there was no 'gender-aware' aspect to the WID's approach to development. In the argument of the critics, there needed to be the declaration of gender awareness in the WID approach because of the interrelations between men and women, which otherwise could result in having conflictual and cooperative dimensions of life (Kaliniuk & Schozodaeva, 2012; March *et al.*, 1999). Amid the controversies, Women and Development (WAD) emerged.

2.5.5 Women and Development (WAD)

As a result of criticisms of the WID approach, the Women and Development (WAD) approach arose in the latter part of the 1970s. Adopting a Marxist feminist approach, the main argument of WAD was that women had always been part of the development processes. WAD asserted that women have always been important economic actors. The work they do, both inside and outside the household, is critical to the maintenance

of society. However, this integration has only served to sustain global inequalities. Therefore, the WID approach that placed emphasis on integrating women into development was not correct. The main focus of WAD was on the interaction between women and development processes rather than purely on strategies to integrate women into development. WAD saw both women and men as not benefiting from the global economic structures because of disadvantages due to class, and the way wealth is distributed. WAD, therefore, argued that the integration of women into development was to their disadvantage and only made their inequality worse.

WAD saw global inequalities as the main problem facing poor countries and, therefore, the citizens of those countries. WAD was very persuasive in raising the debate that women have a role not only in reproduction but in production as well. For development to be meaningful for women, therefore, both roles have to be acknowledged. WAD has been criticized for assuming that the position of women would improve if and when international structures become more equitable. In so doing, WAD saw women's positions as primarily within the structure of international and class inequalities. It therefore underplayed the role of patriarchy in undermining women's development and did not adequately address the question of social relations between men and women and their impact on development.

WAD focused on economic production, and on the relationship between women and development processes rather than purely concentrating on strategies for the integration of women into development. However, focusing on women's productive responsibilities, WAD neglected women's reproductive roles. Also, proponents of WAD believed that the subordination of women in society occurred as a result of the development of private properties and capitalism (Parpart, Connelly & Barriteau, 2000;

Muyayeta, 2007). Proponents of WAD who were mostly Marxist feminists, therefore, advocated for the abolition of private property and ignored the nature of gender inequality, gender relations and the challenges women face in society (Rathgeber, 1990; Muyayeta, 2007). Undoubtedly, women are among groups of people in society with cultures, practices, systems and patriarchal structures. Therefore, women could not have contributed to development without the possible influence of men and other social relations. Hence, in the 1980s, some feminists and development practitioners critiqued WAD and indicated that neither WID nor WAD adequately addressed the causes of gender inequality in society, and that was the argument from the Gender and Development (GAD) advocates.

2.5.6 Gender and Development (GAD)

With the failures of the WID and WAD approaches becoming evident, the GAD Theory came to prominence. The GAD approach started from a holistic perspective, looking at the totality of social organisation, economic and political life to understand the shaping of particular aspects of society (Kaliniuk & Schozodaeva, 2012). In the 1980s, further reflections on the development experiences of women gave rise to Gender and Development (GAD). GAD represented a coming together of many feminist ideas. It sought to bring together both the lessons learned from, and the limitations of, the WID and WAD approaches. GAD looks at the impact of development on both women and men. It seeks to ensure that both women and men participate in, and benefit equally from development and so emphasizes equality of benefit and control. It recognizes that women may be involved in development, but not necessarily benefit from it. GAD is not concerned with women exclusively, but with the way in which gender relations allot specific roles, responsibilities and expectations between men and women, often to the detriment of women. Development, therefore, is about deep and important changes to

relations dealing with gender inequality within society. This approach also pays particular attention to the oppression of women in the family or the 'private sphere' of women's lives. GAD as a gender theory, refers to the social values, norms and laws, which fit well with the existing social capital structures. As a result, projects are developed to address issues such as violence against women.

Empowerment of women is central to the GAD approach. It recognizes that at the local level of governance, there are gendered relationships. The gendered socio-cultural norms in Ghana determine access to rights, resources and decision-making positions, which women's empowerment could be key to addressing the inequality situation. Moreover, the GAD Theory emerged as a result of the equity approach, in which efforts to achieve change failed to question the interrelationship between power and development. Therefore, the GAD as an approach was more effective for informing policy and planning because it looked at all aspects of society and took into consideration that, a man could influence a woman's life and vice-versa (March, Smyth & Mukhopadhyay, 1999). Equally, the approach analyzed the nature of women's contribution within the context of work done, both inside and outside the household. The approach suggested that even the home should be considered as a field of bargaining, cooperation or conflicts and, therefore, gender issues were needed to be discussed in development. Thus, GAD does not exclusively emphasize female solidarity and does not also focus singularly on productive or reproductive roles, or community aspects of women's (and men's) lives to the exclusion of the other aspects. GAD, therefore, welcomes contributions from people, including men who are gender sensitive. It is this difference that makes GAD reverberate with empowerment. Thus, the GAD approach is also known as the empowerment approach or 'gender-aware planning' (Connelly, Li, MacDonald, & Parpart, 2000; Kaliniuk & Schzodaeva, 2012).

According to Moser (1993), the goal of GAD is the emancipation of women and their release from subordination that aim to achieve gender equity, equality and empowerment through meeting practical and strategic needs. Additionally, GAD theories have focused on the logical connections between gender and development programs and also on feminists' viewpoints (Kaliniuk & Shozodaeva, 2012). According to Thomas (2004, p. 23) "The Empowerment of women' is central to the GAD approach and was the key element in the campaigns of DAWN (Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era) by the network of Third World researchers".

2.5.7 The Concept of Empowerment

The issue of empowerment came about during the world economic recession in the 1970s, when there was an increasing awareness of the deteriorating position of women in the third world (Kaliniuk & Shozodaeva, 2012). According to Hancock, Sharon, Jamie and Edirisinghe (2011), empowerment is a socially-constructed status based on the assumption that a person or a group of people may have access to valued resources such as better education, better health, formal employment, safety and decision-making positions in political systems and equality in policy change at the national and international levels. According to AusAID (2011), empowerment is the process of gaining access and developing people's capacities to participate actively in shaping one's life, as well as one's community in economic, social and political terms.

Broadly put, the term 'empowerment' is defined as "a multi-dimensional social process that helps people to gain control over their own lives. It is a process that fosters power in people for use in their own lives, their communities and in their society, by acting on issues they define as important" (Retrieved from <http://www.joe.org/joe/>

1999october/comm1.php). Prasad (2012), explained empowerment of women as the redistribution of work roles and the application of women's values and attitudes to the changing world, and it involves new kinds of adjustments, understanding and trust between men and women. Prasad (2012), went ahead to explain that empowerment is making both men and women realize their changing roles and status, and developing consensus for harmonious living in society, but not setting women against men.

According to Boateng (2017), society is characterized by gender power relations where individual actors have privileged positions and power over others concerning how institutional rules, norms and conventions are interpreted, and how they are put into effect. As victims of inequality in society, women need to use their voice, power and, capacity to act to access resources and make choices to better their lives.

The concept of empowerment can be explored through three closely interrelated dimensions, namely resources (conditions), agency (voice or process) and achievements (outcomes) (Kabeer, 2001). Agency is one of the central pillars of empowerment, which relates to people's ability to make strategic life choices in a situation where this ability was previously denied to them (Kabeer, 2001; Tursunova, 2014). Agency, thus deals with how choice is put into effect and actively exercised to challenge power relations. It is, therefore, exercised through the mobilisation of valued resources such as education, economic opportunities and decision-making positions, which are the means of power distributed through the various institutions and relationships. Consequently, when the distribution of resources and agency is skewed in society, it builds only some people's capabilities and influence their potentials to enjoy meaningful lives. The outcomes of agency and resources are 'achievements.' Achievement is the extent to which individual's potentials are realised or failed to be

realised. Thus, an outcome of individual's efforts, which can only be assessed with initial conditions (resources) and agency (process) is an achievement (Kabeer, 2001). For instance, a woman's ability to achieve political empowerment will occur because she uses her agency (voice, power, capacity to act) to access the available resources such as education, income and decision-making positions.

With regard to 'power' as in empowerment, Rowlands (1997) identified the power dimensions in empowerment and considered them as part of the development processes. These power dimensions are 'power over,' 'power to,' 'power with,' and 'power within.' The 'power over' is the ability to dominate, where when one gets power then automatically someone has less power. 'Power to' is the ability to see possibilities for change. In its positive sense, 'power to' refers to people's ability to make and act out of their life choice, even in the face of other's opposition.

Dupas and Robinson's (2015) study reported that violence distorted and disjointed the lives of many women in Kenya in the wake of the political crisis. Therefore, if empowerment is ever to have a meaning, in times of crisis, women's empowerment (power to) must enable those women affected by violence to find ways to soothe that pain by their choices. In contrast to 'power to' is 'power over', that refers to the ability of some actors to override the agency of others through the exercise of authority or the use of violence and other forms of coercion. 'Power with' is the power that comes from individuals, working together collectively to achieve common goals (collective empowerment). 'Power within' is the feelings of self-worth and self-esteem that come from within individuals (Psychological empowerment) (Boateng & Mensah, 2012). According to Rowlands (1997), all these forms of power are linked and the recognition of the diversity of power beyond 'power over' helps in the construction of policies and

programs to assist the powerless. Thus, the individual who is disempowered can be empowered through interventions such as policies, projects and programs. Significantly, gender policy (gender mainstreaming) was concerned with allowing women access to development activities and bureaucracies. According to Zimmerman (1995), through the empowerment construct, individual's strength and competencies, natural helping systems and proactive behaviors can be harnessed for effective social policy and social change.

2.5.8 Types of Empowerment

It is evident from the discussions that different authors and organizations have tried to define the term 'empowerment' from their own perspectives. It ranges from self-strength to efficiency building of women. However, there are different kinds of empowerment and they include, psychological, social, economic and political (Friedmann, 1992; UNDP, 1993; Kaliniuk & Shozodaeva, 2012; Pettit, 2012).

According to Friedmann (1992), psychological empowerment is an individual sense of potency that is demonstrated in self-confidence behavior. Through psychological empowerment, women not only transgress the traditional and patriarchal taboos and social obligations, but they also transform themselves and subjectivities. When women join educational institutions, political parties or decision-making bodies; hold white color jobs; take decisions and travel to different places; and occupy land and wealth, they feel psychologically empowered and build their self-confidence, recognize their self-worth and take control of their own incomes and bodies. Thus, joining any institution and occupation gives them opportunities to see and to know more of the world than those who have stayed behind at home. This also gives them mental strength and makes them firm, tough and hardworking. They also learn the art of living and

how to adjust to the changed circumstances. Further, it gives them satisfaction in various ways relating to work, living, learning and adjusting to personal and financial situations.

Social empowerment is the ability to join fully in all forms of community life, without regard to religion, colour, sex, class or race. It refers to having access to certain 'basics' of household production, information, knowledge and skills, participation in social organizations, and financial resources is a form of social empowerment (Friedmann, 1992). Social empowerment refers to the enabling force that strengthens women's social relations and their position in social structures. Social empowerment addresses the social discriminations existing in the society based on disability, race, ethnicity, religion or gender. Empowerment as a methodology is often associated with feminism.

Also, social empowerment is about changing society (changing norms, rules, laws, policies), so within a patriarchal society, that means women's place is respected and recognized. The respect and recognition of women's status in society result in women's ability to have access to valued resources such as decision-making positions (Pettit, 2012). For instance, when a woman achieves social empowerment, it means there is a sense of freedom and self-esteem for the preservation of her integrity, the capacity to demand a fair reward for her work and the ability to participate in politics (Treasure & Gibb, 2010). Education is an agent of socialization, where families and schools' structures ensure that individuals get empowered socially. Thus, social empowerment could enhance females' interest in political participation to ensure their political empowerment (Herz, 1991). For instance, a study by Addai (2000) in Ghana, reported that maternal education is the main influence on children's schooling and suggested

that the effect on girls' education is twice as great, as it is probable that girls will continue to the next grade in life.

Economic empowerment is allowing individuals to engage freely in any economic activity. For instance, there have been interventions in the Ghanaian socio-economic and political system to empower women by the state, NGOs and women's groups. Women's organizations such as the 31st December Women's Movement in Ghana played significant roles in the 1980s to empower Ghanaian women to gain economic and political independence (Torto, 2012). The 31st December Women's Movement trained women in soap making and batik tie and dye clothing for sale, which fetched them a lot of money to cater for their families and their wellbeing. "Wage employment means economic power" (Elliott, 2008, p. 86). Through employment, women earn money to enable them become 'bread earners', contributing members of their households with a strong sense of their own economic independence. "Economic empowerment is a powerful tool against poverty" (Biswas, 2010, p. 27).

Economic empowerment can be described as a means by which the poor, landless, deprived and oppressed people of all societies can be freed from all kinds of deprivation and oppression; can directly enjoy the benefits from markets as well as household; can easily manage a square nutritious food and fulfill basic requirements such as housing, clothing, healthcare and pure water. A Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA) has emphasized the economic empowerment of women. The Association holds that raising voice and visibility is not possible unless there is an access "to the ownership of economic resources by the poor women." Kapur (2001) observes that women's empowerment could be described as a process in which women gain greater share of control over resources – material, human and intellectual such as knowledge,

information, ideas and financial resources such as money, and access to money – and control over decision making in the home, community, society and nation, and to gain power. Economic empowerment gains through equal work opportunities, equal organizational benefits, equal treatments and equal working environment.

Another kind of empowerment is political, which deals with the level at which individuals have access to spaces and processes of decision-making, particularly those that affect their future and the future of others. Political power is not only the ability to vote, but also the power of voice and collective action (Friedmann, 1992). Being empowered politically means freedom to choose and change governance at every level, from the presidential palace to the village council. Political empowerment also entails being able to get involved in government and political decision-making processes (Treasure & Gibb, 2010). Empowerment increases the assets and capabilities of individuals or women's groups to make purposive choices, and to transform those choices into desired actions and outcomes (Chakrabarti & Biswas, 2008).

Participation of women in the political field and in various decision-making bodies is an important tool for empowerment. The participation of women at all levels of governance structures is the highest need currently for women's actual empowerment. Brill (2000) holds that without people's voices being heard inside the government areas and halls of public policy and debate, they are without the right to accountability – a basic establishment of those who are governed. In other words, empowerment is not giving people power; people already have lots of power, in the wealth of their knowledge and motivation, to do their jobs magnificently. Empowerment is letting power out (Blanchard, Carlos, & Randolph, 1996). It encourages people to gain the

skills and knowledge that will allow them to overcome obstacles in life or work environment and ultimately, help them develop within themselves or in the society.

Women, throughout the world, have been struggling to break away the shackle of bondage, subjugation, oppression and all kinds of ill treatment both within and outside of their families. Without bringing them in the corridor of power where they can formulate policies and programmes and implement them, the survival of women is very difficult. Rajput (2001) also supports the view. According to her the empowerment of women in all spheres, in particular the political sphere is crucial for their advancement and the foundation of a gender equal society. It is central to the achievement of the goals of equality, development and peace. Without political participation, it would be very difficult for women to increase effectiveness, capacity, challenging the existing power structure and patriarchal ideology.

Politics decide who will get what and how much. Hence, empowering women politically is the highest need. Women's political empowerment implies the decentralization of power and authority in the deprived, oppressed and powerless people who have not been able to participate in the decision-making processes and implementation of policies and programs of both government organizations as well as familial and societal matters.

Empowerment also entails a process of change, which often begins from within and, therefore, addresses the need for women's empowerment. Afshar (1998) asserted that women must have confidence in what they do, and must have access to resources for them to perceive that they can make choices. Women's empowerment involves giving equal status to women and giving them the capacity and ways to direct their lives towards desired goals. It is an active process of enabling women to realize their identity,

potentiality and power in all spheres of their lives (Prasad, 2012). Prasad's (2012) assertion resonates with the Gender and Development (GAD) approach to development, especially when GAD demanded the equalization of access to resources for economic development. The emphasis on women's empowerment is based on the assumption that women must be endowed with different spheres of life, particularly, in the household, in the community and the labour market. Women empowerment requires more concerted efforts from all including the women themselves (Mensah & Boateng, 2012).

Different factors affect the process of women's empowerment through participation in politics. These are "the psychological make-up of the person, her total personality and external environment – the social, economic, cultural, individual response to such stimuli..." (Niroj, 2000, p.17). There are some other conditions that affect women's political participation, including beliefs, customs, superstition, lack of time, patriarchal obligations and hindrances, lack of confidence, lack of education, consciousness, meager financial position in family and a hostile society. All these problems pose great threats in the way of women's empowerment. Besides, the political parties seem not much interested in making women involved in the mainstream of political decision-making bodies.

2.5.9 The Concept of Resistance

According to Routledge (1997, p. 361), resistance is "any action imbued with the intent that attempts to challenge, change or retain particular circumstances relating to societal relations, processes and institutions, which imply some form of contestation...and cannot be separated from practices of domination". Resistance aims at denying, challenging and undermining power relations. Thus, according to Vinthagen and Lilja

(2007), resistance contains the possibility that power gets impaired by the act of the subordinator in the context. Vinthagen and Lilja (2007) explained that in resistance, there is the intention or consciousness of the resister. That is, the action against power is done by someone in a subordinate position regarding power. Vinthagen and Lilja further revealed that resistance occurs in four phases; an act was by someone subordinate; in response to power; do challenge power, and; contain at least a possibility that power gets undermined. To apply the phases of resistance to this study, women are considered as being subordinated under the patriarchal system and structures, and therefore, to get elected to DAs, they employ subtle resistance.

The feminists in Ghana and Africa, in particular, do not accept the perception that women cannot make it in politics, which is a form of resistance against the political systems. For instance, to alert the world on gender inequality in decision making positions, wives of various Heads of State (First Ladies) in Africa, including Ghana and other renowned women advocates have been attending World Conferences on the status of women over the years. Besides, resolutions, conventions and goals have been reinforced by some of these first ladies and gender advocates as they lobby governments in their home countries to implement UN Decisions to reduce gender inequality. The advocates' actions of resistance and lobbying aim to deconstruct patriarchal systems and structures to ensure gender equality in decision-making processes (Tsikata, 2009).

Also, the feminists' response to male dominance comes with resistance, which some may argue that women are seen as having room for exercising their influence within a constraining patriarchal system by negotiating a 'patriarchal bargain' with men (Reeves & Baden, 2000). In Ghana, for instance, Boateng's (2006) study reported that some Ghanaian women struggled to overcome their obstructing cultural beliefs and practices.

Then, they allowed their male spouses to support them with the traditional gender roles and the domestic chores (Boateng, 2006). According to Tsikata (2009), female politicians negotiated with husbands to manage the home while they went into politics and got elected to the District Assemblies in Ghana. These negotiations in the domestic gender power relations can be seen as forms of resistance against the socially-constructed structures and systems, such as the recognition of women in the private spheres while men are recognized in the public sphere.

According to Scott (1990), resistance, which is not as dramatic and visible as rebellions, riots, demonstrations, revolutions, civil war or other such organized, collective or confrontational articulations, is known as ‘everyday resistance.’ Accordingly, such ‘everyday resistance’ is employed with the mechanisms and cooperative strategies to use the same domineering structures and systems they are opposed to, and overcome their negative influence. These cooperative strategies may include networking, friendship, relationships, interconnectedness, which are the tenets of strong social capital. For instance, according to Ortega-Bustamante and Steffy (2000), women’s social networks, in particular, are powerful resources for promoting resistance strategies, especially for those marginalised in contemporary society. These marginalised groups could resist as a result of being empowered through education and exposure to socialisation that encourages new social norms. These women must subtly resist as there are continuous beliefs in proverbs and adages in Ghana that tend to discourage women. One of such proverbs is, “The main office of women is the kitchen”. If this adage is anything to by, then females need not have asked males to support them in the kitchen while they attended political rallies because these women would not be going into politics. In the rural and remotest villages in Ghana, where patriarchal systems are entrenched, many women do not have the voice to defy their husbands nor

resist their male dominance. Despite the endemic nature of the patriarchal systems in society, throughout history when women have not had equal rights, e.g., to study or to take non-traditional roles, they have often found sympathetic males with influence willing to assist them.

Also, in the era of gender advocacy, there is a challenge to the status quo of the perceived male superiority where wives defy their husbands' disapprovals to engage in the public sphere. Moreover, in countries such as Ghana where there are no affirmative action laws or gender quotas to reduce discrimination in the political systems, women who are determined to go into politics had to resist obstacles to their political participation in decision-making positions. Also, women politicians in other patriarchal societies subtly resist such oppressed political systems. For instance, Afshar's (1998) study cited the various ways women in Chile, Brazil, Asia and the Middle East negotiated for power in their political participation. About Chile and Brazil, "politics at the national state level frequently inflict violence on women" (Afshar, 1998, p. 3). Afshar's (1998) study also dictates different "negotiating tactics", as women in these countries participate in the democracies through familial bargaining skills (Afshar, 1998, p. 3). The study also showed that in the Middle East, women in Syria used the existing legal structures to negotiate for power in the state. Resistance to societal obstruction to gender equality has been in the form of cultural dynamism, education for all, advocacy for gender equality and equity, anti-poverty interventions, and positive discriminatory directives, which cause social change. These interventions have weakened patriarchal structures, also resulting in the de-construction of stereotypical gender roles and relationships in the traditional practices in some rural areas in Ghana. In other words, social change influences the established constructed social relations and resisted the patriarchal gender power relations between women and men (UN, 2002).

As a result of social change and the constant call for gender equality, many females have been encouraged to enroll in education and economic activities, and have acquired skills and capabilities needed to engage in local politics. Although opportunities have been given to women to resist patriarchal structures, resulting in the political empowerment of the 5 percent being elected female members in the District Assemblies in 2015, the percentage is inadequate to have a fair representation of females in the decision-making position. However, in some remotest parts of Africa and Ghana, women continue to adhere to the status quo. For instance, Adibi (2006) asserted that a woman's experiences of disadvantage in society would occur as a result of patriarchal control.

Furthermore, feminist theorists argue that women are socialized to accept their inferior positions in society because society treats women's subordinate position as normal (Ebila, 2011; Mahamadu, 2010). In her thesis, Ebila (2011) restated a participant's comment that in most African societies, once somebody was known as being a woman that was all that people needed to conclude that the person would fail in her political career. As a result of the need to overcome the disadvantages to females, which are embedded within patriarchal structures and systems in societies, most women's groups and advocates in such societies have been supporting gender equality to reduce female subordination in both advanced and developing countries.

The United Nations has also been advocating for gender equality among member countries, which makes an impact on their decisions (Zee, 2012). Duncan (1994) and Kay (2005) suggested that gender equality has been touted as having benefits for both males and females, but the disadvantaged position of females urged both radical and liberal feminists to settle on stressing the oppression of women and blaming male

domination. Feminism as an ideology and movement, though it has many branches, exhibits advocacy for issues that uphold the importance of equal rights and fights for women rights in society (Smith, Collins, Chodorow, Connell & Butler, 2014). Since the end of colonialism and in the 1970s, feminism in Africa has been pragmatic, reflexive, group-oriented and focused on politics (Ebila, 2011; Mikell, 1984), because of the persistence belief in the socio-cultural values and norms (UNDP, 2016).

Social norms, values and laws point out how the differences in the status of men and women have implications on the way they participate in a market or non-market work, and in community life (Partart, Connelly & Barriteau, 2000).

2.6 Socio-Economic Factors that affects Women's Participation in Local Level

Governance

In the 1992 Constitution of Ghana, women are recognized as having equal rights with men in all spheres of life. The Constitution prohibits discrimination on the grounds of sex, religion, gender and ethnicity. However, the cultural norms of the Ghanaian society do not favor the inclusion of women in the political arena. Patriarchal practices and the current socio-economic status of women do little to encourage women's active participation in the political arena. These some what explained the difficulties women experience in accessing higher education and economic resources, and the resistance they sometimes face from men (other women) in their own communities. These tend to disempower many women from effective political participation. In many countries, traditions continue to emphasize women's primary roles as mothers and housewives and to restrict them to those roles. A traditional strong, patriarchal value system favors sexually-segregated roles, and 'traditional cultural values' militate against the advancement, progress and participation of women in any political process. In addition, in some countries, men even tell women how to vote. This is the environment, in which

a certain collective image of women in traditional, apolitical roles continue to dominate, which many women face (Kassa, 2015).

One other socio-economic limitation is the monetization of political elections since women rarely have the same personal economic advantages that men do. According to Evertzen (2001), women's often heavy workload of paid and unpaid work is a barrier to their ability to take part in decision-making. Another hindrance is the traditional belief that women are politically inferior (Gender Studies & Human Rights Documentation Centre, 2012). The main aim of Ghana's District Assembly concept is to bring political governance to the doorsteps of the people. However, in 2002, only 341 of the 4,583 elected District Assembly members, representing 7 percent, were women. At the local level, many consider women to be better suited to focus on the concerns of children, the family, community and the environment. Specifically, they can address issues such as girl-child education, child labour, rape, teenage pregnancy, HIV/AIDS and domestic violence.

However, these issues are not on the developmental agenda, because women are not part of the decision-making bodies (Offei-Aboagye 2000). Local government has an important role to play in providing affordable, professional and safe care services for children, older people and people with disabilities. As many women participate in organizations at the local level, it is often thought that decentralization is in the interest of women. But decentralization makes the local level more important, and with the growing of importance, the male interest in it is growing as well. Many barriers still hamper women, with the risk that they will not benefit equally to men (Byanyima, 2009). The ABANTU report launched on women participation in local governance (2012) also noted that, structural inequalities, unfair ethno-cultural and religious

practices, patriarchal family arrangements, lack of support and an unfriendly political climate have been identified as factors restricting women and other marginalized groups from political participation. Indeed, studies have suggested that at the rate of progress of women's representation in legislatures across the world, gender parity will be reached at 2047 (UNIFEM, 2008). However, some legal pronouncements and instruments seem to have contributed significantly to the slow pace of progress made over the years. For instance, the constitutional provision which requires that majority of Ministers must be Members of Parliament (Article 78 of the 1992 Constitution of Ghana) also impede women representation and involvement in decision-making. The import is that, until there are representations of women in parliament, women may not occupy ministerial positions, as such, may not be involved in national policy development. Now, if at the national level, things are strict and not paving way for the needed equality, how much more at the local governance level?

Various provisions in the design of the decentralization process should have made the participation of women in public decision-making easier. These provisions include those for non-partisan local government system, the freedom to use the local language for the business of the assembly and the discretion creating additional sub-committees. The latter could have provided a sharper focus on responding to the concerns of the various sections of the population, including women but it did not. The initial participation of women in local government was low and has remained so. In 1994, women made up about 3 percent of the elected members. In 1998, this proportion rose to 5 percent. This was very interesting given that women constitute about half of all registered voters.

2.7 Cultural Barriers that affect Women's Participation in Local Level

Governance

The limited number of female representatives in positions of responsibility in government results from the unequal gender power relations in the Ghanaian society (Boateng, 2017). The public space, hitherto primarily reserved for men was as a result of the gender construction in society. Gender can be understood as a socially constructed relationship between males and females, which is shaped by culture, norms, customs, values and social relations (Flores, 2005). Gender construction is, therefore, a process of nurturing and influencing individuals with the social norms, rules and values, and the allocation of gendered responsibilities or roles in society (Britwum, 2009).

Social construction of gender roles and status (gender construction), patriarchal systems and structures have disadvantaged women and perpetuate gender inequality in the society. These concepts in the social structures describe how gender inequality is enforced, probably because of the associations of the cultural systems (beliefs and practices). There are clear links between the socio-cultural practices and gender construction where the connection relates to the historical legacy of patriarchal forces and agents (e.g. family, marriage, cultural practices, religion, social norms and values). Subsequently, culture and cultural systems, patriarchy and patriarchal agents are presented to surmise how they contribute to the disadvantaged position of women in Ghana.

2.7.1 Culture

Culture is a complex whole, including beliefs, art, religion, values, norms, ideas, laws, knowledge, and customs, which are socially shared among people in the society and passed on through either an ethnic group, clans or families of the generations (Umar, 2011; Hofstede, 1980). For example, the culture of individuals is the totality of their experiences acquired through the transmission of heritage from one generation to another, about how to learn, eat, drink, behave, walk, dress and work. Consequently, people are born in the environment of culture and, therefore, shared values are accumulated, integrated, responsive, changing, which continuous and makes it the memory of their human race. The cultural practices of each ethnic group feature patriarchal systems that uphold male's notional superiority and advantages (Amoakohene, 2004; Boateng, 2006, 2009; Coalition of the Women's Manifesto for Ghana [CWMG], 2004; Ebila, 2011; Prah, 2004; Sam, 2010).

In the traditional Ghanaian society, traditions continue to emphasize women's primary role as mothers and housewives and to restrict them to those roles. A traditional strong, patriarchal value system favours sexually segregated roles and traditional cultural values which militate against the advancement, progress and participation of women in any political process. In the words of Kassa (2015: p 3-4), societies all over the world are dominated by an ideology of 'a woman's place'. According to this ideology, women should only play the role of 'working mother; which is generally low paid and apolitical. Cultural ideas about women can affect their level of representation throughout the political process, from an individual woman's decision to engage in politics, to party selection of candidates and to the decision made by electorates on the day of elections. According to Kassa (2015), these cultural ideas about women make them to face prejudice as leaders because people tend to think that leadership is a

masculine trait. Even in situations where women have made gains in employment or education, they still face cultural barriers to their participation in politics.

2.7.2 Patriarchy

Patriarchy, a word derived from the Greek language means "the rule of the father" as a father or the patriarch holds authority over women and children (Kay, 2005). Initially, in the nineteenth century, Weber used the patriarchy concept and referred to it as a patrimonialism where the concentration was on the father (patriarch) dominating the households (Boateng, 2017). However, patriarchy as a concept was maintained in the twentieth century to signify men rather than fathers specifically and can be attributed to the developments in feminist thought, women's studies and gender studies (Jóhannsdóttir, 2009). Also, patriarchy is a system of government where older and younger men ruled society through their position as household heads (Duncan, 1994). Adibi (2006) defined patriarchy as males (fathers, husbands and brothers) having precise control over women and family; in this instance, referring to how women relied on men for survival as wives sought permission from husbands, male partners or fathers before engaging in politics and any public activities. Further explanations of patriarchy by Adibi (2007) indicated that, patriarchal societies have endured throughout history, and were surviving in the economic, political and religious change, which sustained gender differences. Akita (2010), in his thesis, also explained patriarchy as a structure of power relations which endorses male supremacy and female subordination.

These deep-rooted patterns of socio-cultural practices and patriarchal agents, including the family system, marriage, religion, and funeral ceremonies are inclined to privilege men over women and perpetuate gender differences and inequality (Baah-Ennumh,

Qwusu & Korkor, 2005; Britwum, 2009; Dako-Gyeke & Owusu, 2013; Gyimah & Thompson, 2008; Mahamadu, 2010; Moghadam, 2003).

2.7.3 Family System

The family system formed through a male and female uniting, creates a strong bond between people, and it is the primary source of an individual's culture, identity, loyalty, recognition, status and responsibility. The Ghanaian culture is a collective one where families share any loss or achievement or honors, including political achievements, but men are at the advantage side (Umar, 2011). The families also facilitate gender construction, resulting in the socially constructed gender power relations and roles.

Two types of family lineages (i.e. matrilineal and patrilineal family inheritance) are recognized in Ghana, which reveal two major types of succession and inheritance rights among various ethnic groups. These succession types are linked to the legacy systems, which share two features: a distinction between family and individual property; and for male siblings as heirs, who are entitled to inherit family property than female children or nieces (Schwimmer, 2006). As a result, the two systems of inheritance rights become privileges of the male against the female in a family or a clan. For instance, with the patrilineal type of inheritance, heirs who are mostly males are chosen from the paternal lineage to inherit property, whereas, in the matrilineal form of succession, male heirs who are often nephews are chosen above daughters and nieces from the maternal lineage to inherit property. Also, among the matrilineal Akan families, members' right to inheritance of an estate, farms and bank accounts in the first instance, goes to the oldest surviving brother of either a deceased male or female. The beneficiaries to the inherited properties, typically men, can increase their wealth through investing in inherited assets, which further enhances their relative economic, political and social

status to the disadvantage of women in the family (Prah, 2004). As a result of biases in the allocation of capital resources, inheritance and assets, females' opportunities to gain financial resources to engage in any public activities tend to be impeded (Kabeer, 2002). The diverse cultural practices mark the sub-divisions in the ethnic groups in Ghana, but each group shares a common cultural heritage, history, origin and language as well as marriage (Baah-Ennumh et al., 2005; Schwimmer, 2006).

2.7.4 Marriage

Marriage, as a universal social institution has been an individual's rite of responsibility. Among the ethnic groups in Ghana, the rites happen within the families of a male and a female. This rite of passage also determines the Ghanaian status of a lifetime achievement within their families (Nyarko, 2013). Thus, an unmarried matured person or a divorcee may find it difficult to occupy an elected political position or a throne of traditional governance; that makes marriage a societal responsibility among many Ghanaians. The marriage types in Ghana include the customary or traditional system of marriage, which involves the families of the couple and it is characterized by polygamous relationship, hence, a man could marry more than one wife. The other type of marriage is the ordinance marriage that requires registration in court after the traditional engagement, and it forbids any form of polygamy of which the offence attracts fines, court settlement or divorce. It is the ordinance marriage that some religious sects or churches organize wedding ceremonies for the Christian couple, which indicates the people's religiosity.

2.7.5 Females as Dependents

In some rural communities in Ghana, the common belief that females must depend on males for survival extend to a moral stance that women must not argue with men in

public. This belief is supported by Ghanaian adages, some of which are ‘When a woman buys a gun, it is placed in a man’s room or ‘it is placed in a man’s bosom’; (It is believed that compared to a woman, a man should hold a gun because of his bravery); and ‘Women sell garden eggs and not gun powder’ (Women should not venture into the men’s world). The implication of these cultural beliefs and proverbs consistently illustrate the expectation that a woman should submit to a man. More significantly, in the rural areas, the cultural practices admonished women to operate in the private spheres, enforcing gender inequality in the public sphere of life.

In 2003, the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) reported that, it was challenging for a woman to take a unilateral decision to engage in public activities such as politics in Ghana. Thus, compared with a married man who could act more unilaterally, a married woman needed to make her husband, children and other family members aware of her decision to engage in politics. Although men, sometimes show their interest in politics with their activities in the communities, a woman may have to inform the family before she starts the community and civic engagement. Thus, she has to notify the family and lobby for social, emotional and financial support. After she had convinced her immediate families to support her, and eventually decided to apply for a ticket to contest an election, the male contenders, not convinced about her status and ability in politics, would concoct all sorts of stories about her (Boateng, 2009). Aside from the intimidations such as insults and name calling from males to females, the party structures may not select her to contest on the party ticket for fear of losing that seat. Despite the differences in the stages of development, in political and economic structures, women’s relative status and bargaining power in Ghana have been continuously less than that of men in their cultures (Boateng, 2009; Kessey, 1997).

2.7.6 Gender roles

Similarly, gender inequality happens through the roles men and women perform in the private sphere as in public domain. Furthermore, patriarchy has been shown to be related to the concept of gender roles, or the set of social and behavioral norms that society considers socially appropriate for individuals of a particular sex (Singh, 2016). For instance, Moser (1993) viewed gender roles from the perspectives of the Triple Roles Framework: Productive, Reproductive and Community functions. In that framework, the female's productive roles entail the production of goods and services for consumption and trade. These roles are the tasks undertaken to earn income, including working in civil and public services and private sector employment.

The productive activities take place in the formal and informal areas such as banking, petty trading, fishing, farming, transportation and food processing. In Ghana, women contribute to family maintenance through the income they earn from paid jobs or subsistence production (Ofei-Aboagye, 2001, 2004; Samorodov, 1999). Irrespective of the productive status of women in Ghana, some women find it difficult to access resources such as land, credit and technical assistance that could help them increase their production and probably engage in politics (Bugri, Yeboah & Agana, 2016). Many females also perform productive roles alongside the reproductive responsibilities or domestic activities. According to Østergaard (1994, p. 5), "... the domestic activities which maintain or 'reproduce' daily life is mainly allocated to women, while the more extroverted and distant income-generating activities are assigned to men." Reproduction was seen as not only involving reproducing children, but also maintaining the home including caring for the family and nurturing the sick and the aged (Adu-Okoree, 2012; Dosu, 2014; Kwapong, 2008; Ramashala, 2016). These functions of the female legitimated as an assigned role as being linked to female biology, ensured that

there was a continuous supply of healthy, disciplined and hardworking labor force in various fields of endeavor, which could guarantee national cohesion, growth and development (Kwapong, 2008).

In Ghana, reproductive roles are labor intensive, and although they are crucial and significant to maintaining the nation's human resources, the role is barely recognized as work (Horn, 2013). Therefore, the unpaid nature of the typical female role has been difficult to challenge. Put another way, policy formulators and implementers in Africa have not fully recognized these female caring functions (Essoungou & Ighobor, 2012). As a result, the household activities of women are seldom considered real work and are usually unpaid (Oláh, Richter & Kotowska, 2014).

In order to empower women, the gender inequity in the allocation of reproductive tasks need to be addressed through the strategic support of their interests (i.e. provision of strategic gender interest or needs), which include maternal policies, reproductive rights and allowing women have control over their bodies and sexuality (Njogu & Orchardson-Mazrui, 2013). In congruence, Moghadam (2003) asserted that the women needing to be available to attend to reproductive roles required these types of protection to offset their disadvantage. Moghadam added that these measures would also challenge the unequal power relations in the society. Moghadam's (2003) assertions are consistent with the arguments raised by gender theorists and advocates of the Gender and Development (GAD) theory. For instance, a woman whose reproductive responsibilities were supported with resources such as nursery facilities in the Ghanaian occupational environment or the political institutions would be able to engage in public activities or attend to her productive, reproductive and community gender responsibilities.

2.8 Religious Barriers that affect Women's Participation in Local Level

Governance

Religion is as central to the majority of people's lives as it is to politics. Religion has, therefore, been another agent of patriarchy, which could negatively influence women's leadership abilities and political lives (Lu, 2016; Norris & Inglehart, 2004). The major religious sects in Ghana are Christianity, Traditional and Islamic. The 2010 Population Census in Ghana indicated that 71.2 percent of the population identified as Christians, 17.6 percent as Moslems and 5.2 percent as being of the Traditional religious faith, and 5.3 percent of the people is not affiliated with any religion (Nyarko, 2013). According to Burke (2012), conservative religions such as Catholicism limit women's leadership role and the church is not willing to involve them in their religious institutional structures, and the reasons given emphasize the supposed existential differences between men and women. However, pagan and early churches had women as priestesses (Witherington, 1991).

Paxton and Hughes (2016) also asserted that countries with more protestant Christians attained women's political rights earlier than in countries with the dominance of Catholicism. Furthermore, whereas Christians such as those in the Church of Christ and other types of Protestant Churches, accept the ordination of women as priests, those in the Roman Catholic Church refuse such conferment (Hooper & Siddique, 2010; Levitt, 2012; Nair, 2000). There have been the critics of the Vatican's decision even internally; an example was Vivienne Hayes, a Chief Executive Officer of the Women's Resource Centre in the Catholic Church (Hooper & Siddique, 2010). Moreover, most critics argue that the churches that were against women's leadership only wanted to mire themselves in ancient patriarchal tradition (Mahamadu, 2010; Scott, 2010; Vlas & Gherghina, 2012). Once the congregation of the Catholic religion adhere to its doctrines

universally, believers in these Christian churches in Ghana also limit women's involvement in the priesthood, which also affects their leadership responsibilities. Similarly, the Islamic religion has never authorized females to lead or preach to a congregation of mixed sexes (Siddiqi, 2005).

The Ghanaian traditional religious beliefs in the form of taboos and myths also influence the economic and political empowerment opportunities and gender roles of many Ghanaian women. For example, it was a taboo for females to work in mining sites in some rural areas in the Western Region of Ghana (Addei & Amankwaa, 2011). Thus, it can be observed that the predominant religions influencing the contemporary Ghanaian society forbid women from engaging in leadership roles. Since politics as a profession requires engaging in social leadership, for the many of the females who have professed the religious beliefs that limit women's leadership roles, this has made them reluctant to engage in public activities such as politics.

2.9 Avenues that Support Women's Participation in Local Level Governance

2.8.1 Affirmative Action

Affirmative action is a set of measures adopted by governments, public and private institutions such as political parties, educational establishments, corporations and companies to address a history of systemic discrimination and exclusion of particular social groups or to encourage the efforts of particular social groups in the interests of certain development goals. Affirmative action is expected to improve development indicators by reducing inequalities and facilitating the contribution of particular social groups to development. Affirmative action, therefore, relates to both the productive and distributive aspects of development. While affirmative action may or may not arise

from the agitation of disadvantaged social groups and advocates, the state and its institutions are central to its design and implementation (Tsikata, 2009).

Historically, the recommendation for affirmative action in governance was approved through a directive from the Office of the President of Ghana. Thus, Ghana governments had used affirmative action since independence from colonialism to address gender imbalances in government (Tsikata, 2009). According to Tsikata (2009), there are two generations of affirmative action in Ghana and these are the first generation affirmative action and the second generation affirmative action. The first generation affirmative action was those implemented in the First Republic, which was in 1960, until the end of the 1970s. The second generation affirmative action on the other hand was implemented from the 1980s. The first generation affirmative action mostly focused on regional differences and rural and urban differences, although there were some policies that addressed gender inequalities in politics, education and work under the Nkrumah regime. Some of the affirmative action measures taken during the first generation were the reservation of seats for women (10 women in parliament), measures to promote the participation of women in certain professions, scholarship schemes (Northern Ghana scholarships, cocoa marketing board scholarship), fee free education; free textbooks and uniforms and targeted investments in infrastructure, education and health in some regions

The second generation affirmative action focused on gender and rural and urban differentials. Some of the affirmative action measures that have been taken during the second generation are; girl-child education policies, lower cut-off points for girls in the tertiary education, reserved places for students from deprived districts, science clinics for girls, school meals in certain districts and 50 percent women appointed as District

Assembly members. After the overthrow of the First Republican government, subsequent government abandoned the Affirmative Action policy (Boateng, 2017). The quotas for women in appointed membership positions has been practiced since 1998 in Ghana, but the directives do not have any legal backing. For instance, in 1998, the National Council on Women and Development (NCWD), which was the national machinery for women, advised the National Electoral Commission (NEC) to encourage political parties to nominate more women to contest Parliamentary seats in Ghana (Crawford, 2004; Tsikata, 2009 as cited in Boateng, 2017). The recommendation for the local government system was to have a 30 percent quota for women in the appointed positions (Ofei-Aboagye, 2000). However, according to Boateng (2017), these positive proposals were not enacted into law because some stakeholders did not support them. The lack of support for affirmative action policy was partly because of the discriminatory practices and the many informal systems (i.e. customs, traditions, adages discussed earlier) that upheld male advantage. Also, the institutional relationships were deeply patriarchal and cut across all facets of life, including national and local level government structures (Beall, 2004) making it inflexible for the Ghanaian society to witness more women in government.

2.8.2 NGOs and Gender Advocates on Gender Equality

NGOs and other gender advocates campaign throughout the country to make people aware and also to educate males and females on the importance of equalizing gender. For example, in the District Assembly elections, most of the non-governmental organizations advocate for women to contest, and this helps to increase the number of women in the District Assemblies. The gender advocates, women's groups and NGOs also picketed the Parliament of Ghana and the Presidency to demand action to address issues of gender inequality (Boateng, 2017).

NGOs, including the International Federation of Women Lawyers; Ghana (FIDA-Ghana); Women in Law and Development in Africa-Ghana (WILDAF-Ghana); the Hunger Project-Ghana; and Network for Women's Rights in Ghana (NETRIGHT) have specific roles and activities in which they engage in Ghana. NGOs organize program and projects for gender activists and advocates, and for women whose interests are in public functions and political activism (Selby, 2011). These NGOs sensitize Ghanaians and educate them on the concepts and theories that come with gender equality to harness its achievement. These theories include feminism, empowerment, gender equity and equality. Therefore, in the struggle to address gender inequality in society, it is significant to share reasons for such program to be rolled out through the NGOs for the Ghanaian populace to understand the advocacy journey, which is the NGOs' passion.

In the bid to achieve the equality milestone, the activities of these NGOs remind us of the past and, sometimes the present on how women had been treated and forged for equality. For instance, through social movements and some actual social change, the stereotypical perception about women have been being revised. As such, although many people around the globe were supporting ill-treated women and had called for gender equality, a lot more understanding was needed in the fields of ideologies on gender. Thus, while various world bodies were geared towards achieving gender equality, it was necessary for wider society to become more acquainted with theories of gender and goals of gender equality, and women's empowerment.

Tadros (2014) acknowledged that there seemed to be a disconnection between the public and the professionals in gender advocacy, where feminism also takes center stage when it comes to the relationship between males and females. 'Gender,' 'the

relationship between women and men,' and 'the feminist movement or 'feminism' an ideological movement demonstrates the importance of women and fights for equal rights in society, which have become buzz words (March et al., 1999; ILGS, 2009; Vinthagen & Johansson, 2013). Thus, the feminism's primary goal is gender equality in the public sphere and its commitment to equal rights, opportunities and choices for people of all genders (Walby, 1990). Therefore, the significance of the understanding of these ideologies may surge the prospects of the Ghanaian nation to achieve equity goals set by the UN. In the Ghanaian context, NGOs, gender activists and women's groups who rely on the philosophies of feminism and support equality and equity, engaged in continuous advocacy through organizing programs for both men and women to understand the goals of gender equality, which was considered to be a necessary step to make equity achievable in an appreciable situation. For instance, organizations such as NETRIGHT, a coalition of NGOs promoting women's empowerment; Pathways Women's Empowerment; Center for Gender Equality and Advocacy (CENGNSA) with like-minded activists from the markets, academia, labor movements, and Persons with Disability (PWDs) focus to promote gender equality (Apusigah, Tsikata & Mukhopadhyay, 2011; Britwum, 2014; GNA, 2011).

On August 11, 2001, NETRIGHT organized a forum for women activists who were committed to gender equality to deliberate on a concrete meaning of "feminism" and how it could be translated into the activists' works (Selby, 2011). This training and formation of mindsets among the feminists in Africa, particularly in Ghana, turned public opinion away from accepting the perception that a woman cannot succeed in politics (Ebila, 2011)

2.9 Conceptual Framework

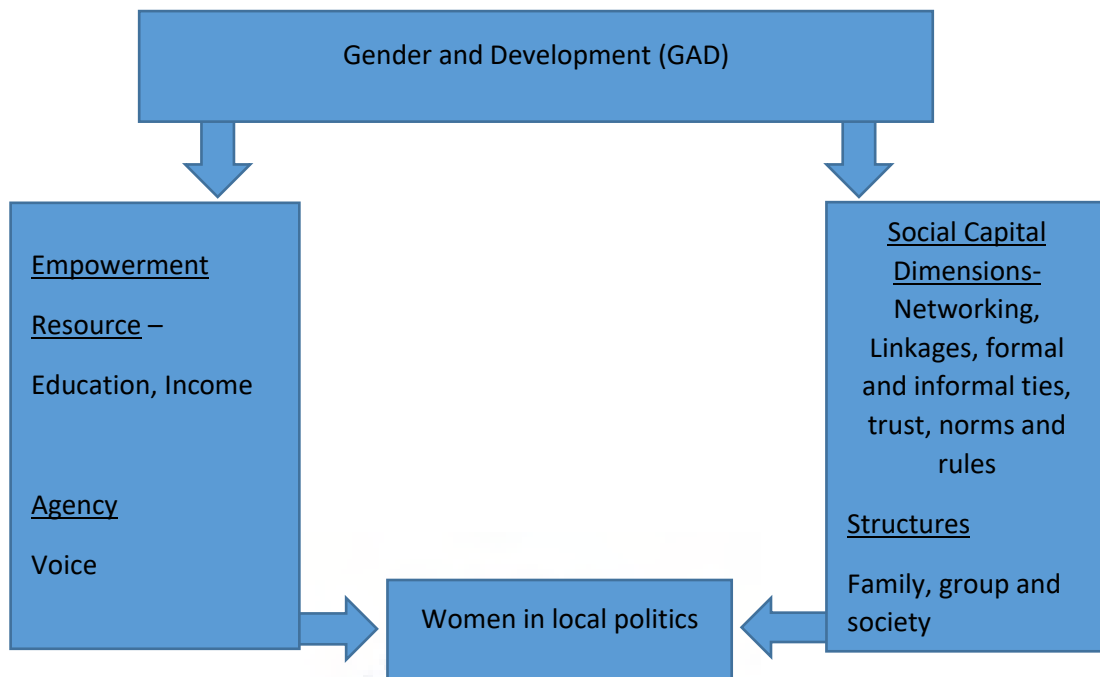


Figure 2: Conceptual Framework
Source: Adapted from Boateng, 2017

The study's conceptual framework was developed by examining the objectives and research questions of the study to identify the theories that have the best fit to answer the research questions. This study's conceptual framework shows the interconnectedness between theories and concepts. The theories that underpinned this study are the Gender and Development (GAD) Theory, the Concept of Empowerment and the Social Capital Theory. The GAD theory gives an understanding of the various aspects of societal structures, including gender construction, gender relations, leadership, equity, justice and economic empowerment (Boateng, 2017).

In applying the concept of empowerment, this study argues that marginalized women could gain power through resources and agency to resist the patriarchal systems that hinder them from politics. Also, the Social Capital Theory explains how individual women can take advantage of the dimensions and structures of social capital to harness

and build constituencies to compete for a political position. Thus, when women are empowered and make efficient use of their social capital to create linkages, networks and build connections, they could resist and overcome the socio-cultural, economic and political structures that marginalize them from political participation and representation at the district levels.

2.10 Summary

This chapter considered a review of relevant literature on decentralization, local governance in Ghana, gender theories; social capital, women in development (WID), women and development (WAD), gender and development (GAD), the concept of empowerment and the concept of resistance, socio-economic, cultural and religious barriers that affect women's participation and representation in local level governance and the avenues that exist to support women as they participate in local level governance. The review of the theories and concepts aided in the development of the conceptual framework.

Falleti (2004) defined decentralization as a process of state reforms. Litvac (1999) categorized decentralization into four main parts which were the political, administrative, fiscal and market decentralization. Aryee (2000), traced the history of Ghana's decentralization to the introduction of indirect rule by the British colonial authorities in 1878. Nkrumah (2000), made an interesting observation that, under indirect rule, downward accountability of the chiefs to the people was replaced by upward accountability to the colonial authorities.

Various commissions and committees from 1949 to 1982 reformed the local government system and made recommendations that underscored the importance of which the various governments attached to ensuring women's participation,

empowerment and capacity building at the local level. The local government system and structures are directly linked to the central government in an intricately balanced five-tier system of public administration and the allocation of functions. The president in consultation with traditional authorities in various electoral areas appoint 30 percent of members of the District Assembly. Half of the 30 percent appointed positions are reserved for women, which doesnot happen all the time, as no legal instrument backs the directives. According to Macke and Dilly (2010), social capital is the set of characteristics of a himan organization that encompasses the relations between individuals or groups; the standards of social behavior; and the mutual reciprocity that makes actions possible because they were based on collaborative processes. The most common forms of social capital include structural and cognitive social capital, bonding, bridging and linking social capital, strong and weak social capital, and horizontal and vertical social capital.

Women in Development (WID) was a liberal feminist movement, which emerged in the 1970s and it elevated recognition of women's consciousness and abilities. The WID placed emphasis on integrating women into development. Amid the controversies that surrounded the WID, the Women and Development (WAD) emerged. The main focus of the WAD was on the interaction between women and development processes rather than purely on strategies to integrate women into development. When the failures of both the WID and WAD became evident, the Gender and Development theory came to prominence. The GAD approach started from a holistic perspective, looking at the totality of social organization, economic and political life to understand the shaping of a particular aspect of society (Kaliniuk & Shozodaeva, 2012).

The concept of empowerment came about during the world economic recession in the 1970s, when there was an increasing awareness of the deteriorating position of women

in the third world (Kaliniuk & Shozodaeva, 2012). The types of empowerment include psychological, social, economic and political empowerment, among others.

According to Routledge (1997), resistance is any action imbued with the intent that attempts to challenge, change or retain particular circumstance relating to societal relations, processes and institutions, which imply some form of contestation and cannot be separated from practices of domination. The socio-economic, cultural and religious barriers to women's participation in local level governance that were reviewed included monetization of political elections, patriarchy, family system, marriage and religion among others. The avenues that exist to support women in local level governance include Affirmative action and NGOs and Gender advocates on gender equality.



CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the methodology employed for this study. It, specifically discusses the research design, population, study area, sample and sampling procedures, data collection instruments, data collection procedures, methods of data analysis, trustworthiness of the study and ethical considerations. This study gathered data from Agona West, Gomoa West and Gomoa Central Districts in the Central Region of Ghana.

3.1 Research Design

A research approach presents the plan and procedures, and also describes the steps from broad assumptions to detailed methods of data collection, the analysis, and the interpretation of the study (Boateng, 2017). This study adopted the qualitative research approach to address the study objectives. The choice of a qualitative research approach is not only based on the worldview of the researcher, but it is inextricably linked to the objectives and questions of the research (Creswell, 2014; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). A qualitative research approach is underpinned by the view that knowledge is socially-constructed by individual actors who interact with their world (Merriam, 2002). Also, a qualitative research approach seeks to widen and enhance the understanding of the emerging phenomena of society. The various qualitative approaches include grounded theory, phenomenology, ethnography, case study and narrative (Creswell, 2014).

A descriptive case study design was adopted for this study. A case study design provides opportunity for an in-depth examination of a phenomenon. A descriptive case study was used to examine the socio-economic, cultural and religious factors that

affects women's participation in local politics in Agona West, Gomoa West and Gomoa Central in the Central Region of Ghana. Yin (1989) characterized case study research as empirical inquiry that: investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context; when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident. The case study design afforded the researcher the opportunity and freedom to understand complex social phenomena (Yin, 1989). According to Yin case studies can be categorized as explanatory, exploratory, or descriptive.

3.1.1 Study Area

Data was collected from three districts in the Central Region of Ghana. The districts were the Gomoa central, Goma West and the Agona West. The Gomoa Central District is one of the 260 Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies in Ghana, and forms part of the 20 (MMDAs) in the Central Region. With its capital as Afransi, the District was carved out of the then Gomoa District in 2008 by the Legislative instrument 1883, and became operational on 29th February, 2008. It occupies an area of 539.69 square kilometres and it is located in the south-eastern part of the Central Region. It is bordered to the north-east by the Agona East District, south-west by the Gomoa West District, east by the Awutu Senya East Municipal and the Ga South Municipal in the Greater Accra Region and to the south by Effutu Municipal. The Atlantic Ocean borders the south-eastern part of the District. The population of the District according to the 2010 population and housing census stood at 207,071 with 98,323 males and 108,748 females (Ghana Statistical Service, GSS, 2014). Data was collected from the Aboso Electoral Area.

Gomoa West District was established in July, 2008 by Legislative Instrument (LI) 1896, following the division of the former Gomoa district into two, Gomoa West and Gomoa

East Districts. Apam is its District capital. Gomoa West district stretches from Gomoa Antseadze in the west to Gomoa Bewadze in the east. It shares boundaries on the west with the Ekumfi district, North-West by the Ajumako-EnyanEssiam district, North by the Agona East and the Gomoa East districts and East by the Effutu Municipal, as well as the Atlantic Ocean in the south. The population of the district, according to 2010 Population and Housing Census stood at 135,189. Males constitute 44.7 percent and females represent 55.3 percent. Data was collected from the Apam Nsuakyir/ Abura, Gomoa Tarkwa, Ankamu/Ajumako Sinbrofo and Ayipe Electoral Areas.

The Agona West Municipality is one of the 20 political and administrative districts in the Central Region of Ghana. It was created out of the former Agona District on 25th February, 2008 by LI 1920 (Ghana Statistical Service, GSS, 2014). It is situated in the eastern corner of the Central Region. It has a total land area of 316.16 square kilometer, with its capital as Swedru. It is bordered to the north by Agona East, to the south by Gomoa East and to the northwest and west by Asikuma-Odoben-Brakwa and Ajumako-Enyan-Essiam Districts respectively. According to the 2010 Population and Housing Census, the total population of the municipality stood at 115,358. Males constitute 46.9 percent and females represent 53.1 percent. Data was collected in the Asesem Abronye, Maahodwe, Otedukrom and Anafo Adansi Electoral Areas.

3.1.2 Population

The population of the study encompassed all Assembly women in the Central Region. All present and past District Assembly women and some significant others which comprised of all the husbands of the assembly women constituted the population of the study.

3.1.3 Sample and Sampling Procedures

The adoption of a sampling strategy is influenced strongly by a research problem and the types of research objectives and questions (Boateng, 2017). The samples for a qualitative inquiry are assumed to be selected purposefully for locating rich information key informants or critical cases (Patton, 2002). This study employed purposive, snowball and convenient sampling strategies in selecting the participants. A total number of 13 participants were sampled for the study. Out of the 13 participants, eight were former Assembly women, one had contested and lost a District Assembly election, one won, but could not go to the Assembly and one person withdrew from the District Assembly elections contest. Two husbands of the former Assembly women were conveniently selected to constitute significant others. The reason for selecting the significant others was to examine the role they played in the political lives of their wives. The researcher chose 13 participants because they were available and willing to participate in the study. Besides, the data reached saturation at that number. Moreover, Crouch and McKenzie (2006) proposed that less than 20 participants in a qualitative study helps a researcher build and maintain a close relationship and, thus improve the “open” and “frank” exchange of information.

3.1.3 Data Collection Instruments

In this study, the participants who were elected Assemblywomen helped to gain an in-depth understanding of the socio-economic and political experiences that contributed to their participation in the District Assemblies elections. The researcher employed an interview guide to generate qualitative data from the participants. The interview guide was a set of semi-structured in-depth interviews. The interview was a face-to-face discourse between the researcher and the participants, out of which data was gathered for the study (Harrell & Bradley, 2009). (Refer to Appendix A for the interview guide.)

3.1.4 Methods of Data Collection

An Introductory letter was taken from the Department of Social Studies Education to introduce the researcher to the participants to show that the data that was collected from them was strictly for academic purpose and that confidentiality and anonymity was highly ensured. (Refer to Appendix B for the introductory letter). Face -to-face interviews were conducted with each of the participants. The interview lasted between 30 to 60 minutes. During the face-to-face interview with each of the participants, a safe and convenient place was agreed on by the participants and the researcher to ensure minimal distraction. As Creswell (2014) pointed out, the interview site must be free from interruptions to create the needed cooperation to ensure productive interview and convenient discussion. At the beginning of each in-depth interview session, the researcher gave a compliment remark such as “madam you are a brave woman to involve in local politics in Ghana”. This comment made the women smile and felt relaxed to answer the questions.

3.2 Method of Data Analysis

The interviews conducted for this study were all transcribed, particularly because qualitative research requires words rather than numbers as its unit of analysis (Denscombe, 2007). The researcher went through the data and looked for instances where, as Bogdan and Biklen (2006) advise, “words, patterns of behaviour, subjects’ ways of thinking and events repeat and stands out” (p.173). Following the observation of such instances of repetition, the researcher employed selective coding. Selective coding is a process of integrating and refining categories representing the main themes of the research (Strauss & Corbin, 1994). A coding system called ‘coding categories’ was developed in which the transcripts were read to look for regularities and patterns,

and words or phrases were written down to represent the pattern. These phrases were then interpreted into understandable meanings and discussed.

3.3 Trustworthiness of the Study

Rossmann and Ralis (2012) suggested that trustworthiness is a set of standards that honours participants ethically through researcher sensitivity to the topic and setting. To ensure that the data of the study is trustworthy, the researcher relied on a tape recording of the interview as well as respondents' validation. To ensure validation, the recorded interviews were played to respondents for them to authenticate the responses. Robson (2002) further stated that the aim of a piece of research is to have a measure that is reliable and valid. Examples of ways of dealing with these problems are to clarify the questions for the interviewees, and for the researcher to train himself/herself to be acquainted with possible problems. Verbatim tape transcriptions were availed to participants as soon as possible after the interviews. Greef (2002) pointed out that this allows the information to be clarified and elaborated.

According to Veal (2011), Bryman (2012) and Loh (2013), trustworthiness consists of four different components and these are credibility, that is, the validity of the findings, transferability, that is, the applicability of the findings in other contexts, dependability, that is, the reliability of the findings at another time and confirmability, that is objectivity of the researcher while carrying out his or her research. The combination of these four terms constitutes towards the trustworthiness criteria, thus, forming conventional pillars for qualitative methodology (Phillimore & Goodson, 2004). The researcher achieved trustworthiness in the following ways.

3.3.1 Credibility

To establish the validity, the data for this study was credible. Bradley (1993) referred to credibility as the “adequate representation of the construction of the social world under study” (p. 436). In this study, interviews of the participants were conducted to enable me make better interpretation of the situation. The researcher had a telephone conversation with them to develop good interpersonal relationship with them before the data collection began. In this way, the researcher was able to build trust between herself and each of the respondents. This trust made it possible for the respondents to readily open up for the discussion of all sensitive issues that were covered by the interview for the study.

3.3.2 Transferability

Transferability is the degree to which results of a research study or experiment can be generalized to other groups, settings or situations (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The general methods and procedures of this study were vividly described so that anyone who would want to conduct the same research, using the same methodology will get the same results.

3.3.3 Dependability

Dependability of qualitative research findings corresponds to reliability of findings in quantitative research (Merriam & Associates, 2002 cited in Kusi, 2012 p.103). Dependability requires an audit trail of clear documentation of all research decisions and activities in a chain of evidence from the time of data collection to the conclusion of the research (Bryman, 2001). The researcher had a personal interaction with the respondents from whom the data was collected through clear and unambiguous questions. Also, an independent audit of the research methods and data analysis was

carried out by a Senior Lecturer at the Department of Social Studies Education of University of Education, Winneba, is an expert in qualitative studies and based on established precedents in qualitative research, dependability was established.

3.3.4 Confirmability

Confirmability is the “extent to which the data and interpretation of the study are grounded in events” rather than the researcher’s personal construction (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p.324). The researcher was also aware of personal assumptions, biases and subjectivity that could easily affect the outcome of the study. As a result, the researcher placed herself on an emphatically neutral ground, seeing her respondents as autonomous beings in order to obtain accurate data void of biases. The confirmability of this study was ensured by the thick description and reporting of the research process. Thick descriptions were used to substantiate and illustrate assertions made by respondents to illuminate the context. Respondents’ statements during the interviews were quoted verbatim to ensure that their true emotions and opinions were conveyed. During the interview, respondents were probed further when the need arose for clearer explanations and deep understanding.

3.4 Ethical Consideration

At the beginning of the data collection process, participants were given letters which explained the nature and purpose of the study. Each of them was given a consent form which showed their willingness to freely participate in the study. The participants were also informed that the face-to-face interview would be audio recorded and that the participants were told about their right to quit their participation, as the study was a voluntarily project. As a way of preventing plagiarism, all ideas, writings and other documents or intellectual property of other authors were duly referenced.

3.5 Chapter Summary

This chapter presented the methodology of the study. The qualitative research approach was adopted for the study and a descriptive case study design was used. The study area comprised the Gomoa West, Agona West and the Gomoa Central Districts of the Central Region of Ghana. The population of the study encompassed all the Assembly women and their husbands. The purposive, snowball and convenient sampling techniques were used to select 13 participants for the study. The interview guide which was semi-structured was used to collect data from the participants. The data was collected in a face-to-face interview with each of the participants. The data was transcribed, coded and discussed. The trustworthiness of the study was ensured through credibility, that is, the researcher built trust between herself and the participants to make the participants open up for the discussion, transferability, where vivid descriptions were provided on the procedure and settings of the study, dependability, where an expert in qualitative research audited the work, and confirmability, where the researcher placed herself in an emphatically neutral grounds and saw her participants as autonomous beings. The researcher also ensured confidentiality and anonymity of participants.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings and discussion of the issues raised by the findings. The focus is on presenting the findings obtained through the administration of the research instrument. The data was obtained from women who contested the local assembly elections in three selected districts in the Central Region of Ghana. The districts were, the Agona West, Gomoa West and the Gomoa Central. The women comprised of eight outgone Assembly women, one woman who contested assembly elections and lost, one woman who won but could not go to the Assembly due to ill-health and one woman who withdrew from the contest because her boss at work told her not to involve herself in politics.

4.1 Background Information of Respondents

The researcher gathered data on participants' age, level of education, occupation, religion, marital status, number of children and the current status in terms of district assembly elections. The data is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Demographic Data of Participants

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Age		
30-50	2	18
51-70	8	73
70 and above	1	9
Total	11	100
Level of Education		
Primary	1	9
Middle School	4	36
SSS	2	18
NVTI	2	18
Commercial School	1	9
Diploma	1	9
Total	11	100
Occupation		
Formal	2	18
informal	9	82
Total	11	100
Religion		
Christianity	9	82
Islam	2	18
Total	11	100
Marital Status		
Married	7	64
Single	2	18
Divorced	1	9
Widowed	1	9
Total	11	100
Number of Children		
1	1	9
2	5	45
3	0	0
4	2	18
5	2	18
6	0	0
7	1	9
Total	11	100
Current status		
Outgone (Former)	8	73
Won but not in office	1	9
Withdrawn	1	9
Contested but Lost	1	9
Total	11	100

Source: Field Data, 2020

As shown in Table 1, the ages of the participants ranged from 30 to over 70 years. 2 (18%) of them were between 30 and 50 years; 8 (73%) were between 51 and 70 years

and 1 (9%) was above 70 years. Their educational background was also varied. Of the eleven women, 1 (9%) person had primary education, 4 (36%) were middle school leavers, 2 (18%) of them had secondary education, 1 (9%) completed commercial school, 2 (18%) had National Vocational and Technical Institute (NVTI) education and 1 (9%) person had diploma. With regard to occupation, 2 (18%) out of the eleven women worked in the formal sector (one was a teacher and the other worked with the Gomoa Central District Assembly) while the remaining 9 (82%) work in the informal sector (two of them were business women, four were traders, one was a beautician, one was a medical counter assistant (sold drugs at the drug store) and the other was a farmer).

On religious backgrounds of the respondents, 9 (82%) of the women were Christians and 2 (18%) of them were Muslims. Regarding marriage, 7 (64%) out of the eleven women were married, 2 (18%) of them were single, 1 (9%) was divorced and 1 (9%) widowed. 1 (9%) of them had one child, 5 (45%) of them had two children each, 2 (18%) had four children each, 2 (18%) of them had five children each and 1 (9%) of them had seven children. Out of the eleven women, 8 (73%) of them were former assembly members, 1 (9%) won but could not go to the Assembly because of some ill-health, 1 (9%) person contested, but lost and the last person contested, but later withdrew from the contest because she said her boss at work asked her not to involve herself in politics. In order to facilitate the discussion of the views of the participants, they were anonymously personified with code names that ranged from R1 to R11.

The respondents were asked whether the background information gathered from them had any negative influence on them. With regard to their levels of education, almost all

of them (10 out of 11) indicated that it had no adverse influence on their participation in local level politics. R1, for example, noted:

No, my level of education does not influence me negatively. In the assembly concept, if you are not formally educated you can contest for the Assembly elections. We know some Assembly members who are not formally educated, some cannot even write their names, but they have the zeal and the will power to work, they are good organizers and have home sense. It is When it comes to writing that they will suffer, but when it comes to working on the field and in the community, they can do it. So, education is not a challenge. But if you have a little education it is good because it will help you read and understand document presented to you at the Assembly meetings because the documents are written in English. Also, it will help you go far in your political career.

R4 also added, *“No. if I want to write a letter, I call my children to help me and I edit it.”* The remaining eight respondents just said “no”. R7 who was of a different view said, *“For my education, they talked about it. One of the two men I contested with was highly educated but I was better than the other one.”* The point then is that although most of the women had low educational backgrounds, it did not prevent them from participating in local level politics. It is obvious, however that education is critical if they wished to be effective local politicians because it would enhance their ability to read and understand the documents presented to them at the Assembly. R1 exemplifies the foregoing with her curt advice, *“It will also help one go far in one’s political career.”*

On the occupation of the respondents, all the respondents said that their occupations did not have any adverse effect on their ability to participate in local level politics or perform well as Assembly Members. R1, R2, R3, R4, R5, R7, R8, R10 and R11 were all employed in the informal sector, but this did not have negative effect on their participation. More specifically, R1 said, *“My occupation did not influence me*

negatively.” R2 stated, *“Because it is my own business, it didn’t have any effect.”* R3 also added, *“I don’t work for someone so it did not affect me.”* R5 also said, *“No, we were informed about meetings with letters so I planned for them. They didn’t have any negative effect on my work at the District Assembly.”* R6 and R9 were both employed in the formal sector and they also said their occupation did not have an adverse effect on them. R6 said, *“No, it didn’t have any negative effect. My staff even helped me.”* R9 also added *“No, I did my campaign after work.”*

From the above, it can be said that, the occupation of the respondents did not have any negative effect on their participation in local level governance, which means that no matter one’s occupation, whether one is employed in either the formal or informal sector, one can also engage in politics. With regard to the number of children and the effects it had on the respondents’ participation, ten out of the eleven respondents said that the number of children had no negative effect on their participation while one respondent said though it was difficult, but she was able to combine taking care of her children and her political career. R6 said *“When my husband died, I was with children of two years and three months old, but by the grace of God, I was able to pass through all the problems and I made it”*. R1 said, *“No, the number of children I have, did not influence me negatively”*. R4 also said, *“No, they are grown ups so it didn’t affect me.”* R10 said, *“No, I have siblings so they helped me.”* Similar expressions were made by the others. Apparently, maternal responsibilities of child-caring, regardless of the number they had did not hamper their participation in local level governance or the success of their political careers. While it seems challenging to combine parental responsibilities and politics, it was not an insurmountable barrier.

With regard to age, almost all the participants discounted it as a challenge to their participation. However, R3 who was 55 years said, *“Yes, some people said I was too*

old so I should rest.” It may, therefore, be discerned that in their case, as long as one has attained the statutory age of 18 years that makes her an adult, and has the physical and mental capabilities to engage in local politics, age poses no barriers.

The Districts of the participants are presented below.

Table 2 : District of Participants

Participant	District
R1	Agona West
R2	Agona West
R3	Gomoa West
R4	Agona West
R5	Agona West
R6	Gomoa Central
R7	Agona West
R8	Agona West
R9	Gomoa West
R10	Gomoa West
R11	Gomoa West
H1	Agona West
H2	Agona West

Source: Field Data, 2020

Table 2 shows the districts of the participants. As there were more females who involve themselves in local politics in the Agona West District, there were less females in the Gomoa Central as compared to Agona West and Gomoa West. H1 and H2 were the husbands of two women Assembly members. H1 and H2 were used because of anonymity in order to facilitate the discussion and insertion of their views.

Research Question One: *What are the socio-economic factors that affect women's participation in local governance in the Central Region of Ghana?*

4.2. Socio-Economic Factors

A rationale for increasing women's representation in local politics is that they are likely to be more abreast with the issues affecting females and, therefore, could play constructive roles in responding to their developmental needs. But in Ghana, as in many other places around the world, women face many barriers in their quest to participate in politics. This section attempts to present the findings and discussion of the socio-economic barriers local female politicians in the three District Assemblies face. The socio-economic barriers the participants discussed include lack of self confidence, limited funds and unsupportive assembly.

4.2.1 Lack of self confidence

A lack of self-confidence was a theme that was unanimously identified by the respondents as a barrier to women's political participation. Self-confidence is the belief in one's ability to perform or undertake an activity or a job. Benabou and Tirole (2003) asserted that one's ability to engage in social interaction shows his or her self-confidence. In the context of this study, confidence relates to women trusting themselves to break through the glass ceiling efficiently (Vliet & Temming, 2017) and, interact, network to engage others and to perform executive roles and duties.

In this respect, R3 noted, *"When you do not believe in yourself, you cannot enter into politics."* According to R6, *"If you are a woman and you do not have the zeal and believe in yourself, you cannot enter into politics."* R9 reiterated:

I have the zeal and I believe that I can do it. If you are a woman and you don't have confidence in yourself, you cannot enter into politics. We should not listen

to what the people will say against us. When you contest and lose for the first time, try again. It is better to try and fail than to fail to try.

Others such as R1, R2 and R7 lamented the lack of self-belief and fear restrains many women from venturing into politics. More specifically, R1 shared this view, “*some will say, hmm can I really do this? If you do that then it means you do not have confidence in yourself*”. R2 added:

Some women ask whether they can contest with the men. All they need is to have confidence in themselves that they can compete with them. I competed with three men and I won. So far as I have been able to do it, you can also do it. We the women should believe in ourselves.

Besides, R5 revealed, “*Some women are afraid to enter into politics because they are afraid that people will laugh at them when they lose*”. R8 added, “*Some women look down upon themselves due to the fear that they would be laughed at if they enter into politics*”. R4 on the other hand advised:

The women should be bold and pray and ask God for strength and when you get the strength there is nothing you cannot do. So, we shouldn't think about the money involved but rather think about what we can do for the nation.

In this respect, R10 added, “*When you believe in yourself that you can do it you will do it. When we say we cannot do it, then we cannot do it*” R11 said “*let us not be dull, let us push forward and believe that what the men will do, we the women can do it and do it better. When we have confidence, we can do It*”. The low level of confidence most of the participants had may be attributed to the roles they are socialized into right from their infancy as females. The highly patriarchal Ghanaian society prioritizes males in many aspects of society, for example in education, gender roles, allocation of resources and power to make decisions. But as Evertsson and Neramo (2007), for example, argued that when women's level of education and their social status are increased, their self-

confidence improves and their share in house work decreases. There may be two-way effects as the women's social status, and self-confidence may urge them to develop the interest to engage in local politics, not to mention their relative freedom from time and energy consuming domestic chores. According to Bénabou and Tirole (2001), people's self-confidence affects their social interaction. Obviously, one of the attributes that could urge an individual to develop confidence is to interact with other social beings. Besides, political ambition contributes to a decision to engage in the local government system and take up a role as an assembly member in Ghana (Adusei-Asante, 2012). In effect, persons with strong self-confidence are likely to engage in politics. Politics is an occupation, which persons with confidence could easily engage in as with the social interaction, they would be building constituencies to harness political support. This is one of the tenets of the social capital theory.

4.2.2 Limited Funds as a Barrier to Women's Participation in Local Level Politics

Another barrier identified by the women in this study was the lack of financial resource. According to R2, for instance, said:

We are in the Agona West District and all the six women who contested lost because they had no money to give to the electorate to vote for them. In the eight years I contested and won, I never used money, but now people invested money into it to look as if there is some huge financial benefit in the District Assembly work. So, when people come to you and say Assembly woman, give me money before I vote for you and you don't get the money for them, they go to your opponent and your opponent will give them. But we should understand that the money you have been given is for four years, whether the person can do the work or not. So, what I will plead is that the money they give to people to vote for them should stop.

R6 also added:

When I contested, I incurred a lot of debt. I had to borrow from people. The food the people ate was all on me. When you don't share money too people will not vote for you. So, as I was sharing five cedis other opponents were also sharing ten cedis and over. There was no support from my family too, but because I was determined to help my area, I tried hard and won. So, what I can say is that, the government should support the women financially.

The narratives from both R2 and R6 bear their origins from the perceived vote buying in politics in the country today where many people do not see any direct benefits from the government, but assume that those in power are able to enrich themselves through their engagement in politics, they develop a quid pro quo mentality. Potential voters literally sell their votes to the highest bidder. R3 supported the above statement and hinted:

Politics has now turned into money. If you do not give the electorate money to vote for you, they will not vote for you despite the good intentions and plans you have for the people and the electoral area.

Besides, in order to demonstrate some amount of empathy with them, physical resources necessary to facilitate minimum livelihoods or to enable them to operate has to be provided even if the local government has no means or are unwilling to do that. In this respect, R7 noted, *"The District Assembly will not give you shovel and other tools for clean-up campaigns in the community so I had to use my own money to buy such tools."* R1 also said,

Compaigning in the district level electorate involves a lot of money for printing of poster and feeding your campaign team, owing others. This is a huge financial burden so when women think about all these costs they are going to incur, it discourages them from entering into politics".

And as R3 pointed out, *“If you have the plight of the people at heart you will still push through and bring something good to your electoral area.”* The huge financial burden in local politics, according to the participants, therefore, discourages many females from venturing into it, because as women, they are already financially disadvantaged. According to R4, as a major challenge:

Lack of money prevents women from entering into politics and those already in the District Assembly also suffer because people will not look at the good works you have done but rather want money. If you are unable to provide it when they ask for it, it will make them say negative things about you, regardless of the developmental projects you have initiated.

The pressure to meet the demands of the electorate could push some of them into financial ruin as recounted by R5:

Money is a great challenge. Sometimes, you have to borrow from other people and also use your personal income for the campaign, yet when you lose, you will not get any support from anybody. You have to defray the debt by yourself without any help.

R8 relativised this when she added,

Even the men with more financial strength than the women face a lot of financial problem. So financial problem is a strong barrier to women participation in politics. Most women are not financially strong and this affects them.

In effect,

Politics at the local level involves a lot of money, printing of poster and feeding of your campaign team is a huge financial burden so when women think about all these costs they are going to incur, it discourages them from entering into politics (R1).

Engaging in politics requires some finance on the part of an aspiring candidate to get campaign programs running. However, the call for women to enter public life is

hampered by most women starting with less financial resources as compared to men. So, if women are not sponsored and helped out, they would not succeed in their political careers.

4.2.3 Unsupportive Family

Familial support is very important for a political candidate because family defines the identity of an individual (Umar, 2011). While the majority of participants in the study were supported by their families, others who did not get that backing felt somehow deterred from seeking public office at the local level. R6 in particular lost the political contest because her family was against the idea and therefore did not give her the requisite support.

For my family it was a lot of issues. I had problems with my parents so my they ejected me from the house. I lost the second time partly because of my mother. There were such issues the person I was contesting with used as an opportunity to create problems for me. He went to my mother and held her hands to the polling station and she voted against me. Some people were saying that even my family members do not support me so they shouldn't vote for me. (R6)

Sometimes, it becomes difficult for the prospective female politician to choose between her decision and that of the family. Perhaps, as a result of the sexist insults and the stigmatization, "*families are reluctant to have their women in the public eye*" (Ofei Aboagye, 2000, p. 4). A woman who attempts or ventures into politics is judged according to the dogma that 'good' women do not indulge themselves in public spheres (Castillejo, 2009). Hence, according to R1, she stated that, sometimes personal courage must be involved to override the pessimism of family members she said:

Some members of my family told me to take my rest because there are a lot of insults in politics. Some even said that we do not contest with our physical eyes but what I always say is that if someone has been able to do it and it wasn't a machine that did it, then so far as am a human being I can also do it.

Apart from R1 and R6, all the other participants said they had support from their families. For example, R2 opined, *“My family was in full support. My husband, children and my siblings were all in support”*. According to R3, her family encouraged her that they were ready to offer her their full support. R8 maintained, *“My family members are not in this town, but when they heard about my involment in local level politics, they were happy and supported me”*; while R10 maintained *“family members were so happy when I won. They really jubilated”*.

It is clear from the data that some of the women had familial support while others did not. Those who did not get support from their families lost in their first attempt. This shows that familial support is very crucial in the success stories of women in politics, hence women who are not supported by their families may be discouraged from entering into politics, even at the local level where competition for votes is not as intense as at the national level. The women are from families, and therefore, needed the family support as they perform their triple roles (reproduction, production and community responsibilities). Engaging in politics is the period in the women’s political career that needed emotional and financial assistance from these close relations including spouses, siblings, mothers and grown-up children.

The Family as an institution plays a role to make the social capital function. For instance, Heffron (2001) identified the family as a structure that establishes bonding capital or bonding links as far as social capital is concerned. Bonding capital or bonding relationships are based on a sense of shared identities, shared culture or ethnicity with family, close friends and people with similar backgrounds. The understanding and support from some family members gave the women courage to engage in their political activities successfully. In the social capital discourse about a family and the linking

bonds, family, therefore, should have been the significant bonding network that the female aspirants could benefit as the principal supporting factor. Heffron (2001) asserted that bonding links are with the family and close friends who could be committed to drawing up campaign strategies with aspiring contestants to compete in the DA elections. The support from the family reflects Putnam's (1993) reference to the social capital concept, where he argued that the individual felt belonged to the family where they have a collective identity. The women gained support because of the social bonding and commitment, and the close relationships they had with their families, that is, the social resources. According to the order of importance, the family could have been the most significant because of the associated thick trust or bonding relation. However, due to the patriarchal nature of the Ghanaian society, some family members continue to perceive that a woman's place is the home. Therefore, unsupportive family is a barrier to women's participation in local level governance. According to the participants, these are the socio-economic barriers that affect women from participating in local politics.

Research Question Two: *What are the cultural barriers that affect women's participation in local governance in the Central Region of Ghana?*

4.3. Cultural Barriers

Cultural beliefs and practices are the norms, values, customs, marital and religious practices, which are imbibed through socialization. In the process, there is some amount of gendered construction that pushes males and females to assimilate them differently. Hence, the assimilation of Ghanaian cultural beliefs and practices have led to differentiated gender roles for women in politics. Ghana's socialization processes, just like many other societies in the world, tend to emphasize particular roles as what

women should play. These gendered roles are influenced by their cultural values, beliefs and practices. As Iwanaga (2008) indicated, the lack of interest to participate in local politics is linked to the nature of gender construction which tends to restrict and psychologically hinder women from aspiring to public office. In other words, the internalization of the socio-cultural beliefs and practices from childhood through to adulthood largely determine the nature of activities and jobs men and women do. In the traditional Ghanaian society, traditions continue to emphasize women's primary role as mothers and housewives and to restrict them to those roles. A traditional strong, patriarchal value system favors sexually-segregated roles and traditional cultural values which militate against the advancement, progress and participation of women in any political process. In the words of Kassa (2015: p 3-4), societies all over the world are dominated by an ideology of 'a woman's place'. According to this ideology, women should only play the role of a 'working mother' which is generally low paid and apolitical.

Cultural ideas about women can affect their level of participation throughout the political process, from an individual woman's decision to engage in politics, to party selection of candidates and to the decision made by electorate on the day of elections. According to Kassa (2015), these cultural ideas about women make them face prejudice as leaders because people tend to think that leadership is a masculine trait. Even in situations where women have made gains in employment or education, they still face cultural barriers to their participation in politics. In this respect, all the participants noted that cultural beliefs and practices are obstacles to women's desire to involve themselves in local politics. For example, in some traditional Ghanaian homes, females are socialized and encouraged to marry early and give birth to a large number of children to expand the family lineage. In contrast, fewer men are encouraged into early

marriage, and their capacity to engage in public life is less constrained by nurturing children. As further evidence of how the socio-cultural beliefs and practices had influenced the thoughts and behaviors of the Ghanaian society, participants R4 and R5 asserted that members of their communities hold the belief that men cannot stand by for women to lead them. Thus, the notion that men ought to be leaders has been a product of gender roles and socialization, which have resulted in men and women developing different attitudes and behaviors toward the socio-economic and political activities and jobs (Crespi, 2004). Besides, R9 asserted that society sees women as belonging to the kitchen and, therefore, it believes that they should leave politics for men. She said:

Our forefathers pushed the men and left the women behind and it made life difficult. But when both men and women move together it will make life easy. Our forefathers made it clear that the place for the woman is the kitchen, but gender equality makes us understand that when women are involved, they can also go forward and help.

R1 added, *“Men think that they were created to be leaders so it pains them when a woman takes their leadership positions from them so most of the men are sometimes not happy when women compete with them.”* R8 recounted, *“We were made to believe that home activities such as cooking, washing and taking care of children belong to women whilst outside home activities belong to men but because of education that has changed.”*

Women are over burdened with different household activities like cooking, washing, sweeping and caring for kids, among others. All these activities make women busy in the house, and thus impede their involvement in politics. According to Kassa (2015), a study conducted by Gidudu on Socio-cultural factors that hinders women’s access to management positions revealed that women have to do house duties, gardening and

washing while men go out for duty and also go for further studies outside the family as women stay back to take charge of the family. Culturally, there is a belief that women are supposed to be led but not to lead. In fact, stereotyped notions about women constitute a major barrier.

4.3.1 Abuse and Harassment

Violence against women in politics not only obstructs women from participating in politics, but also challenges the concept of good governance (Erturk, 2008). Some women, including R2, R3, R6, R8 and R9 revealed that abuse and harassment deter some women from participating in local politics. Specifically, the women described some of the abusive and harassing comments as coming from members of their communities. R2 said, “*Some people even said that women who engage in politics are prostitutes.*”

R3 also reiterated:

Women who involve themselves in politics are sometimes accused of being prostitutes, and most especially when they are seen often with men. They are accused of snatching people's husbands from them. The wives of the men normally start circulating such rumor, so if the women do not take it as they are helping their community, but listen to such rumors, then it will discourage them.

R6 asserted, “*women who defy all odds and engage in politics are sometimes tagged as prostitutes.*” According to R8, in her bid to become a female politician, she was tagged as ‘*obaa akokonini*’ (*female cock*) and was told “*politics is a game that belongs to males.*” According to R9, some people insulted and made mockery of her. She recounted, “*People insulted and gave me a lot of names but that did not discourage me.*” The abuse, especially verbal abuse against women who try to engage in politics in order to contribute their quota to national development is really a strong barrier that

discourages less courageous women from entering into politics. When other women observe the treatment female politicians endure, they are deterred from following suit. Most of the participants apparently endured challenges relating to insults and personal attacks in their communities, but they worked hard to break those psychological barriers as well.

4.3.2 Political Affiliations in the Assembly

In principle, the Local Assemblies in Ghana are supposed to be non-partisan, hence people make themselves available because they believe in doing something positive for the common good of their society without regard to any political party. However, the partisan nature of the Assemblies implies that Assembly members and their constituents ascribe Assembly members' actions and inactions to one political party or the other. Participants, R1, R3 and R7 experienced this in a variety of ways.

R1 contended:

What discourages me is the partisan nature of the District Assembly elections. We all know that the elections are non-partisan, but because of the politics they do, at times party A and party B may not agree on issues and this makes it working in such an atmosphere very difficult. This discourages me.

According to R3:

The partisan nature of the Assembly is a big problem. When you do not belong to the ruling government, it is very difficult for your request to be granted and because of that assisting developing your electoral area becomes very difficult. When you are not able to bring any developmental project to your electoral area too people will not vote for you when you decide to contest again. So, when you are a woman and you do not have money to do something for your Electoral Area without depending on the Assembly then, you cannot win in the next elections if you contest again.

R7 added:

All the women who contested last four years lost because the District Assembly didn't help them. For example, the Assembly women at Wawase and Abodom contested but they lost because the Assembly didn't help them to develop their electoral areas.

In Ghana, the law that established the local government system ruled out partisan politics, and therefore, local level politics is non-partisan, where the involvement of a political party in local elections is considered illegal. For Ghanaian women, the significant effect of the local government reforms was the flexibility and its non-partisan nature that offered them the opportunity to participate in politics at the local level (Allah-Mensah, 2005). The partisan nature of the District Assembly affected the relationships among Assembly members and this impacted on the Assembly women constituents' relationships, which adversely affected the women's chances for re-election. For instance, when an Assembly woman was perceived to belong to a party and those constituents were not affiliated with the same party, they did not commit themselves to assist the member to undertake cooperative activities and projects.

Research Question Three: *What are the religious barriers that affect women's participation in local level governance in the Central Region of Ghana?*

4.4 Religious Barriers

4.4.1 Unsupportive Religious Organizations

Arguments about women's inferiority to men are present across all dominant religions, and religion has long been used to exclude women from aspects of social, political, or religious life around the world (Boateng, 2017). Religion also has had a role to play in the political lives of the participants in their various electoral areas. While the religious organizations of some of the participants played very effective roles in their political

lives, others were also of the view that their religious organizations were against them, and consequently they lost partly because of them. The majority of the participants though noted that their churches were very supportive of them.

According to R1:

The church did not have any negative influence on my decision. My pastors even prayed for me because they knew what I can do so they even encouraged me to pursue it because according to them, Christians are also supposed to participate in politics. At first, the Christians were sitting back and criticizing the non-believers when they become leaders, who were not able to do things better. So, now when the pastors see that you are a believer and you want to contest, they would encourage you to go. I am an Assemblies of God church member and my church did not have any negative influence on me. The church really supported me.

Both R2 and R3 noted, *“their religion did not have any negative influence on them”*. and were even supported with prayers by the church members but not money. R3 noted further, *“I saw that if God helps me to win someone might even look at me and go to church.”* For R7, the church support came with an ominous warning: *“My pastor told me that I will win but when I win, I will have a lot of enemies and it actually happened.”* R8 and R9 had contrary views because they had no support from their churches and even believed their loss could be partially blamed on their churches.

R8 said:

My church members are hypocrites because they have been divided along party lines. Most of them are NDC supporters so they hosted my NDC opponent who is not a member of the church and voted for him so I have even stopped attending the church.

R9 also added, *“Hmm my church didn’t help me at all. One member of the church told me that when they divide the church into four groups, three did not vote for me.”* Religion

is as central to the majority of the people's lives as it is to politics. Religion has, therefore, been another agent of patriarchy, which could negatively influence women's leadership abilities and political lives (Lu, 2016; Norris & Inglehart, 2004). The major religious sects in Ghana are Christianity, Traditional and Islamic. The 2010 Population and Housing Census in Ghana indicated that 71.2% of the population were identified as Christians, 17.6% as Moslems and 5.2% as Traditional religious worshippers, and 5.3% of the people were not affiliated to any religion (Nyarko, 2013). This was evident in the study as 9 representing 82% of the participants were Christians and 2 representing 18% of the participants were Muslims. However, some of these religious organizations were not willing to support their female members to win political power. According to Burke (2012), conservative religions such as Catholicism limit women's leadership role, and the church is not willing to involve them in their religious institutional structures, and the reasons given emphasise the supposed existential differences between men and women. Most critics argue that the churches that were against women's leadership position only wanted to mire themselves in ancient patriarchal tradition (Mahamadu, 2010; Scott, 2010; Vlas & Gherghina, 2012).

Similarly, the Islamic religion has never authorized females to lead or preach to a congregation of mixed sexes (Siddiqi, 2005). Though the Islamic Religion does not authorize females to lead, the participants who were Muslims said they were encouraged by their fellow Muslims, both males and females, to contest the District Assembly elections. According to Boateng (2017), the Ghanaian traditional religious beliefs, in the form of taboos and myths, also influence the economic and political empowerment opportunities and gender roles of many Ghanaian women. Thus, it can be observed that the predominant religions influencing the contemporary Ghanaian society forbid women from engaging in leadership roles. Since politics as a profession

requires engaging in social leadership, for the many of the females who have professed the religious beliefs that limit women's leadership roles, this has made them reluctant to engage in public activities such as politics. It can be seen from the study that the ancient religious patriarchal tradition that was against female leadership roles is gradually fading out in the Agona West, Gomoa West and Gomoa Central Districts because most of the women gained support from their religious organisations even though few of them admitted that they did not get the needed support from these organisations.

Research Question Four: *What are the existing avenues that support women as they participate in local governance politics in the Central Region of Ghana?*

4.5 Existing Avenues that Support Women in Local Level Politics

There are efforts that have been made by both local and international activists and governments to ensure that women have fair representation and participation in local level politics. Affirmative action has been adopted by governments, public and private institutions such as political parties, educational establishments, corporations and companies to address a history of systemic discrimination and exclusion of particular social groups or to encourage the efforts of particular social groups in the interests of certain development goals.

Historically, the recommendation for affirmative action in governance was approved through a directive from the Office of the President of Ghana. Thus, Ghana governments had used affirmative action since independence from colonialism to address gender imbalances in government (Tsikata, 2009). NGOs and other gender advocates campaign throughout the country to make people aware and also to educate males and females on the importance of equalizing gender. For example, in the District

Assembly elections, most of the non-governmental organizations advocate for women to contest and this helps to increase the number of women in the District Assemblies. The gender advocates, women's groups and NGOs also picketed the Parliament of Ghana and the Presidency to demand action to address issues of gender inequality (Boateng, 2017). The NGOs included the International Federation of Women Lawyers; Ghana (FIDA-Ghana); Women in Law and Development in Africa-Ghana (WiLDAF-Ghana); the Hunger Project-Ghana; and Network for Women's Rights in Ghana (NETRIGHT). Each of these NGOs has specific roles and activities they engage in.

There are civil society organizations, NGOs, women's groups and political parties who empower women through skill training in communication, public speaking and financial sponsorship. Some of these groups also sensitise the public to support the promotion of gender equality. In the quest to find out from the women in Agona West, Gomoa West and Gomoa Central districts whether avenues existed in their districts to support them in their political careers, some of the women revealed that some avenues existed while others also said they did not come into contact with such avenues. For instance, R1 and R9 said that they had support from such organizations. R1 said:

I did not actually see any avenue or institutions with the responsibility of supporting women to get into politics, but what I know is Agona District Civic Union of which I am its president. The union can be found in both the Agona East and West districts. It has been in the system for long. What we do is to bridge the gap between the Assembly and the citizens. Some people think the Assembly is for just some specific group of people but we educate the people and teach them that, that is not the case. Also, the National Commission for Civic Education also educate women to participate in politics. Some time ago, Abantu for Women organized a workshop for women of which I attended. There are other NGOs that during election times organize workshop for women and educate them on the importance to engage in politics. They also take participants through how to campaign and also give them campaign messages.

There are certain things that women are not supposed to do because of some cultural barriers. So, some of these NGOs educate women on how to dress well for their campaigns. Some of these NGOs helped me to pursue my political career.”

R1 who is from an electoral area in the Agona West District was of the view that there were some organizations of which she was part that helped her in her political career. This showed that there are avenues in her District that other women who aspire to be political leaders can tap in to enrich themselves to help their political careers grow. R9 added, *“Yes. I had support from an NGO and they encouraged me to contest.”* R9 who is from an electoral area in the Gomoa West District explained further that it was an NGO in her electoral area that encouraged her to contest the elections and she could have won through the support from that NGO. This also showed that there is an avenue in Gomoa West District. R6, a member of an electoral Area in the Gomoa Central District, added, *“There was no support from organizations in my electoral area but I went to Apam for one or two workshops.”* This indicate that though there is no organization in her electoral area that is supporting women to build their political careers but she made an effort to attend some workshops in a different district because her career was of much importance to her.

R2, R3, R4, R5, R7, R8, R10 and R 11 were of opposing views. They said they had no support from any organization. According to R2, from an electoral Area in the Agona West District, she did not get any support from any organization or institution because none of such organizations existed in her electoral area and she did not make any effort to find out from other districts. She said, *“There are no avenues. We didn’t get support from any institution.”* From an electoral area in the Gomoa West District, R3 said that it was members from her political party that organized workshops of which she

attended, but there was no recognized institution that she got support from. She said, *“There are no avenues that support women in local level politics unless members from your party support you.”* The rest of the participants said they did not come into contact with such organizations mainly because such organizations did not exist in their electoral areas. While some of the women were attending workshops outside their electoral areas, others were not utilizing such opportunities because they said such organizations did not exist in their electoral areas. It is clear from the study that there are some avenues that exist to support women to get elected into District Assemblies but, these avenues are not enough and, therefore, a lot of such avenues should be created in every electoral area to support women so that gender issues would be adequately dealt with.

In the researcher's bid to find answers to the research questions of the study, two themes emerged from the data collected. These themes were the things that enabled the women to participate in politics and also helped them to get elected into office that is, enabling factors, and the challenges the women faced after they assumed office, that is, challenging factors.

4.5 Enabling Factors

The enabling factors were the factors that helped the women to involve themselves in politics and the factors that helped them to get elected into office. The Social Capital Theory provides the context to situate the emerging themes in the data collected. The study found that the Assembly women had teamed up with the electorate to resolve common problems in their electoral areas.

4.5.1 Individual Motivation Strategy

R1, R5 and R7 stated that they had passion for being leaders and were ambitious to become public figure working towards development and felt equal to their male counterparts. More specifically, R1 said:

Women are part of development so they can also contest and I believe I can also become an Assembly member and contribute my quota to the development of my community, that is why I engaged myself in politics.

R5 added:

What a man can do, a woman with the will and zeal can also do it. Also, I love my community. There were so many things we needed in the Electoral Area, but the then Assembly man tried hard and his tenure expired and I also contested and was voted for. It is not everything that men should do, women can also contribute. A woman can become a President, Prime Minister, Member of Parliament and Assembly woman among others. So, I decided to contest”.

R7 engaged herself in politics because she had the interest. The women stated they got involved in local politics, as they believed getting involved could help them petition the government to address women’s needs and concerns. They had to socialize and build networks that supported them in their political careers. Specifically, R2, R3, R4, R6, R7 and R8 indicated that they were friendly and sociable or approachable, and therefore, were receptive to all manner of persons in their constituencies, towns, villages and electoral areas even before they declared their intentions to contest the DA elections. Bornstein *et al.* (2008) argued that social networking is a component of social capital stemming from the norms of trust in human relationships to build society. Therefore, most of the women developed a strong social network with members of their communities by relating well with them. The argument is that the concept of social capital relates to investing in social relations with expected returns as individuals network to benefit from it (Kreuter & Lezin, 2002).

Moreover, R1, R2 and R3 made it clear that they were determined and dedicated to the development of the community, including the construction of drainage systems, bridges, places of convenience and markets in their areas. The data indicated that nine women had the desire to engage in politics, hence were determined to get elected into the District Assemblies. R1 and R8 announced their confidence in their preparedness to aspire to be Member of Parliament and NPP women organizer respectively. R1 said, *“I have planned to go on the ticket of LPG Party to contest for the Member of Parliament position”* while with a smile, R8 said, *“I always strive to move forward in life so I will be contesting for NPP women’s organizer.”* The women believed that it was time for them to get involved in leadership positions to work hand-in-hand with government to address the concerns of all, especially women in the community. Thus, these elected women in the local areas had developed bridging links or bridging capital with local authorities and the District Assemblies. These were the various reasons that motivated them to involve themselves in the Assembly elections.

4.5.2 Campaign Strategy

Even at the local levels of politics, campaigning to get the attention and eventual votes of the electorate is important. This demands personal involvement in terms of several hours of engagement and interactions with individuals and at local radio stations and among others. But there are variations in the extent to which these combinations of actions are adopted and applied. The enquiry into how this played out for the women yielded a number of views. Some of the strategies they adopted were regular involvement in communal activities, demonstration of excellent personal attitudes in their relations with others, and their efforts to address challenges and problems of their electoral areas. In this regard, R2 noted:

I know the problems of the area, and based on that I started solving them before deciding to stand for the Assembly elections. First of all, we had sanitation problems so I took it upon myself to go and stand at the refuse dump every morning to ensure that the refuse was not thrown out arbitrary. The children who could not throw it in the bin I collected it from them and threw it in the bin for them. Also, we had low current with the street lights so I took it upon myself and went to the Electricity Company to lobby for them to come and change the electricity poles and wires. So, all these things I did helped me to win the elections when I contested.

R2 identified the problems of her electoral area and tried her possible best to find solutions to some of them. By so doing, she was able to build connections with the people in her community, and they began to appreciate the good things she was doing and as a result of that, she gained the love of her constituents and won the District Assembly elections when she contested. Similarly, R3 assumed responsibility for finding solutions to some of the problems a local school was beset with. She said:

For the first election no one knew me but what helped me to take office in the second election was my constant involvement in communal activities in my community. Also, it is not everything that we will depend on the government so some of the things we have to use our own strength to do it. There is a school in my electoral area that I constantly checked whether the School Feeding Programme was going on well. Also, I joined hands with the teachers and organized PTA meetings, and also contributed something to see to the wellbeing of the school. All the parents were happy with what I was doing so all these helped me to win the elections.

R6 was of the same view as R3 when it comes to the involvement in activities in their communities. She said,

The Assembly work deals with human beings, so, how well you relate with people can determine your chances of winning or losing. When there is communal labour I buy porridge and biscuit for the people before I go to work. So, all these I did made me win the elections.

R4 also stated, “*As I said earlier, I wasn’t dull in my community. I part took in whatever went on in there.*” R7 also revealed, “*I am very popular in my community*”, but in order to maintain that popularity, “*I involved myself in everything that went on there*” while R8 also acted similarly; “*I involved myself in everything that went on in my community.*”

The above findings clearly show that, if women really have the aspiration of involving themselves in politics, then they have to participate in everything that goes on in your communities in order to build the necessary social capital. Thus, these elected women in the local areas had developed bridging links or bridging capital with local authorities and the District Assemblies. As indicated by the Social Capital Theory, bridging capital is the vertical connections between communities, which extends beyond individuals and organisations (Narayan, 2002; Dolfsma & Dannreuther, 2003; Keeley, 2007). These women won elections because they had developed linkages with the people at the grassroots through their participation in public activities and other communal events such as funerals, weddings and festivals. Others had to adhere to the social values by being friendly and approachable in their relationships with the electorate. These became their strategies to help them win the DA elections.

4.5.3 Marital Support

Almost all the married participants claimed that they had a very strong support from their spouses, and the help from their husbands went a long way to help them in their political careers. According to them, their husbands helped them with the house chores during their absence and also took very good care of their children. Some also supported them financially. The respondents were asked whether their marital status had any negative influence on them and almost all of them said no.

More specifically, R1 said, “*No, my marital status did not have any negative influence on me. My husband even encouraged me*” while R2 replied; “*No it didn’t. My husband helped me a lot through my campaign. God bless my husband.*” R3 said, “*....my husband was in support. I sometimes go for Assembly meetings without an invitation letter, but he will be the one to remind me to go when the time comes.*” R7 commented that in an unusual situation, she had the support of her partner. She said, “*I have a concubine and he supported me. But according to the woman Assembly Member, during the campaign period, someone said this woman who doesn’t have a husband when you vote for her and you need her to do something for you, you will go and meet her having sex with someone*”.

The case of R7 shows how patriarchy manifest itself as Adidbi (2006) pointed out. According to Adidbi, patriarchy is having precise control over women and family; in this instance, referring to how women relied on men for survival as wives, sought permission from husbands, male partners or fathers before engaging in politics and any public activities. Because patriarchy still exists in our societies, the people could not have said same about a male contestant who was equally single as R7. Even in situation where the couple belong to different political parties, as was the case of R11, she was supported by her husband. Hence as far as this study is concerned, the participants had support from their husbands and this helped them to focus their attention on political activities as well as giving them the social stability and respect they needed for the job they were doing.

To determine the roles that husbands played in the political lives of their wives, two husbands were conveniently selected to constitute the significant others of the study. The husbands of R1 and R5 were conveniently selected. The first husband was

represented by H1 while the second one was represented by H2. The husbands were asked the roles they played in the political lives of their wives. H1 said:

I really helped her. She is educated and I had to help unravel the kind of knowledge she has. Though I am the man of the house but I did not intimidate her. I helped her in pounding fufu and also preparing soup. When you come and I have prepared soup, you might think I went to the catering school.

H2 also said, *“I supported her when she decided to contest, because I knew she had good intentions. Where ever she wanted to go that had to do with her career, I allowed her to go.”* The men were then asked the kind of advice they would give to their fellow men who do not allow their wives to participate in politics. H1 said:

As a man if you subject your wife to the kitchen it is very bad. There is an adage that two heads are better than one so you should think with your wife in everything. Your wife is your helper and that does not mean you should force her to the kitchen. I will advice my fellow men to rally their support behind their wives if they want to involve themselves in local level politics. In this 21st Century, what men can do, women can also do it so let us all support our wives.

H2 also added, *“men should be patient and support their wives.”* They were again asked the advantages they enjoyed with their wives being assemblywomen. H1 replied, *“she shares the knowledge she gained from the Assembly with me and it made our marriage life better.”* H2 stated, *“she became enlightened and it helped us in our marriage.”* Finally, they were asked the challenges they encountered with their wives being Assembly women. Both H1 and H2 were of the view they did not encounter any problems. H1 said”

I know my wife and she know me too. I will not go for other women when she goes for workshops. I also trust her so I did not encounter any concrete challenge. I am even advising her to stand for the Member of Parliament position.

H2 also said, “*I did not encounter any challenge.*” The study shows that spousal support is very important in a political career as in other careers. Unfortunately, this is not always the case for many women because their spouses disagree or disengage themselves from their activities because some believe that their wives should restrict themselves to their families by way of looking after their husbands and children. While this view might be inconsistent with twenty-first century thinking, one should note that it is the product of the traditional socialization of children and the gendering of roles in many Ghanaian communities.

The researcher presented the enabling factors that assisted the women in their District Assembly elections. It was revealed that the women were elected based on the interconnection between their individual’s persona, their relationship with their communities, families as well as the campaign strategies they adopted to appeal to the electorates for votes. McGing and White (2012) suggested that the influences that make a prospective politician come forward to pursue political career include the availability of resources such as political experience, time, funds and network. Ghanaian patriarchal society features structures that uphold male superiority and, therefore, in the political system, men are in the majority in the decision-making processes. Consequently, Ghanaian women had to develop a strong social network and build constituencies to rally for support in District Assembly and national elections. From the study’s findings, it could be argued that through socialisation processes, prospective women politicians developed and empowered themselves politically.

4.6 Challenging Factors

Since every human endeavor is confronted with one challenge or the other, the participants were asked to account for some of the challenges that inhibited their work.

One of the issues that came up was the uncooperative nature of the electorate. In that respect, R1 commented:

The demand of people is sometimes beyond our capacity. There are certain things that are not the responsibility of the Assembly woman but because people know that you are a leader in the community, they will bring their requests expecting you to do something about them and when you are unable to do something about their demands, they tag you as a bad person.

R3 also added:

Everybody will invite you to their programs, and when you honor their invitation, they treat you as if you are a god and whatever you have on you, you have to give it to them and go home empty handed. But you are not paid at the end of the month unless you go for sitting. The sittings are only four times in a year and you won't even get more than hundred Ghana cedis in one sitting. When you fail to honour these financial requests, they will not vote for you when you decide to contest again. "When we fail to honour such invitations to the functions, it could spell doom for us if we contest in the next elections.

The implication of the above is that, compared to their male counterparts, the women's inability to meet electorate financial demands affected their re-election. The privileges of the men could largely be due to social structures that gave them the opportunity to acquire socio-economic and political skills to build networks and high social capital. For instance, men received financial assistance promptly than their women counterparts who needed to make numerous pleas over an extended period (Allah-Mensah, 2005). R6 resounded, "*Someone can beg me for money and I will give the person, but this same person, will stand somewhere and insult me, but because I am serving my community, I don't listen to what people say.*" Despite the challenging factors that have been impeding the performance of the women Assembly Members, they were not deterred from local politics and sought for re-election. The unusual ideological context between men and women resurfaced. In R7's experience:

Some men said that the women should sit down for the men to go. Some men too are not happy when a woman comes to take their positions. They even said that the men cannot sit down for the women to invite them to participate in communal activities.

From the argument of R7, it is clear that some people were yet to comprehend that females could also lead and 'ask' elderly men in the community to participate in the execution of communal projects. R8's challenge and disappointment was with the uncooperative attitude, when she lamented:

when you call for the people to attend to community issues, most of them do not respond to the calling. The few that attend too you have to use your little money to either prepare or buy food for them. I organized extra classes for students for free and also had to pay the teachers with my own money, I bought books for students and also gave some feeding money. I did all these with my own money and it was really a challenge for me.

The above is a clear indication that when you are unable to satisfy the financial aspects of the electorate then you are likely to be voted out. This serves as a barrier to other women who do not have the strong financial background and that most of them may not be willing to engage themselves in politics because of the huge financial burden it comes with despite the fact that there is no pay.

Just like the electorate, the District Assemblies were also not fully supportive of the participants. According to R1:

When you want any development project in your electoral area it delays. Sometimes it is not that you will not be given that project just that it will delay and you only have four years to complete your tenure so when it delays like that, you become discouraged and it becomes a challenge too.

Although the women were members of the Assemblies, they had to lobby hard to get the necessary resources for the development of their electoral areas, as evidenced by R2:

When you go to the assembly it is not easy, you have to lobby, and if you don't do that you can't bring anything to your Electoral Area. When you write letters to them and you don't follow up, nothing will come. That is the challenge I faced at the Assembly.

R5 was equally disappointed for the lack of support, she intimated that:

The way I was popular if the assembly had helped me do something good for my Electoral Area, I would have been happy but they didn't help me. I requested for speed rumps for my electoral area but they didn't help me so I would have lost if I had decided to bid for re-election. This was a challenge I faced.

R7 also corroborated, *"The Assembly will not give you shovel and other tools to undertake community project so I had to use my own money to buy such tools."* The District Assembly is the highest administrative authority at the local level to facilitate the concept of decentralization, which aims to bring governance closer to the doorstep of the citizenry to ensure widespread participation of the local people in community development. However, the District Assembly had been unsupportive, which also emerged as one of the challenges the elected Assembly women had to deal with as they undertook their functions. Obviously, the major challenge the Assemblies face is the delay in the release of the District Assembly Common Fund from the Central government to develop the districts. According to R1, R2, R5 and R7, the DAs were not honoring requisitions made by the Assembly members to solve some of the problems within their electoral areas.

Apart from the inadequacy of funds, there was discrimination in the provision of support as R4, for example, had a much experience with, she said:

I didn't encounter any problem when I went to the Assembly. The leaders there helped me so much. Hon Oppong was the then MCE and all of them helped me to fulfil some of the promises I made in my Electoral Area.

As public officers undertaking their community responsibilities, the women had to contend with those impediments to perform to the satisfaction of the electorates. Sometimes, even the chiefs were impediments to their efforts, thereby hampering growth and development in those communities. One could support the argument from a respondent that some people were yet to comprehend that females could also lead and team up with the elderly men in the community undertake community activities. For example, R1, R3, R6, R7 and R8 pointed out that some actions and inactions of the electorate in their communities did not make them function efficiently and that frustrated them. Also, R1 and R6 also added that some members of their communities demanded money from them. In cases where they could not honour invitations to functions, it created more disaffection for them than their male counterparts, thereby affecting their chances of being re-elected. The privileges afforded the men could largely be due to social structures that give them the opportunity to acquire socio-economic and political skills to build networks and high social capital. The participants revealed that the unsupportive nature of the electorate made their interests in local level politics wane. In this respect it has been argued that elected women's inability to undertake developmental projects tends to affect their re-election more than those of men (Ofei-Aboagye, 2000). It could be claimed that the elected women's inability to deliver their promises may confirm the negative stereotype that politics was a vocation for men.

4.7 Chapter Summary

This chapter focused on the findings and discussions of the study, and discussed the demographic data of participants, socio-economic, religious and cultural barriers which affects women participation in local politics in Agona West, Gomoa West and Gomoa Central Districts in the Central Region of Ghana. It also looked at the avenues that exist to support women. Themes that emerged from the data included motivation strategy, campaign strategy, marital support and challenges the assembly women faced when they assumed office. Since the women were resolute to pursue their political careers, they also advocated for government and civil societies' continuous encouragement to women who showed interest in local level politics.

The study found that the demographic data of the participants had no negative effects on their participation in local level governance. It was also found that, women in these three districts face major barriers such as lack of self confidence, limited funds, unsupportive family, cultural barriers, abuse and harassment, political affiliation of the Assembly and religious barriers, among others. These barriers have been obstructing women in the districts from venturing into local politics, yet some of the women surmount these barriers and have access to decision-making positions in the District Assemblies. From the study, there were inadequate avenues that support women in politics.

Two themes emerged from the data which were the enabling and challenging factors. The enabling factors were the factors that assisted women in District Assembly elections. The findings revealed that the women were elected based on their interconnection between their individual persona, the community, family and the campaign strategy they adopted to appeal to the electorate for votes. McGing and White

(2012) suggested that the influences that make a prospective politician come forward to pursue political career include availability of resources such as political experience, time, funds and network. The Ghanaian patriarchal society structures uphold male superiority over females and, therefore, in the political system, men are in the majority in the decision-making processes. Consequently, women had to develop a strong social network and build constituencies to rally for support during District Assembly elections. There are no affirmative action policies such as quota system and reserved seats to increase the number of women in political decision-making positions, consequently, the barriers and challenges to the aspiring female politicians are still persistent.

From the study, it could be argued that through their education about gender equality, some of the women politicians developed and empowered themselves politically. The women had observed most of the norms of society, such as respectful interactions and attending communal activities, and had developed their human capital, got employed to satisfy their personal and societal needs which are some of the strong pillars with which build their economic social capital. The challenging factors were the factors that affected the assembly women while performing their duties. Despite these barriers, women in the Gomoa West, Agona West and the Gomoa Central Districts are challenging the political structure of Ghana and the limited financial resources, as their struggle continues with the increase in strength because they have already become strong agents of change in the Ghanaian society (Boateng, 2017).

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter deals with the summary of the study. In addition, conclusions have been drawn and recommendations are also made.

5.1 Summary

The objectives of the study were to examine the socio-economic factors that affect women's participation in local level governance in the Central Region of Ghana; identify the cultural barriers that affect women's participation in local level governance in the Central Region of Ghana; determine the religious factors that affect women's participation in local level governance; and to explore the existing avenues that support women as they participate in local level governance in the Central Region of Ghana. The instrument used for data collection was interview guide. The sample that constituted the study was 11 assembly women and two husbands of two of the assembly women, making a total of 13 participants, from three selected districts in the Central Region of Ghana. The districts were the Gomoa Central, Agona West and Gomoa West. Data gathered through the interviews were analyzed thematically. These themes were derived from the various research questions the researcher sought to find answers to and other related themes that were generated from the data collected.

5.2 Major Findings

The major findings of the study included the following:

- (i) The study revealed that, lack of self-confidence, limited funds and unsupportive family were the socio-economic factors that affected women's participation in local level governance in the Central Region of Ghana.
- (ii) The study also found that, the culture of the people, abuse and harassment were the cultural barriers that affected women's participation in local level governance in the Central Region of Ghana.
- (iii) Women's inferiority to men are present across all dominant religions, and religion has long been used to exclude women from aspects of social and political life around the world (Boateng, 2017). It was, therefore, revealed from the study that, some of the participants were not supported by their religious organisations, and consequently, they lost partly because of them, thus, unsupportive religious organizations was a barrier to their success in local level politics. This affected their participation in local level politics in the Central Region of Ghana.
- (iv) It was revealed from the study that, most of the women who involved themselves in local level politics had little or no support from civil society organisations and Non-Governmental Organisation. Therefore, it is evident from the study that there were inadequate avenues to support women who involved themselves in local level governance in the Gomoa West, Agona West and the Gomoa Central Districts of the Central Region of Ghana.

5.3 Conclusions

Based on the outcome of the study, the following conclusions are made:

- (i) Women in the Gomoa West, Agona West and the Gomoa Central districts in the Central Region of Ghana faced socio-economic barriers which include, lack of self-confidence, limited funds and unsupportive family. Despite all these barriers, some of the women were able to surmount such challenges and became successful in the District Assembly elections.
- (ii) The culture of the people, and abuse and harassment were the cultural factors that affected women's participation in local level governance in the Goma West, Agona West and the Gomoa Central districts in the Central Region of Ghana. Though the women faced these challenges, some of them were able to overcome them to be successful in the District Assembly elections.
- (iii) The presence of the religious barriers did not affect women's participation in local level governance in the Gomoa West, Agona West and the Gomoa Central districts in the Central Region of Ghana. While some of the participants were not supported by their religious organizations, others had the necessary support they needed from their churches and mosques, this helped them to be successful in the District Assembly elections.
- (iv) Women in the Gomoa West, Agona West and the Gomoa Central districts in the Central Region of Ghana did not have adequate support from civil society organizations and Non-Governmental Organizations to enhance their participation in local level governance.

5.4 Recommendations

Based on the study's findings and conclusions drawn, the following recommendations are made:

- (i) Special fund should be set up by the government to support Assembly women to perform their roles and responsibilities within their communities regularly. Such funds may help them fulfil their promises, which may encourage them to seek re-election that may maintain the few elected Assembly women in the District Assemblies. Also, female politicians should mentor other women; as the potential female politicians avail themselves, the mentors may support them build the confidence required to engage in local level politics and to aspire higher positions in the political office.
- (ii) The persistence of some cultural beliefs and practices that make it difficult for many females to engage in local level governance should be dealt with, the idea of quota system should be supported, hence the Affirmative Action Bill should be passed into law and seats reserved for women to participate in governance and other decision-making processes.
- (iii) Religious organizations should be educated on the roles women can play when given leadership positions so that, they can rally their full support behind them when they want to contest for District Assembly Elections as well as other leadership positions.
- (iv) Civil society and non-governmental organizations in the Gomoa West, Agona West and the Gomoa Central Districts in the Central Region of Ghana should support women by organizing workshops and seminars for them to help them participate in local level governance. Also, the linkages

among the various NGOs and other civil society groups that advocate for gender equality should be strengthened and the structures enhanced for their advocacy roles to encourage more women to engage in politics to bridge the gender gap between men and women in local level politics in the Central Region of Ghana.

5.5 Suggestions for further studies

The researcher suggests that further study could be conducted to expand the literature on female appointees' experiences with the elected Assembly women and Assembly men.



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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

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MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY IN SOCIAL STUDIES

FACE TO FACE INTERVIEW GUIDE

Project Title: Women Participation and Representation in Local Governance in Selected Districts in the Central Region of Ghana

The purpose of this interview is to examine the women's political participation in the district assemblies in Agona West, Gomoa West and Gomoa Central in the Central Region of Ghana. The questions are meant to elicit information on what you know about women's involvement in the local government systems. This study is meant for purely academic purposes. As part of this study, your responses will be kept confidential and anonymous however, you may withdraw from answering any question that makes you feel uncomfortable.

Background information

1. **Locality**.....

2. **District**.....

3. **Age**.....

4. **Level of education**

a. 2nd degree []

b. 1st degree []

c. A level []

d. Secondary []

- e. Middle school []
- f. No education []
- g. Other (specify).....

5. Occupation

- a. Teaching []
- b. Nursing []
- c. Trading []
- d. Farming []
- e. Other (specify).....

6. Religion

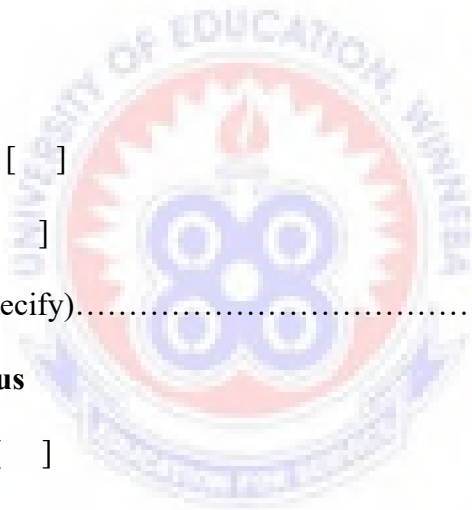
- a. Christian []
- b. Muslim []
- c. Other (specify).....

7. Marital status

- a. Married []
- b. Single []
- c. Divorced []
- d. Widowed []

8. Number of children.....

9. Position.....



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PQ – Preliminary Questions

GQ – General Questions

PQ 1. Why do you engage in politics at the local level?

PQ 2. What factors helped you to take office in the local government system?

PQ 3. How were you encouraged to get elected to the District Assembly?

PQ 4. What did you do to get elected as a representative in the District Assembly?

PQ 5. In your opinion, what will encourage or discourage you from participating in governance?

PQ 6. What are the challenges you encountered as a member of the District Assembly?

PQ 7. What prospects do you get as a member of the District Assembly?

PQ 8. Do you plan to continue to be a member in the District Assembly?

GQ 1. Can you share with me the best ways to deal with low representation of women in the District Assembly?

GQ 2. Looking at the Ghanaian society, what do you suggest should be done to politically empower women?

GQ 3. What do you think are some of the avenues that should be created to support women as they get elected into local governance?

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A. Socio-economic factors

1. How did you mobilize resources for your campaign?
2. What is your income level?
3. How was the society's reaction when you declared your intention to participate in local governance politics?
4. How was people's relationship with you after declaring your intention to participate in local governance politics?

B. Cultural and religious barrier

1. What influence do gender roles have on your participation in governance at the local level?
2. Did your religion influence you in anyway during your campaign?
3. How was other women's reaction to your decision to participate in local governance politics?
4. How did your family receive the news of your intention to participate in local governance politics?
5. What are some of the reactions you got from your male counterparts?

C. Other challenges

1. Did your age affect you in your participation in local governance politics?
2. Did your level of education influence your participation in local governance politics?

3. Did your marital status play a role in your participation in local governance politics?
4. Did the number of children you have affect your participation?
5. Did your occupation influence your participation in local governance politics?

D. Support systems

1. How were you encouraged to participate in local governance politics?
2. Did you get support from any organization or entity?
3. Were there avenues that existed to support women who want to participate in local governance politics in your district?



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Face to face interview guide for husbands of the assembly women

1. What role did you play in the political life of your wife?
2. What advice will you give your fellow men who do not allow their wives to participate in politics?
3. What advantage did you enjoy from being the husband of an assemblywoman?
4. What challenge did you encounter as a husband of an assemblywoman?



APPENDIX B



10th October, 2019

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Dear Sir/Madam,

LETTER OF INTRODUCTION: MS. ASANTE AUGUSTA KYEREWAAH

We write to introduce Ms. Asante Augusta Kyerewaa to your outfit. She is an Mphil Social Studies student with registration number 8183140022 from the above-named Department.

As part of the requirements for the award of the Master of Philosophy in Social Studies, she is undertaking a research on "*Women's participation and representation in Local Government in the Effidu Municipality.*"

We wish to assure you that any information provided would be treated confidential.

Thank you.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lucy Effeh Attom".

Lucy Effeh Attom (Ph. D.)
Ag. Head of Department

HEAD
DEPT. OF SOCIAL STUDIES EDUC.
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