WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT: A CASE STUDY OF AKATSI SOUTH DISTRICT ASSEMBLY OF THE VOLTA REGION OF GHANA

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DECLARATION

With the exception of references used, which have been duly cited, I Samuel Yao Dogbey, do hereby declare that this thesis (**Women's Participation in Local Government: A Case Study of Akatsi South District Assembly of The Volta Region of Ghana**) is the result of my own work under the supervision of …………. at the Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Agder (UiA), Kristiansand, during the 2016/2017 academic year. This work has neither been submitted in whole nor in part for any degree in this University or elsewhere.

Name of Student: SAMUEL YAO DOGBEY

Name of Supervisor: ………………

DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my mother and father; Mr. Dogbey Moses and Mrs. Abla Ametepee and My Wife Evelyn Anim. Thanks for always being there for me.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

ABSTRACT

Decentralization is acknowledged to be one of the most suitable forms of governance that makes room for greater participation of the citizenry for good governance and participatory democracy worldwide. Equitable participation of both genders in politics and governance is essential to building and sustaining this democracy and Ghana is not an exemption. However, this equitable participation of women in local governance in Africa is disheartening. This thesis was conducted to examine the extent of women participation in local governance in the Akatsi South District of Ghana. Mixed methodology was employed in the study with 8 semi-structured interviews and 28 administered questionnaires.

Liberal feminist theory was used to put the research into its proper theoretical framework. The adoption of the liberal feminist theory as the theoretical framework for this study augmented our understanding of the extent of women participation in local governance in Akatsi South District, Ghana.

Findings revealed that the women participation in local governance in Akatsi South District is very low. This is supported by the fact that over the years, number of women elected to the Assembly is on the decline. The current Assembly comprises of twenty-eight elected members and none is a woman; buttressing low level of women participation in local governance in the District. In addition, the study identified financial and monetization of the political space, lack of education and higher education, cultural and religious factors, inferiority complex on part of the women, lack of community support among others as the reasons for low participation of women in local governance

in Akatsi South District. Furthermore, the respondents revealed that education and awareness creation, financial support, family/husband support, introduction of quota system for women and support from NGOs and women groups as strategies for increasing women participation in local governance in Akatsi South District.

LIST OF ABBREVIATION

ASD	Akatsi South District
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
LATF	Local Authority Transfer Fund
DACF	District Assembly Common Fund
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
ODA	Official Development Assistance
PNDC	Provisional National Defence Council
PDC	People`s Defence Committee
PNDCL	Provisional National Defense Council Law
IPU	Inter – Parliamentary Union
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
IULA	International Union of Local Authorities
UN	United Nations
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
PHC	Population and Housing Census
DA	District Assembly
NCCE	National Commission for Civic Education
NGOs	Non Governmental Organizations

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Chapter Introduction

This chapter covers the background, statement of the research problem, statement of objectives and research questions, organization or scope of the work, and limitation of the study. The research problem looks into the issue of lower elected female numbers in the Akatsi South Distract (ASD) Assembly. The objectives and research questions make an attempt to raise questions of the extent of women participation at the ASD, as well as the factors which constrain or support representation of elected women in local government and why? The relevance of this study in relationship with other studies (for example, and Crook & Manor, Brenya, Ofei-Aboagye), theories (feminist theories by (Bryson, Jaggar & Rothenberg, Kumari)) provide an opportunity for further understanding of the local government processes in Ghana. The organization of the work is done in seven chapters covering the problem under study, literature review, theories, methodology, study area, data analysis and finally, conclusion and recommendations.

1.2 General Background

One of the most controversial issues of the modern times, a topic that has been much debated among practitioners, politician, civil societies, donor agencies, policy makers and academic, is the role and position of women in politics be it at the national or local level. Waylen (1996) posits that an increase in women's participation in politics has been

recognized as central to the nation's effort at achieving democratic governance. Women constitute slightly more than half of the world population. Their contribution to the social and economic development of societies is also more than half as compared to that of men by virtue of their dual roles in the productive and reproductive spheres (Bari, 2005). According to Karam (1998), despite the widespread transition to democracy taking place in many regions, the popular participation of women in key decision-making as full and equal partners with men, particularly in politics, has not yet been achieved.

In sub-Saharan Africa, the links between politics and women's participation be it at the national or local level is complicated by the presence of two parallel systems of governance: modern political structures co-exist with traditional forms of governance, which are particularly strong in rural settings. Women have played leadership roles in several African countries in recent years, including as presidents, vice-presidents, or prime ministers in 15 countries in Africa. As of 2015, Rwanda was a world leader, with women accounting for 64% of national parliamentarians. More than 40% of legislators in Namibia, Senegal, and South Africa are female. However, women tend to be underrepresented at lower levels of government—in provincial, district, and municipal structures.

Ghana, like other developing countries, has been engaged in efforts to develop participatory governance at the local level for a long time. Pike et al suggest that '… much of experimentation with these new forms of participatory government appears to be taking place at the local level, where questions about the quality of development seem pressing' (Pike et al, 2006, p. 150).

Decentralization has become an increasingly widespread and significant dimension of political and administrative reform in many developing countries since the late 1980s. Nearly all countries in the world are experimenting with one form of decentralization with diverse motives (Manor, 1999). A plethora of reasons accounts for decentralization drives pursue by number of countries across space and time. As echoed by Manor (1999), it includes stimulation of economic growth in the local economy, reduce poverty in the rural areas, way of strengthening civil society and deepening of democracy as well as decentralization as panacea to of load expensive responsibilities on central government to lower level of government.

In Africa, decentralization is implemented in various forms by governments across the continent, inclusive of Ethiopia, South Africa, Uganda, Namibia, and Ghana etc. Certainly, in West Africa it is difficult to find a country that does not have a decentralization programme either in the form of fiscal, political or administrative decentralization being practiced. Decentralization has been recognized as a means of enhancing the powers and responsibilities of the local units of central government because of their closeness to the people at the grassroots level they are to served (Beall, 2007). According to Tendler (2007, p. 144) cited in Beall (2007), he assets that one usefulness of decentralization is that, "it creates avenue for "greater proximity makes government more vulnerable to citizen pressures, and makes it easier for citizens to become more informed and hence more demanding of good service".

From the early 1980s, decentralization became an important element to international development policy, as articulated for example by the World Bank (Rondinelli et al, 1983, World Bank, 1997). The term has been applied to extremely diverse forms of

restructuring, which culminated into making decentralization difficult to define. According to Crook and Manor (2000) cited in Beall (2007), 80 per cent of countries, with very diverse political dispensations, were engaged in some form of decentralization by the mid-1990s. Ghana for instance started the journey of decentralization in the 1980s.

"Decentralization has changed the political and institutional context for promoting the full and equal rights of citizens in many societies around the world. By transferring functions, resources, and varying degrees of political and fiscal autonomy to regional, local, or municipal governments, decentralization can provide new opportunities for women and men to participate and be represented on the matters that most closely affect their lives"(Policy Recommendation, 2008).

This shift in this political and institutional context in promoting equal rights of all citizens around the world as a result of decentralization is plagued with biases. This bias stems from the fact that these processes have not been sufficiently gender sensitive, as women are not actively engaged in local governance as compared to their male counterparts.

This bias negates

"governments' global commitments and obligations, inter alia the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, the Beijing Platform for Action, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Millennium Development Goals, and relevant regional instruments that reaffirm that gender equality and equity, including women's full and equal participation and representation in public life, and their full and equal right to meet such basic needs as

access to clean water, health care, education, and economic opportunities, are critical to

achieving sustainable democracy and development" "(Policy Recommendation, 2008).

1.3 Problem Statement

Ghana is currently ranked 140 out of 185 in the Inter-Parliamentary Union ranking on women representation in parliament across the world. Out of 275 Members of Parliament only 35 are women, representing a marginal 12.7% of the total number of Members of Parliament. The situation at the local and district level is similar to the national outlook. This phenomenon of low representation of elected women in local government had necessitated a gender policy dialogue- *"Nkitahodie"* Gender Policy dialogue held in Accra on the theme **women in politics pledge to bridge gender inequality gap on Ghana's political landscape**. The purpose of the dialogue was to deconstruct the role of political parties in promoting gender equal political participation and the role political parties can play in supporting women's inclusion and participation in political processes at all levels. This brings to fore that there is under-representation of women in decision making at the local level. Various studies have been done on decentralization in developing countries and for that matter Ghana from diverse perspectives. For example, Crook (1994) looks at four years of Ghana District Assemblies in operation. Ayee (2008) has written extensively on the balance sheet of decentralization in Ghana whilst Crawford (2008) looks at decentralization and the limits to poverty reduction: findings from Ghana and many reports on decentralization on Ghana. Ofei-Aboagye (2004) also looks at promoting gender sensitivity in local governance in Ghana where she opines that those appointed to promote gender at the local level need to have clear mandates and authority

or legitimacy through official positions located in the assembly structure" (ibid, p. 59). Mahamadu (2010) also looks at a comparative study on the challenges of women participation in local governance in Accra and Tamale Metropolis. In the context of regional and local spatiality/ differentiation, no single empirical work has been done on women and local governance in Akatsi South District. It is against this background that the study seeks to examine and conceptualize women participation in local governance at the Akatsi South District Assembly.

1.4 Research Objectives and Questions

This work has four (3) major objectives and poses a research question under each of the objectives outlined. The objectives are:

1. To examine the extent of women participation in local governance in Akatsi District of Volta Region from the inception of local governance system to 2016. There are concerns over the participation of women in politics in general; being at the national or local level because of being relegated to the background politically for a long time, which of course made them loose their rightful position in local governance. **Question**: Are women participation in local governance in Akatsi District increasing or decreasing?

2. To identify the main factors constraining or supporting women participation in local government. **Question:** How do socio- cultural, economic, political and institutional factors which constrain or support active engagement of women in local government?

3. To find out the strategies that can be adopted to promoting women participation in local government. Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 3 specifically requires nations to support gender equality and women's empowerment. **Question:** How can women participation in local governance be made more effective in the number of women representation in the Assembly?

1.5 Scope of The Study

The organization of the work is done in seven chapters with chapter one covering the background of the study, statement of the research problem, objectives and research questions, scope of the study and limitations of the study. Chapter two covers a discussion of the literature review conceptualization of decentralization, types of decentralization; participation, chapter includes a historical overview of local governance in Ghana, structure and composition of assemblies in Ghana. The fourth chapter is on the methodology of the study covering sources of data, experiences of data collection, ethical issues, validity and reliability of the study. The fifth chapter is on the study area with brief introduction on Ghana, geography of Akatsi South District, its local economy, population, etc. Chapter six deals with the interpretation and analysis of the data, implications of data on the objectives and research questions, and theory. The final chapter includes an overview of methods, findings/conclusions, emerging issues, and recommendations for future studies.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

CONCEPTUALISING DECENTRALIZATION, LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND PARTICIPATION

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews literature on decentralization and local government to identify various concepts that have shaped the thinking and practice of decentralization by local actors and institutions. It will also attempt to explore the varied theories and perspectives that underpin contemporary practice and thinking of decentralization and link to the concept of political participation. It highlights on typologies of decentralization, history of decentralization in Ghana, structure of Ghana's decentralization and legal instruments underpinning Ghana's decentralization and lastly, the concept of participation and women participation in local government.

2.2 Conceptualizing Decentralization

There is no common definition of decentralization. It has different meanings to different people depending on the context in which the term "decentralization" is being used. According to Work (2002), definitions of decentralization differ from each other depending on the type and form of decentralization one is looking at. "While decentralization has undoubtedly gained popularity within the last two decades, it is not a new concept. The term attracted attention in the 1950s and 1960s when British and

French colonial administrations prepared colonies for independence by devolving responsibilities for certain programmes to local authorities. In the 1980s decentralization came to the forefront of the development agenda alongside the renewed global emphasis on governance and human-centered approaches to human development. Today both developed and developing countries are pursing decentralization policies" (Work, 2002, p. 5). Crawford (2003) also opines that decentralization has become an increasingly widespread and significant dimension of political and administrative reform in many developing countries since the late 1980s, supported by diverse actors ranging from international development agencies to national governments to non-governmental and grassroots organizations. Decentralization is acknowledged to be one of the most acceptable forms of governance that allows for greater participation of the citizenry for good governance and participatory democracy (Offei-Aboagye, 2004; Ayee, 2003).

Decentralization is basically the transfer of responsibility for planning, management and resource raising and allocation from the central government and its agencies to the lower levels of government. According to Rondinelli (1981) decentralization is:

"the transfer of responsibility for planning, management and resource-raising and allocation from central government to (a) field units of central government ministries or agencies; (b) subordinate units or levels of government; (c) semi-autonomous public authorities or corporations; (d) area-wide regional or functional authorities; nongovernmental organizations/private voluntary organizations" (cited in Khan, 2011, p. 66).

According to Mawhood (1983) as cited in Khan (2011) decentralization as any act in which a central government formally cedes powers to actors and institutions at lower levels in a political-administrative and territorial hierarchy. Poteete (2004) defines

decentralization as a shift in policy-making from the center to the local. Decentralization is the transfer of authority and responsibility for public functions from a central government to subordinate governments (Ayee, 2003).

With the above definitions echoed by scholars on decentralization notwithstanding, this thesis will adopt the working definition of Agrawal and Ribot which is widely used by both economists and political scientists. Decentralization is thus defined as an action by which the central government formally cedes power to actors and institutions at lower levels in a political-administrative and territorial hierarchy (Agrawal and Ribot, 1999).

2.3   Forms of Decentralization

Rondineli categorizes decentralization into four major types i.e. deconcentration, delegation, devolution (Rondineli, 1981) and privatization or deregulation is a current form of decentralization in the literature. According to Manor, decentralization has three major types i.e. deconcentration or administrative decentralization, fiscal decentralization and devolution or democratic decentralization. All these types can occur simultaneously or they may occur in isolation. Sometimes various combinations of these types are being used. All the different types of decentralization share one common characteristic i.e. decentralization is not a situation rather it is a development and a process of change from one institutional system to another (Manor, 1999).

2.3.1   Deconcentration or administrative decentralization

According to Rondineli, deconcentration or administrative decentralization involves the transfer of specific administrative responsibilities to lower levels within the central

government ministries and agencies (Rondineli, 1981). In the context of Ghana, a vivid example is the establishment of passport offices in the 10 regions in the recent time as compared to the previous situation where the passport office is located in Accra; which is the capital of Ghana. Manor describes it as the dispersal of agents of higher levels of government into lower-level arenas and emphasizes that deconcentration and democratization should occur simultaneously. When deconcentration occurs in isolation, agents of the higher levels of government will remain accountable only to the authorities at the higher level. Deconcentration is in practice mostly in less developed countries (Manor, 1999). According to Mawhood, the various factors responsible for excluding people from the affairs of the government in less developed countries include higher levels of illiteracy, livelihood patterns and poor communication systems. Under such circumstances the deconcentrated field offices enjoy the power to take all kinds of decisions. They are not subject to local pressures. Despite entering into voluntary consultations with the local notables, central government's demands are always prioritized (Mawhood, 1983).

2.3.2 Fiscal decentralization

The transfer of fiscal resources and revenue generating resources to the lower levels in the system is called fiscal decentralization. It empowers the lower levels to have influence over budgets and financial decisions. It must also be followed simultaneously by democratization or otherwise it may not increase the influence of organized interests at the lower levels (Manor, 1997). The transfer of fiscal powers to the lowers levels is essential for other forms of decentralization. For instance, if the lower levels in a system

receive only decision-making powers but do not receive any powers to have control over budgets and financial resources at the same time, all the decisions regarding different activities (e.g. development works etc.) would be in vein. At the same time, a mere transfer of funds without decentralizing the decision power may also give rise to a number of problems. Work (2002) opines that fiscal decentralization is the most comprehensive and possibly traceable degree of decentralization since it is directly linked to budgetary practices. Fiscal decentralization refers to the resource reallocation to sub-national levels of government. Arrangements for resource allocation are often negotiated between the central and local authorities based on several factors including interregional equity, availability of resources at all levels of government and local fiscal management capacity. Experience in fiscal decentralization has led to capacity building in expenditure and revenue assignment as well as the design of fiscal transfer formulas and sub-national borrowing. In Africa, examples of this are the Local Authority Transfer Fund (LATF) in Kenya and the District Assemblies Common Fund (DACF) in Ghana. Also increasingly, as in the case of Ghana, development partners are channeling many resources directly to the local governments.

2.3.3 Devolution or democratic decentralization or political decentralization

Devolution or democratic decentralization is the transfer of powers and resources from the center to authorities at the lower levels, which are representatives of as well as accountable to the local populations (Manor 1999). The authorities at the lower levels are largely or wholly independent of the central government and are democratic in some way and to some degree (Manor 1999). The local units of government are autonomous and

independent bodies have a legal status and are separate or distinct from the central government. Central government has only indirect, supervisory control over such units. These units normally exist in the form of local governments (Rondelini, 1981). Democratic decentralization can take different forms. Candidates are elected by secret ballots. Election can be both direct and indirect. In case of direct elections, the people elect candidates. In case of indirect elections, the directly elected representatives elect members at the higher levels. The persons being elected either directly or indirectly become members or heads of their respective councils as the case may be (Manor, 1997).

Democratic decentralization or political decentralization according to Blair (2000) refers to political or democratic decentralization as a meaningful authority devolved to local units of governance that are accessible and accountable to local citizenry, who enjoy full political rights and liberty. It thus differs from the vast majority of earlier efforts at decentralization which were largely initiatives in public administration without any serious democratic component (cited in Arthur, 2012, p. 28). In the context of Ghana, this typology of decentralization is not fully in operation as the underpinning principles of transferring responsibilities for services to municipalities and districts to elect their own mayors and councils, raise their own revenues, and have independent authority to make investment decisions are missing.

2.3.4 Delegation

Delegation is the transfer of public functions to the lower levels of government, public corporations or any other authorities outside of the regular political-administrative structure to implement programs on behalf of a government agency. Even though the

agents possess broad discretion to carry out the specified devolved functions and duties, it is the central government that remains as the sovereign authority (Rondelini, 1981).

2.4 Rationale for Decentralization around the World

Decentralization as a process that involves the relocation from the central government of political mandate, administrative responsibility and financial resources to the lower level of government as it emerged in the 1970 and 80s is occurring worldwide for different reasons, at different paces and through different means. The main reason for decentralization around the world looks like if it is simply happening, but the inception of decentralization in the 1980s came as a reaction on the disfunctioning of national governments.

First, much of the decentralization, which has taken place in the past decade, has been motivated by political concerns. For example, in Latin America, decentralization has been an essential part of the democratization process as discredited autocratic central regimes are replaced by elected governments operating under new constitutions. In Africa, the spread of multi-party political systems is creating demand for more local voice in decision-making. In some countries, such as Ethiopia, decentralization has been a response to pressures from regional or ethnic groups for more control or participation in the political process. In the extreme, decentralization represents a desperate attempt to keep the country together in the face of these pressures by granting more autonomy to all localities or by forging "asymmetrical federations." This view is echoed by Arthur (2012), when he state that due to the fact that the economies particularly in Africa have

crumbled and there was agitation from trade unions, civil society, students etc. for a change. Again within that period, Africa as a region had fallen to the military junta of government and therefore civil society groups opined that decentralization policy reforms might encourage democracy.

Secondly, the development community has generally welcomed decentralization with some enthusiasm. For the last two decades, decentralization policy reforms in developing and transition countries have become part and parcel of the broader public service reform programme being undertaken under the auspices of the World Bank, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Official Development Assistance (ODA), and other donors. It has become conditionality for loans and grants from the international donor community and Ghana is not an exception to this phenomenon.

Thirdly, in recent times, literature mentions the need for decentralization in post-conflict state-building. In two post-conflict cases, Sierra Leone and Uganda, the World Bank has promoted decentralization (Devas 2005, Zhou, 2009 cited in Arthur, 2012). In Uganda, following civil war, Museveni sought to reconstruct the state from the bottom up, through local "Resistance Councils", which were subsequently transformed into Local Councils (Devas, 2005).

Last but not the least; Arthur opines that

"as a form of decentralization by default, the collapse of centralized planning and administrative structures has encouraged regional and local governments to participate in the political and economic process. Decentralization thus became widely appealing to politicians in the developing world as a means of coping with eroding centralized

systems, as it pushed the responsibility of responding to some of the public's mounting demands to lower levels of authority" (Arthur, 2012, p. 36).

2.5   History of Decentralization in Ghana

The history of decentralization in Ghana is traced back by Ayee (2000, p. 48) to the introduction of indirect rule by the British colonial authorities in 1878, lasting until 1951. 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 cited in Crawford, 2004). Nkrumah also makes 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 cited in Crawford, 2004).

According to Tordoff (1997) cited in Crawford (2004), local government witnessed a generally weak system and subjected to the centralization of power that was typical of the post-colonial state in the post-independence epoch from 1957 onwards. 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: 58 cited in Crawford, 2004).

The early period of Rawlings military rule (1981-92) witnessed decentralization reforms being introduced. In 1983, Rawlings' Provisional National Defense Council (PNDC) government announced a policy of administrative decentralization of central government ministries, alongside the creation of People's Defence 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 cited in Crawford, 2004), while the deconcentrated ministries played a more significant role. Ayee (2000, p. 49) notes 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.

Furthermore, "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" (Ayee, 2000, p. 49).

2.6   Structure of Ghana's Local Government System

Ahoi (2010, p. 35) cited in Der Bebelleh & Nobabumah (2013) notes that Ghana's local government and decentralization program envisaged participation as summarized in Policy Guidelines in 1982 as follows:

I. "The urgent need for participatory democracy to ensure that the bane of remote government that had afflicted Ghanaians since independence is done away with effectively, to render government truly responsive and accountable to the governed.

II. The assumption of power by the people cannot be complete unless a truly decentralized government system is introduced, that is, the Central Government, in all its ministerial manifestations, should empower Local Government Councils to initiate, coordinate, manage and execute policies in all matters affecting them in their locality".

In line with the policy guidelines, a four tier metropolitan and three tier Municipal/District Assemblies structure was adopted in 1988 by Provisional National Defense Council Law (PNDCL) 207. Local governments in Ghana, labeled as Assemblies, are called 'Metropolitan' (population over 250,000), 'Municipal' (one town Assemblies with population over 95,000), or 'District Assemblies' (population 75,000 and over). The emphasis of this study however lies within a three-tier Municipal/District Assemblies structure because the thesis is looking at women participation in local government.

Fig 1 shows structure of the local government system in Ghana

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                    ┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
                    │    Regional Coordinating Council     │
                    │                                      │
                    └───────┬──────────────┬───────────┬───┘
                            │              │           │
              ┌─────────────┴──┐  ┌────────┴───────┐  ┌┴──────────────────┐
              │  Metropolitan  │  │   Municipal    │  │ District Assemblies│
              └────────┬───────┘  └────────┬───────┘  └─────────┬─────────┘
                       │                   │                    │
          ┌────────────┴───────┐           │                    │
          │  Sub Metropolitan  │           │                    │
          │  District Councils │  ┌─────────┴──────┐            │
          └────────────┬───────┘  │ Zonal Councils │            │
                       │          └─────────┬──────┘  ┌─────────┴─────────┐
          ┌────────────┴───────┐            │         │    Urban/Town     │
          │   Town Councils    │            │         │                   │
          │                    │            │         │   Area Council    │
          └────────────┬───────┘            │         └─────────┬─────────┘
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                          \──────│  Unit Committees   │──────/
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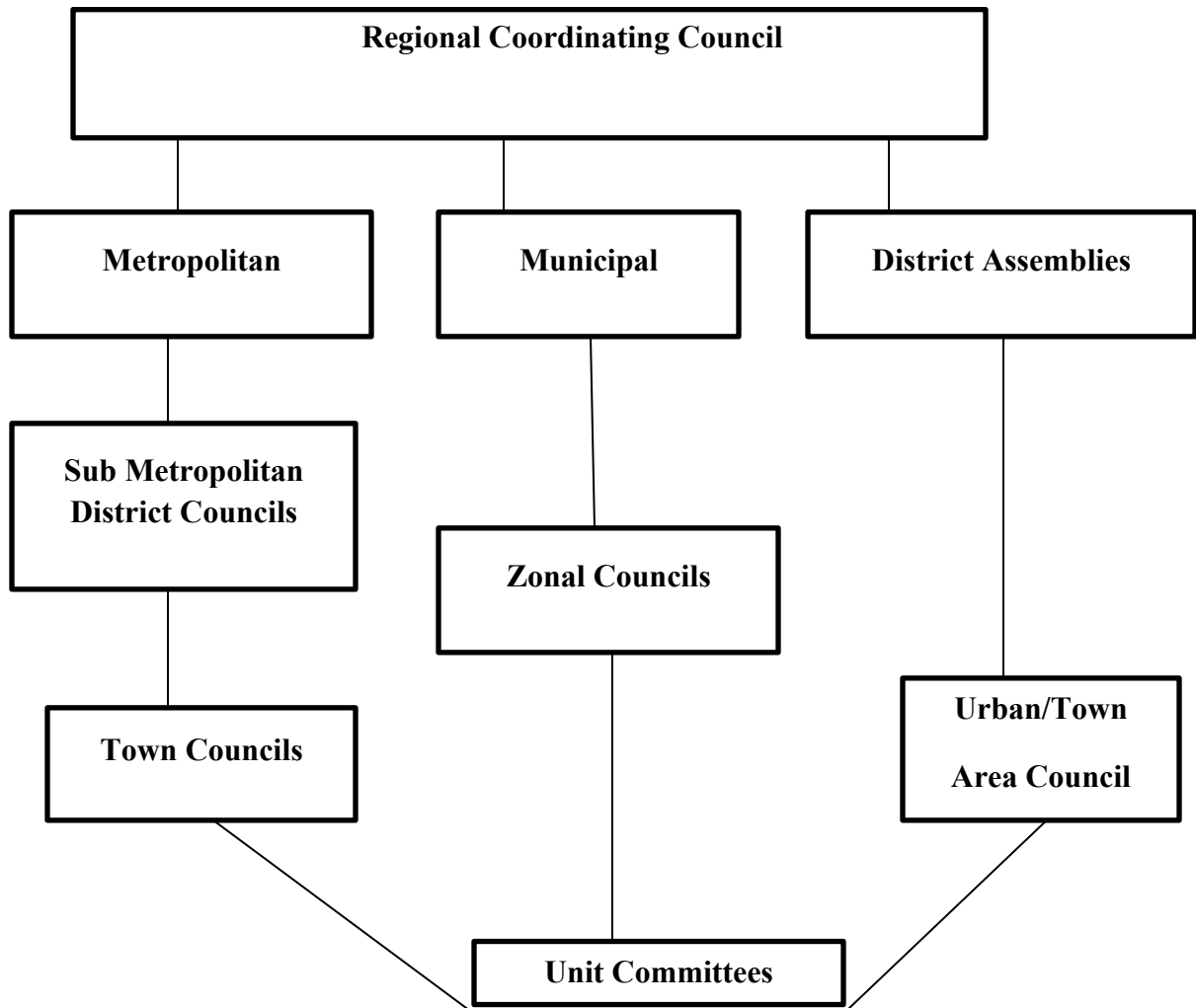
Fig 1 above shows the structure portraying the various steps through which decisions are carried out from the central government through the regional level to the unit committees which form the basic structure of the Local Government System in Ghana.

The specific structures of Ghana's decentralization under PNDC Law 207(1983) are as follows:

a. A three-tier structure, consisting of Regional Coordinating Councils (RCC), District Assemblies and Town/Area Councils and Unit Committee.

b. An Assembly is the basic unit of government as well as the statutory, deliberative and legislative body for the determination of broad policy objectives and a change agent in development progress. It is the highest political authority in the district.

c. Each Assembly consists of the following members

i. 70% elected members;

ii. 30% central government appointees;

iii. Member of Parliament (MP) of the constituency area.

iv. The District Chief Executive (DCE) appointed by the President in consultation with chiefs and approved by Assembly.

d. Each Assembly is to elect one of its members as the Presiding Member (PM) who presides over meetings of the District Assembly.

e. An Assembly functions through an Executive Committee and its subsidiary committees. Each Assembly member must belong to at least one committee.

f. Twenty-two (22) departments and organizations are also decentralized in an Assembly to provide technical and managerial support services to the Assembly and its constituents.

Under fiscal decentralization an Assembly is empowered by PNDC Law 207(1983) and Local Government Act, Act 462(1983) to collect taxes, rates, licenses and so on, for development and alleviation of poverty. There is no doubt, therefore that the current local

government system in Ghana is a comprehensive administrative system in which functions, power, responsibilities and resources could be transferred to the Central government units, that is the District Assemblies. Furthermore, it provides an elaborate framework for the enhancement of popular participation at the local level and also provides machinery for economic and social development

2.7 Legal Instruments Backing Ghana's Decentralization Process

Ghana's decentralization process is supported by a number of legal instruments. These include the following:

i. The Fourth Republic Constitution of 1992

ii. The Local Government Law, PNDCL 207(1983)

iii. The Local Government Act, Act 462 (1993)

iv. The District Assemblies Common Fund Act, Act 455 (1993)

v. The National Development Planning System Act, Act 9 (1993).

2.8 Concept of Participation and Conceptualizing Political Participation

2.8.1 Concept of Participation

There are various arguments when it comes to the concept of political participation. Whatever the impulse for engaging people in the governance process, for a very long time, people were seen as the mere recipients of government services without having any (active) role in policy-formulation, decision-making and in program implementation.

Within development, perhaps the overriding concern with participation has been related to the community or social sectors. In a highly influential study in the late 1970s, participation was defined as the *"organized efforts to increase control over resources and regulative institutions in given social situations, on the part of groups and movements hitherto excluded from such control"* (Stiefel and Wolfe: 1994, p. 5). In recent times, the definition of participation in development has often been located in development projects and programmes, as a means of strengthening their relevance, quality and sustainability. The World Bank (1995) cited in Gaventa & Valderrama (1999, p. 2) defines participation as "process through which stakeholders influence and share control over development initiatives and the decisions and resources which affect them".

2.8.2   Political Participation

Political participation received less attention within the development discourse/literature. According to Gaventa & Valderrama (1999), political participation has been defined in broad or narrow terms by different authors depending on the method of inquiry. Political participation according to Nie and Verba (1972) is those legal activities by private citizens that are more or less directly aimed at influencing the selection of governmental personnel and/or the actions they take (cited in Gaventa & Valderrama 1999). A broader definition on political participation is given by Parry, Mosley and Day. Political participation according to Parry, Mosley and Day (1992) is taking part in the process of formulation, passage and implementation of public policies (ibid, p. 3)

2.8.3   Participation of Women in Local Governance

Participation of women in all spheres of life and by extension in the arena of politics (local and national) has become a major development concern worldwide. This concern is because of the increasingly dominant influence of their male counterpart in governance and in this context local governance.

Women's position in the political sphere can be traced to women activists in the United States as early as 1848, when they convened the first women's right Convention in Seneca Falls, New York (Ballington et al., 2012 cited in Boateng & Kosi, 2015). This convention has brought to fore political representation and participation of women in governance system and has since dominated the international community. It is important to note that representation and participation of women in political position vary within and among countries. For instance, IPU, (2013) opines that in Sweden and Rwanda, there is a remarkable progress when it comes to women's representation and participation in governance (Boateng & Kosi, 2015). In Ghana, the call for enhanced gender equality in political decision-making begun 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 1980s and early 1990s, the call for the increase in women's representation had been intensified in the whole of the sub-Saharan Africa (Manuh, 2011). Coupled with the above, the formulation of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in 2000 and the new phase which is Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2015 gave a renewed strength to the historic arguments for women's participation, as governance expert and practitioners indicated that the actualization and achieving SDGs

will come to not without women involvement and participation at high level of decision making.

According to Ofei-Aboagye (2004), two main reasons accounted for the need to promote women interests and gender equality in Ghana's local governance. These are

"first the design of the assembly system, which includes features such as appointed memberships, the use of local languages (in addition to English for business for official purposes), the use of subcommittees, and the non-partisan status of the assemblies, has been thought to have considerable potential for enhancing the effective involvement of women in local development (Issaka, 1994). Second, Ghana has committed itself to such international requirements as the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action and the 1998 International Union of Local Authorities (IULA)'s Declaration on Women" (ibid, p. 754).

3 THEORETCAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 Introduction

For the purpose of this research work, feminist theory has been adopted. Researchers have found feminist theory to be a relevant framework for analysis in areas relating to women's roles and lives in different disciplines. The theory has been found applicable to feminist politics in discipline like anthropology and sociology, women and gender studies, etc. Feminist theory has also been adopted for the purpose of this study because among its objectives which includes the aim to understand the nature of inequality and its focus on gender politics, power relations and sexuality, it also focuses on analyzing gender inequality and the promotion of women's rights, interest and issues (Rosser, 2005). These aforementioned strengths, aims and objectives of feminist theory have informed its adoption for this study since the focus of this research is in tandem with the tenets of feminist theory.

3.2 Different Meaning of Feminism

Feminism has its root in a Latin word 'femina'. It is a term which describes women's issues. It has been variously defined and described by many critics. For instance, Sheila (1980, p. 4) rightly observes that "feminists do not agree among themselves on one all-inclusive and universally acceptable definition of the term". According to her, what feminism means to various people depends on one's political or sociological observations and goals, one's understanding or interpretation of the word 'woman' and several other

factors. Feminism, she emphasizes, may be a perspective, a world-view, a political theory, or a kind of activism.

Sotunsa (2008) posits that feminism is a cross cutting theory in contemporary scholarship, it has its origin in the struggle for women's rights Cuddon (2012) also defines feminism as an attempt to describe and interpret (or reinterpret) women's experiences as depicted in various kinds of literature. Feminism is defined as the belief of the social and economic equality of men and women. It is a discourse that involves various movements, theories and philosophies which are concerned with the issue of gender difference, advocate equality for women, and campaign for women's rights and interest (Bryson, 1999).

3.3 Typology of Theories of Feminism

It is essence to note that many scholars and writers in the 1980s have identified many theories of feminism. These include the following; liberal, socialist and radical theories.

3.3.1 Liberal Theory

The Liberal theory was developed in the seventeenth century. It believe that individuals have the right to own property, sell their labour and go about their lives within a legal framework that protects them from arbitrary interference by governments or other individuals (Jaggar & Rothenberg, 1993). Later, these rights were combined with the democratic claim that the individuals also have a right to choose their own representatives to govern them. However, most of the early liberal democratic theorists

denied these rights to women. Some women publicly argued that they were just as intelligent and rational as men and that even if they appeared inferior; it is because of their lack of education rather than a quality inherent in themselves.

3.3.2 Social Feminist Theory

Social feminist theory on the other hand adopts some of the principles of Marxism, but instead of focusing on economic determinism as the primary source of oppression, the socialist feminist sees the oppression as having psychological and social roots (Kumari, 2006). They share a genuine concern for women that transcends politics. Their focus is on people, not profits. To the socialist feminist, the prostitute is a victim of the corruption of a society which accompanies class distinctions. The oppression of class in a materialistic society degrades people by categorizing them in a particular class and objectifying them so that they are merely parts of a mechanism that can be replaced by other parts of the same description. In both the socialist feminist and Marxist feminist perspectives prostitution is discouraged, but neither school of thought seeks a legal remedy for its elimination.

3.3.3 Radical-Feminist Theory

While Jaggar & Rothenberg (1993) argue that the Radical-feminist theory recognizes patriarchy and family as the key instruments in the oppression of women, an American feminist Elizabeth Shanton campaigned not for women's right to vote, but to own property, to be educated and to work outside the home, and also attacked the ways in which man has misused religion to legitimize female subordination (Newton, 1983, p. 261).

However, for the purpose of this research, liberal feminist theory was used to put the research into its proper theoretical framework. The adoption of the liberal feminist theory as the theoretical framework for this study will augment our understanding of the extent of women participation in local governance in Akatsi South District, Ghana. According to the liberal feminist's theory which seeks no special privileges for women, it simply demands that everyone receive equal consideration without discrimination on the basis of sex. This assertion is supported by Article 1 and 2 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which states that all human beings are born equal in dignity and rights without distinction of any kind such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion or status. The essence of this Declaration to a large extent is for women to be treated as equal as men and no longer be tagged with second-class citizen status.

The use of liberal feminist theory as the basis of this study accordingly places before this research work the enormous importance of going deeper into the obstructions or challenges militating against the effective participation of women in politics either at the national or at the local level which is the focus of this study. Liberal feminists also seek to remove such barriers which include socio-economic barriers, ideological and psychological barriers and political barriers that prevent equal access for women in social, economic and political aspect of life.

Liberal feminists contend that the society holds the erroneous belief that women are, by nature, less intellectually and physically capable than men, it tends to discriminate against women in the academy, the forum, and the marketplace. Liberal feminists believe that female subordination is rooted in a set of customary and legal constraints that blocks women's entrance to and success in the so-called public world and they work hard to

emphasize the equality of men and women through political and legal reform (Tony, 1989).To this effect women institutions now exist in most parts of the world. This has been perpetrated by international bodies as they took up the cause of women just as supported by the liberal feminist theory. This led to the setting up of conferences on gender issues by bodies like the United Nations (UN) which culminates into to the increasing spread of the women institutions across the globe. For instance, the Beijing conference of 1995 was one of the very influential factors that brought about a more determined action plan towards the issue of women rights and participation in Ghana. It eventually led to the establishment of women institutions in Ghana especially the Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs (MOWAC).

The liberal feminist theory helps this research to contemplate on the need to achieve gender balance in political life and the necessity to ensure that commitment to equality is reflected in laws and national policies and not a political rhetoric by politicians and policy makers. According to Kumari, (2006) an example of such national policies is the Affirmative Action which is a necessary tool to maintain at least 30 per cent of women at all levels of decision making. Carefully, women must also think about their own strategies, goals, and tactics in the political terrain. Also, it is important to assist women already in the District Assemblies to be able to deliver on their promises and to equip them with the necessary skills and strategies on debate and discourse that takes place in the District Assemblies. This also constitutes an important step towards confidence building and facilitates the sharing of experiences among women.

4   METHODOLOGY

4.1   Introduction

This chapter presents the methodology used in conducting this research. It provides details of the participants and means through which the data was collected during the fieldwork, analyzed and presented. Thus, this chapter focuses on the methods used in the field, critical reflection as well as the discussion of some limitation during the course of data collection. The chapter is divided into three sections. The first section discusses the choice to use mixed method of enquiry for this study. The second section introduces the diverse tools that were used during the fieldwork and how they were applied and the third section addresses the issue of validity and reliability and limitations of the fieldwork.

4.2   Choice of Research Methodology

Methodology is the way in which you find out information, it describes how something will be done or was done. The methodology includes the methods, procedures and techniques used to collect and analyze data with the purpose of generating information. As conceptualized by Kitchin and Tate (2000), methodology of research involves a coherent set of rules and procedure which can be used to investigate a phenomenon or situation. In conducting a geographic research, two broad methodological pathways are available to choose from, thus the qualitative and quantitative. In recent years, scholars have argued for the combination of the two (mixed method) which I used in this study.

4.2.1 Mixed Method Approach

Mixed method is an approach to inquiry that combines both the qualitative and quantitative forms. It involves the philosophical assumptions, the use of qualitative, quantitative approaches and the amalgamation of the two approaches in a study. It is more than merely collecting and analyzing the data from these two sources but go further by using the two approaches in tandem so that the on the whole, the strength of the study is greater than either qualitative or quantitative research (Creswell, 2009). This study is looking at women and politics at the local level and for me to delve deep into the issue of the extent of women participation at local government in Akatsi South District of Ghana; I find it prudent to use of mixed method to capture both the qualitative and qualitative dimension of the issue under investigation.

The choice of mixed mode design as referred to by Bhattacherjee (2012) are influenced by the appropriateness of this research design in investigating the research problem, the research objectives as well as the philosophical worldview of the researcher. I am inclined to pragmatic world view which comes from the pragmatists. Pragmatism is derived from the work of Peirce, James, Mead and Dewey (Cherryholmes, 1992). Pragmatism is not committed to only one method of philosophy and reality and this applies to mixed methods research in that inquiries draw on the assumptions of both the qualitative and quantitative methods when they engage in their research (Creswell, 2009) In addition, pragmatists' researchers have the freedom of choice in the sense that, they are free to choose the methods, techniques and procedures of research that best meet their needs and purposes. Moreover, pragmatists do not see the world as an absolute unity and

in a similar manner, diverse approaches are used in collecting and analyzing data rather than subscribing to one only; being qualitative or quantitative (Creswell, 2009). "Mixed methods research also is an attempt to legitimate the use of multiple approaches in answering research questions, rather than restricting or constraining researchers' choices (i.e., it rejects dogmatism)" (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004, p. 17).

4.3 Types of Data: Secondary and Primary Data

The type of data collected and utilized in any research is of paramount to the research process. This study utilized both primary and secondary data which were collected from diverse sources. Primary data was the main information for analysis and discussions of this study. Primary data was collected from the key informants including all the elected Assembly members, defeated female assembly aspirants, former female assembly members, Deputy District Coordinator (woman). Bearing in mind the financial constraint and time factor, three main techniques were employed in generating primary data. These techniques were questionnaire administration, interviews and observation.

Secondary data on the other hand comprises of data derived from existing database of organizations and other previous research undertaken by other researchers in the field. Example of the secondary data used included information from Akatsi South District Assembly Registry, Local Government Act 1996 (Act 427). Secondary data served as background information to the study or to compliment the primary data.

4.4   Data collection and Sampling Techniques

The research using mixed mode design combined both qualitative and qualitative techniques in data collection. In doing so, different sampling techniques were used in that regard. Before describing into details the specific techniques and process of data collection and sampling techniques, details of the informants and sampling methods used were discussed.

4.5   Samples and Sampling Techniques

The research informants in the study can be classified into four main groups. These are elected Assembly members, defeated female assembly aspirants, former female assembly members and Deputy District Coordinator who happens who be a woman. The option of using multiple units or groups of respondents provided an avenue for multiple data but also has an overarching merit of comparison.

Table 1. Summary of respondents and sampling techniques

Respondents Categories	Sample Size(Units)	Sampling Techniques	Data collection Techniques
Elected Assembly members	28	Purposive Sampling	Questionnaire
Defeated female assembly aspirants	5	Purposive Sampling	Semi structured Interview
Former female assembly members	2	Purposive Sampling	Semi structured Interview
Deputy District Coordinator (woman)	1	Purposive Sampling	Semi structured Interview

Source: Fieldwork, 2017

4.5.1 Questionnaire Administration

A set of 28 questionnaires were administered among elected Assembly members of Akatsi South District Assembly. The questions captured in the interview ranges from their background with respect to age, sex, main occupation, duration serving in the

assembly. In addition, other segment of the questionnaire focused on core duties of member of the assembly, what distinguished women from men in their assembly work, extent of women participation in local governance, factors strengthening or mitigating against women participation in local governance, etc.

4.5.2   Interviews

Yin (2010), describes interview as data collection techniques that involve integration between interviewers and a participant or interviewee. Regardless of how interview is being conceptualized, the underlying notion is that an interview involves a face to face conversation leading to the gathering of data for a study. Interview of whatever forms could take the form of structured, semi structured or unstructured. These different forms of interviews are linked to the depth of data one seeks and in this research; semi structured interviews were conducted face to face.

4.5.3   Semi structured Interviews

A semi-structured interview is a qualitative method of inquiry that combines a pre-determined set of open questions with the prospect for the interviewer to discover particular themes or responses further. Semi structured interview involves the formulation of open ended guide questions for interviews which are highly controlled by the interviewer (Kitchen and Tate, 2000). This tool is about listening to what people said and at the same time not being judgmental ones interpretation. And according to Clifford, French, and Valentine (2010), semi structured interview involves talking with people in ways that are self-conscious, orderly and partially structured. This is used for the defeated

assembly female aspirants, former female assembly members and the Deputy District coordinator (woman). An interview guide was formulated prior to the commencement of the fieldwork (See appendices).

4.5.4 Observation

Observation was used as part of my techniques of data collection. Bearing in mind that mixed mode design being used in my research, observations involve the taking of field notes on behaviour and individuals in the field (Creswell, 2009). The use of observation in this research provided another dimension for answering the research questions with adequate verifiable data. This is because observation enables the researcher to describe existing situations using the five senses. In addition, observation is also a means of breaking through areas that are difficult in breaking through in the course of the data gathering and this is as a result of my experience on the ground.

4.6 Data recording, data Analysis and Presentation

Digital tape recorder was used in this study to record the interviews I had with the respondents and informants. Prior to recording, permission was sought from them which are in line with issue of ethical consideration and with their approval I went forward for the recording. Field note was also employed to write down interesting points in the course of interview that later used in written analysis. The use of field note helped me to remember the expression and their reactions to different issues in the course of the interview. F4 transcription software was later used to transcribe the recorded interviews

in the field. With regard to the qualitative data which have in depth interpretation of what people said, the data was transcribed and organized in themes. Data was analyzed mainly through an interpretative approach relying on patterns, categories and main themes as basic descriptive units with the use of Atlas.ti. The data was interpreted by looking at key words, ideas, similarities as well as differences in the responses from the respondents. SPSS was also employed in analyzing the quantitative data generated on the field. This was used to generate pie charts, bar charts, and frequency tables and cross tabulation tables for diverse areas that were analyzed quantitatively. Basically, the questionnaire administered on the field was analyzed through Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS).

4.7 Evaluation of the Methodology

4.7.1 Validity, Reliability and Trustworthiness

The need for every research to meet the three criteria of validity, reliability and trustworthiness is paramount. These three criteria in my view are the yardstick for evaluating one's methodology used in a research. These concepts however mean different things in qualitative research and quantitative research (Creswell, 2009).

Validity in research is concerned with the legitimacy of the research findings while reliability on the other hands refers to the extent to which the study produces consistent findings on repeated trials. Validity is achieved in this study by adopting a method called triangulation. Triangulation is defined by Denzin as cited in Jick (1979) as the use of different methodologies in the study of the same phenomenon. Various multiple data

collection sources as previously described above as well as adopting multi source approach in data collection. This made it possible to cross check information in order to enhance the credibility of the research.

Trustworthiness is more central to qualitative methods but the fact that qualitative and quantitative method was used in this study; it is of significance to discuss trustworthiness as well. The underlying supposition of qualitative data is that texts have multiple meanings and its interpretation could be taken out of context and subjective as well (Graneheim & Lundman, 2004). According to Graneheim and Lundman (2004), discussions of trustworthiness take into account in most literature the concept of credibility, transferability and conformability. Credibility as a criterion for trustworthiness pertains to how the methods and procedures employed address the focus of the research (ibid). This is achieved in this study by the use of multiple source of respondents and data collection as described above. Gray (2009) also posits that, the content of interview questions must be linked directly to the research objectives. In meeting this, interview guides and checklist and questionnaires were prepared beforehand and even though many issues emerged during the process, I make sure every aspect of my interview guide and questionnaire were covered.

Transferability on the other can be related to external validity and relate to the extent to which the findings of the research can be transferred to other settings. The ability to generalize this research to other areas is limited. This stems from the fact that the setting of this research has a peculiar culture as their inherent characteristics and cannot be overly generalized to other areas. This notwithstanding, the finding can be useful indicators of ways of strengthening women active participation in local government.

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Comfirmability of the research relates to how to be able to review the entire process, remove personal biases in the analysis and give an opportunity to respondents to verify the conclusions drawn after the research work (Crang & Cook, 2007). Even though member checks is the most widely used means of checking this, the distance and time factor between myself and the informants could not allow me to relate to them back for verification. This notwithstanding, the back and forth verification of responses on the field during the interview process ensured that their responses were properly recorded. Another way comfirmability was achieved in the study was relating the responses to personal observation on the field.

4.7.2 Ethical Consideration

According to Silverman (2011), researchers must be sincere with informants about the aims of the research. Explanation was given to the gatekeeper regarding the aim of the study and helped me along the way. Tenets of ethical considerations including confidentiality, informed consent and safety of the respondents were kept in mind.

At the inception of each administration of questionnaire and interview, I began with the introduction of myself and the topic being researched, and the fact that they have the free will to partake and withdraw at any time when so wish. I also assured them that the information given will be treated with the outmost confidentiality. I also asked for consent to take pictures and these were agreed upon at some moments and dissent to at some point and as ethics demand, I have no option than to agree with them. Recording of interviews I had with them was done likewise.

4.7.3   Positionality and Power Relations

The status of an individual is defined as the position he or she occupies in relation to the entire society (England, 1994). Rights and duties come with the position one occupies in society. A careful reflection of a researchers' status in the field is of essence because it can affect the kind of information a researcher gets on the field. For the purpose of this study, my status was that of a student researcher and also an 'insider' in the context of the research site. This is because I'm a native of the region and can equally speak their dialect; the Ewe dialect. With this, I was considered as one of their own and trust was developed in me. Notwithstanding this, I was equally regarded an 'outsider' when it comes to the specific location in the region because the research sites happens not to be my hometown. In addition, my identity was hidden for a plethora of reasons including financial inducement.

Power relation is produced as a result of the differences in knowledge between the researcher and the respondents and this have to be managed in the research process. Power relation played some role in this research in a galore of ways as envisioned and it was essence on my part to plan and deal with them as advised by (Crang & Cook, 2007). Some of the anticipated interaction that may have power relation entrenched in them were identified and appropriate measures considered before the inception of the fieldwork.

The first of this interaction bringing about power relation has to with the interaction with the informants. As a researcher and not a native of the area and having a kind of knowledge in the subject matter, the probability of me dominating was foreseen. According to England (1994), this type of power relation is characterized as possibly

exploitative relationships. Having this in mind, the situation was dealt with by engaging the respondents in a friendlier, down to earth manner in terms of my body language and framing of questions and not domineering in the interview process.

5 PROFILE OF THE STUDY AREA

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a background description of the Akatsi District of which Akatsi District Assembly is located. This background information includes a short profile of Ghana, the geography of the area, location and size, climate and vegetation, topography and drainage, population structure, economic and social aspect of the District.

5.2 Short Profile of Ghana

Ghana is located on the coast of West Africa and shares boundaries with Togo to the East, Cote d'voire to the West, Burkina Faso to the North and Gulf of Guinea to the South. Ghana has ten administrative regions which are divided into 216 geographical and administrative Districts, Municipals and Metropolitan Assemblies. Ghana has an elected president with an independent judiciary and a unicameral legislature: having one legislative chamber. According to the 2010 provisional results of the population and housing census, Ghana has a population of 24,658,823. There is a 30.4 percent increase over the 2000 census population of 18,912,079 with the most populous region being Ashanti and followed by Greater Accra Region (Ghana Statistical Service, 2012). Ghana is located within the tropical equatorial belt and as a result witnesses high temperature of between 25 and 35 degree Celsius with some variation throughout the year.

Ghana is characterized with an agricultural economy with more than 60% of the labour force in the sector. Ghana is endowed with a lot of natural resources comprising gold,

bauxite, cocoa, diamonds and recently petroleum oil. It is the world's largest exporter of cocoa, the sixth exporter of diamonds and major exporter of gold and manganese. Ghana has recently discovered oil in a commercial quantity.

5.3 Geography of Akatsi South District.

(Topography, Drainage, Climate, Vegetation Population and Local Economy)

The Akatsi South District was established by a Legislative Instrument (L.I.) 2165 in March 15, 2012 (PHC) Population and Housing Census (2014). The District is located between latitudes 60S 70N and longitudes 00W 10E and shares boundaries with Keta Municipal to the South, Ketu North to the East, to the West by South Tongu District and to the North by Akatsi North District. Its total land area is about 536 square kilometers.

The District falls within the coastal savannah equatorial climatic regime characterized by high temperatures (min: 21o C max: 34.5o C), high relative humidity (85%) and moderate to low rainfall regime (1,084 mm) with distinct wet and dry seasons of about equal lengths. The District falls within the tropical coastal savannah equatorial climatic region characterized by high temperatures (minimum of 210 Celsius to maximum of 34.50 Celsius). The population of Akatsi South District, according to the 2010 Population and Housing Census, is 98,684 representing 4.6 percent of the total population of the Volta Region. It comprises 53.9 percent females and 46.1 percent males. About sixty eight (67.7%) percent of the Districts population is rural. The District has a sex ratio of 85.5. The population of the District is youthful with the population under age 15 constituting 37.6 percent.

The vegetation of the District is made up of coastal savannah with marshy and sandy portions. The black berry (velvet tamarind') locally called "atitoeti" can be found in most parts of the areas surrounding Akatsi town. In the far northwest, around the Avu lagoon and its creeks are large track of reed locally known as "Keti" and used in weaving mats. The vast savannah grassland is ideal for irrigated mechanized farming and livestock rearing.

The local economy of Akatsi South District is agrarian in nature. The majority of the people in the District are engaged in agriculture. The District has substantial agricultural resources, which include large expanses of land of which are suitable for the cultivation of crops and rearing of animals. The major agricultural products include black berry (Atitoe), sugar cane, pineapple, mangoes and staples such as maize, cassava, rice and sweet potato. Major economic activities in the District include crop farming; livestock keeping, fishing and hunting and constitute the major sources of employment for the economically active population. Apart from these agriculture-related activities, there is manufacturing, mining and quarrying, construction, wholesale and retail trade, and tourism. Other economic potentials include the sugar production, chili pepper cultivation, commercial mango production, aquaculture and exploitation of clay deposits.

Photo 1: Photo showing the Assembly Hall of Akatsi South District Assembly

Source: Field Data, 2017

Figure 2: Map of Akatsi South District

DISTRICT MAP OF AKATSI SOUTH
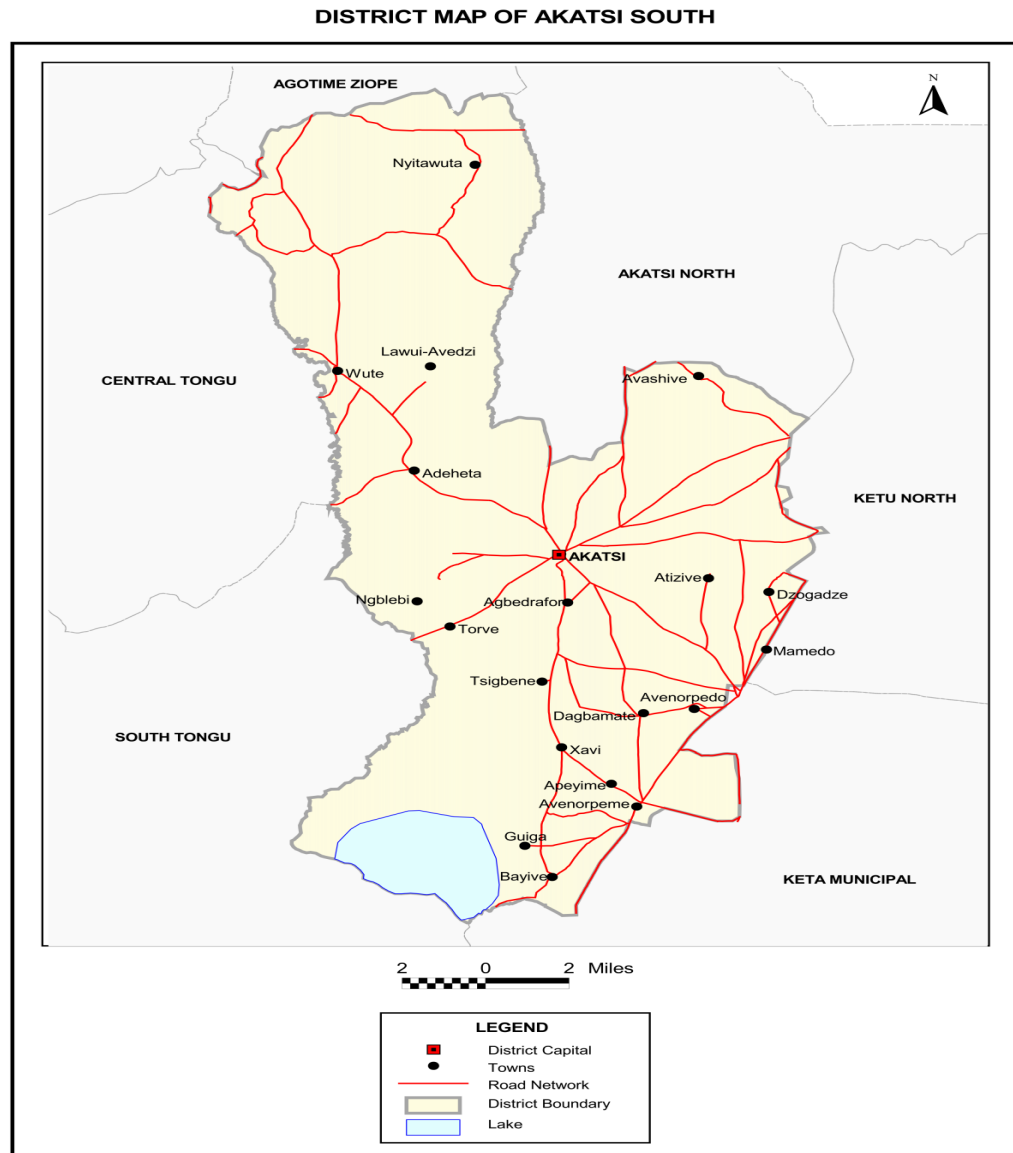
Source: Population and Housing Census, 2

6   DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

6.1   Introduction

This chapter deals with data that was collected in the Akatsi South District pertaining to the women participation at local governance system in Akatsi District Assembly. Quantitative data were collated and analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS version 15.0) software package as well all as Atlas.ti for analyzing qualitative data. Statistical analyses include the frequency distribution tables, and simple percentages. A total number of 28 questionnaires were self- administered to respondents and 8 semi-structured interviews were conducted.

6.2   Data Presentation

6.2.1   Objective I: To examine the extent of women participation in local governance in Akatsi District of Volta Region

Respondent's view on extent of women participation at local governance.

The first objective of this study is to examine the extent at which women participate in local governance in Akatsi South District with emphasis on elected members to the assembly and not appointed members. Therefore, the focus of the analysis is purely on elected women to the assembly. The structure of Ghana's local governance system is such that other persons not exceeding 30 per cent of the total membership of the Assembly are appointed by the President in consultation with the traditional authorities

and other interest groups in the District and these appointees can either be both male and female into the assembly.

The current Akatsi District Assembly consists of 28 elected members from the 28 electoral areas in the Akatsi South District. Out of these numbers, 28 are males with no elected woman representation in the Assembly. This according to the officials of the District Assembly is very worrying. According to Deputy Coordinating Director of the Assembly who happens to be a woman, she iterates that;

It is a concern for them and her specifically because the extent of women participation in the local governance system the Akatsi South District is very low. Is a concern but is has been like that... it has been like that and that is why I am saying that we just need to intensify the education to remedy the situation. Education is most important and I think if you educate the people that women are so important, woman are very outspoken and passionate so elect them into the Assembly, they might listen to you.

This assertion is shared by one of the defeated female aspirant. She was of the view that;

Women play a very important role in every sphere of life and it is very disturbing that in Akatsi South Assembly, there is no elected woman in the current assembly. Even in the past assemblies, women representation is very low and this cannot be left to continue forever. It was one of the reasons that made me to contest for the election so as to change the situation but unfortunately, I lost but I shall try again. Something needs to be done concerning this phenomenon of low representation of elected women to the assembly. Out of 28 elected assembly members, none is a woman. Don't you think it is disturbing? She asked.

The above assertions are also supported by the quantitative data collated through instrument of data collection where it was revealed that all the elected members are males. This is evidenced in figure 1 below.

Figure 3: Number of Assembly members elected into Akatsi South District Assembly
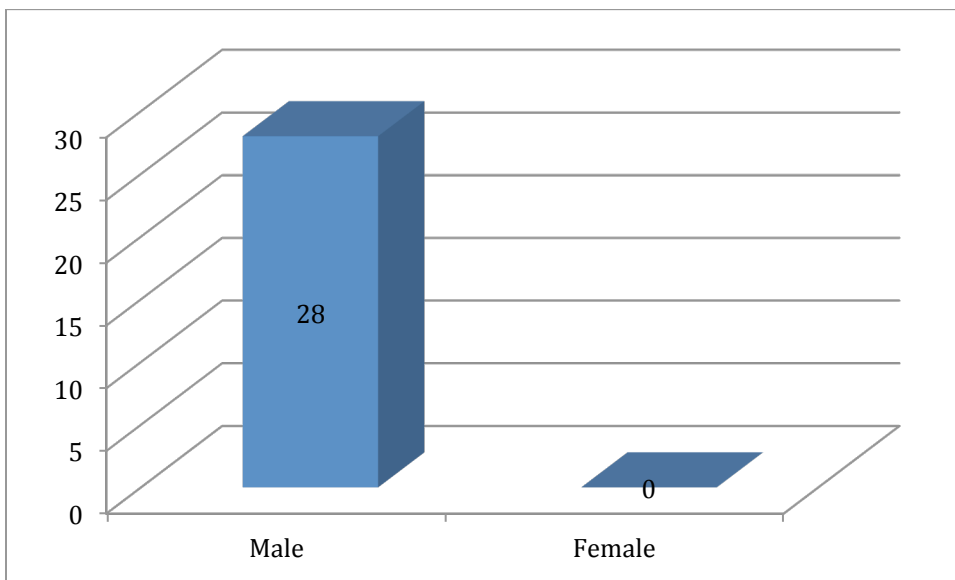
Source: Field Data, 2017

This low representation of women in local governance in Akatsi South District confirms the findings in a study by Brenya, Mensah & Nana Nyarko (2015) where he stated that women's poor representation in local governance resulted in their voices being excluded or underrepresented when priorities and agendas, policies, strategic plans, budgets and action plans are being formulated at all levels of government. Another study by Baah-Ennumh, Owusu & Kokor (2005) state that generally, there is low representation of

women in local level governance in Ashanti Region and this low representation according to them can be attributed to a number of factors.

Assessing Respondents View on Women Representation in the District Assembly Enough?

The result in figure 2 revealed as to whether women representation in Akatsi South District Assembly is enough or otherwise. All the 28 representing 100% elected Assembly members who happen to be men agreed that representation of women in local governance in Akatsi South District is not enough.

Figure 4: Respondents view on either women representation in local governance being enough or otherwise
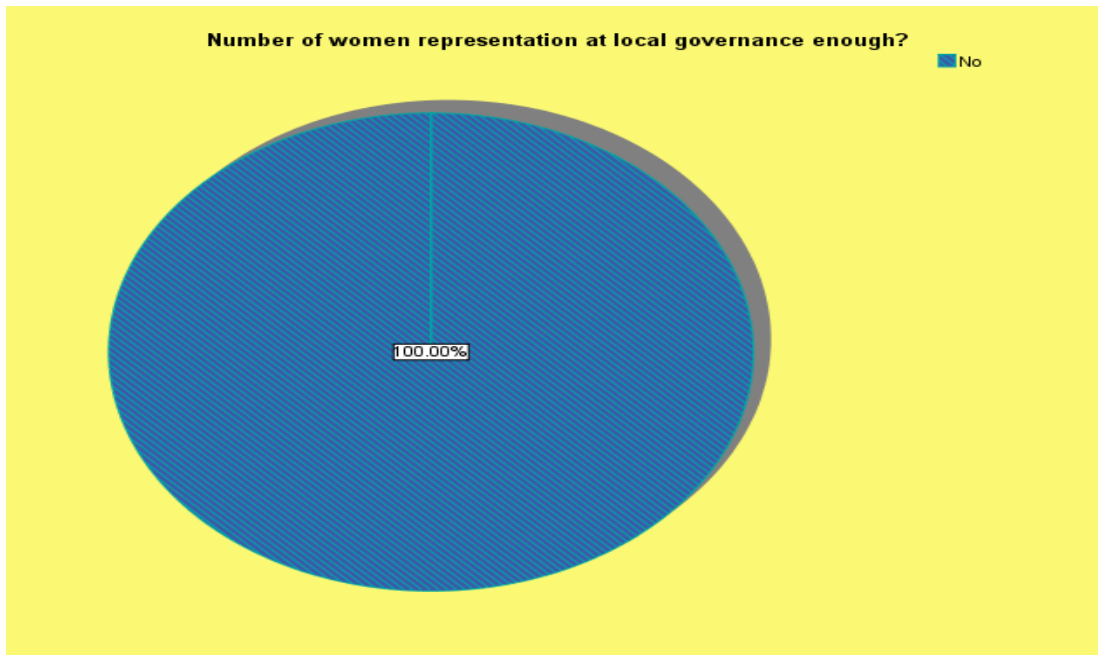
Source: Field Data, 2017

6.2.2 Objective II: To identify the main factors constraining women participation in local government.

Some general views of respondents on factors constraining effective women participation in local governance in Akatsi South District

The second objective of this study sought to unravel factors limiting the effective representation of women in local governance hence low representation of women as reveled in this study. A plethora of factors came to fore as militating against the quest of women to be better represented in local governance system.

Deputy Coordinating Director

According to Deputy Coordinating Director who happens to be a woman herself, opines that women epitomize good governance than men but due to obstacles confronting them, that dimension of good governance that ought to be brought to the system by the women is missing. She iterates that;

The major factor militating against or limiting effective women participation in local governance in Akatsi South District is financial factor. This is because processes leading to District Assembly election require money and this to some extent is very difficult for women to come by and this put women at a disadvantaged position as compared to men. Financial resources are required for printing posters (which ready comes to mind) and looking at the economic conditions of Akatsi South District and the fact that women are the vulnerable and underprivileged in society, it is difficult for women to have the financial muscle to contest for District Assembly election and be voted for. The above assertion by Deputy Coordinating Director buttressed earlier research by Abubakari, Askia Mohammed & Issah (2014)

where they state that monetization of political environment is one of the reasons among many which serve as barrier to women political participation.

The Deputy Coordinating Director also opines that cultural factors also limit the ability of women to effectively participate in local governance. Women roles are traditionally seen to be limited to the house and this makes it difficult for women to be voted for and represent the larger electoral area. *In many parts of Ghana and particularly in rural areas and in this locality, people really feel it is men who are the head so they don't see the reason why the woman should be voted. The women feel that when men are elected, they will really speak on their behalf hence men getting upper hands over women to get elected into the Assembly. You understand…. they almost feel that the men should be their leaders and you a woman standing as an assembly member, I don't know how the electorates will vote for you as woman.*

Former Female Assembly Member

According to one of the respondents who happen to be a former Assembly member and a woman, on the question of challenges women faced in getting elected into the District Assembly (DA), she mentions financial factors as the major factor militating against effective women participation in local governance in Akatsi South District. This she iterates that;

One major challenge I see is financial challenge. Women in general need assistance and in this locality, farming is the main livelihood activity here and if you don't have enough capital, you cannot go about the financial obligations associated with election

campaigns, etc. It is no doubt that finances play a role in DA elections and due to poor economic background of women in this locality, they are disadvantaged in coming out with finances for the election. This in my view attributed to the very low representation of women in local governance in this DA over the years. When asked further how she financed her campaign and subsequent election, she said that aside her personal savings from her businesses, she had a support from a colleague who helped her in printing of her posters, etc.

Another major factor or challenge she identifies as militating against women representation in DA is lack of education/higher education. According to her;

You see my son, it is in this contemporary time that they (women) are appreciating the worth or value of education as far as girl child education is concerned. In the past, the popularly held view was that it is not necessary educating female/girl child and this make women lagging behind in this part of the locality in terms of women empowerment. But I must say that when I became Assembly member and the exposure I had gotten, I do encourage parents especially women to prioritize their children education and for that matter girl child education in order to becoming a meaning person in the society as an attempt in addressing this phenomenon.

Defeated Female Aspirants

One of the defeated female aspirants also has this to say regarding the low representation of women in local governance in Akatsi South District.

Inferiority complex on the part of women in my candid view is a major factor contributing to low women turn out in this District Assembly. Some of them have the perception that they may not be strong enough like the men in discharging their duties when they get to the assembly; maybe in terms of lobbying. So people think when they give us the nod to represent them as Assembly members, we may not be effective as the men in the assembly. That is why some of them are reluctant to vote for us to go into the assembly. For me, I see that they don't know the importance of woman so we have to educate them.

She also indicates that intimidation from the men also prevented women from effectively vying for local governance election hence low representation of women in local governance in Akatsi South District. *According to her:*

Some of them are afraid of the men. Some of them do not have the courage to go through the tedious processes leading to the election. With the use of vulgar and intimidation languages from the men, we women are left out, it takes the courageous ones like me and few others to withstand the intimidation tendencies portray by the men during the campaign processes.

This above assertion by this defeated woman aspirant is confirmed by one of the respondents who happen to be a former female assembly member. She pointed out that:
Men are fond of suppressing women; they do not allow or give room to women to participate in local governance system. If you want to participate, then you must be active and be ready for the battle which comprises of diverse tactic from the men including intimidation and suppression in an attempt to advance their course.

With regards to the twenty eight elected assembly members who all happen to be men, it was held among 31.7% of the respondents that, financial reasons and monetization of the political space is one of the factors contributing to the low level of participation of women in local governance. Whilst 28.6% of the elected assembly members ascribed lack of education and higher education to the low representation of women participation in local governance, 14.3% of the respondents also attributed the phenomenon to cultural and religious factors which interplay in the society. 10.7% each of the assembly members noted that inferiority complex and lack of community support are some of the factors militating against effective representation of women; hence low women representation of women in local governance in Akatsi South District. These assertions by the elected assembly members who were all men support the views expressed by the defeated female aspirants, former women assembly members and Deputy Coordinating Director for Akatsi South District. This confirms a study by Bebelleh & Nobabumah (2013) that lack of formal education, low socio economic status, lack of incentives, among others as some of the perception of constraints of low participation of women in Upper West Region of Ghana.

Figure 5: Respondents views on reasons for low representation of women in local governance
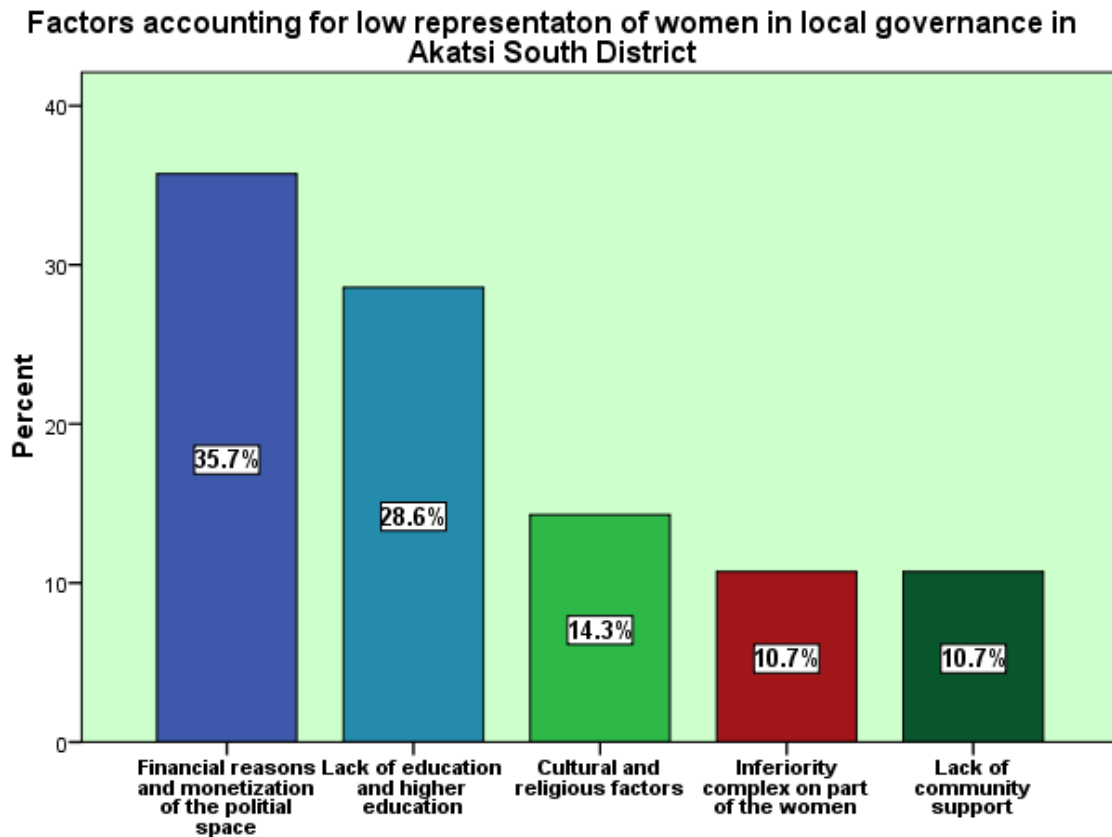
Source: Field Data, 2017

Does party affiliation play a role in District Assembly Election?

One of the questions interrogated by this study is to ascertain if ones political party affiliation plays a role in becoming an Assembly member. From the quantitative data collated, majority of the respondents with a percentage of 78.6% noted that, one's political affiliation at the locality or in the electoral area plays a major role in ones chances to get elected into the District Assembly. However, 21.4% of the respondents were also of the view that, one's political affiliation does not play any role in one's

election into the District Assembly. The former assertion that political party affiliation is a winning factor to District Assembly defeats the Local Government Act 1993 (ACT 462) of Ghana which stipulates clearly in section 7 as follows:

- A candidate seeking election to District Assembly or to lower local government unit shall personally appear before the electorate as an individual, and shall not use a symbol associated with a political party.
- A political party shall not endorse, sponsor, offer platform for or against a candidate seeking election to a District Assembly or to a lower local government.

This stipulation notwithstanding, it is clear from the study that majority of the respondents held the view that, political parties affiliation plays a role in getting elected to the District Assembly.

Figure 6: Respondents views on role of political parties' affiliation to getting election into District Assembly

Does politcal party affiliation play a part in one's election to the District Assembly?
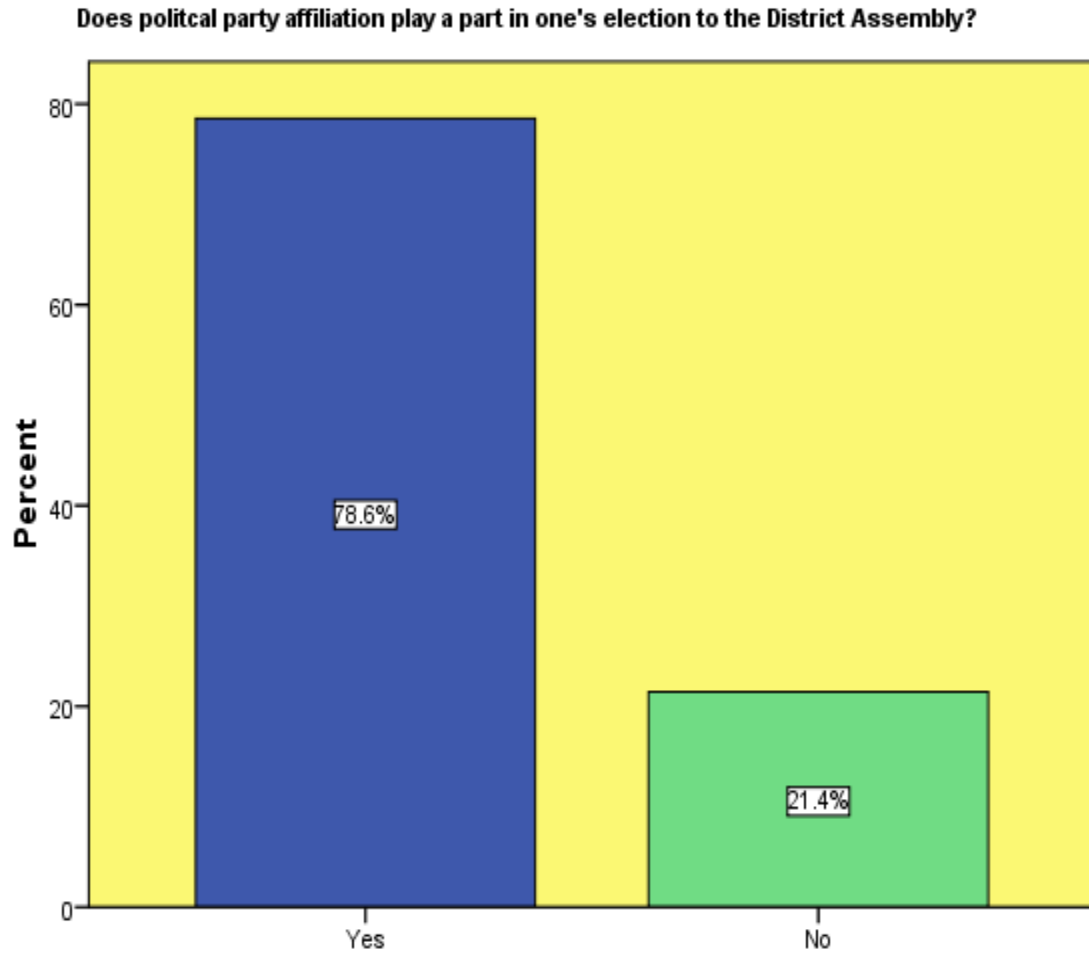
Source: Field Data, 2017

This assertion of political parties' affiliation playing a part in one's chances of getting elected into the District Assembly is echoed by the former woman Assembly Member. According to her:

One's political parties' affiliation plays a part in one's election to the District Assembly. This is done subversively but everyone is aware of this phenomena. For instance, if not because of my political position as a women organizer when I contested for the second term, I would have won. It is not on my own to be a former assembly member after my first 4 years. I contested but due to party position I held, I lost by thirteen votes to a man. So I am telling you truthfully that if not because of party consideration, I would have won and at least do 8 years in the District Assembly. But because of party-party, I lost. It cuts across all political parties in Ghana and not only limited to this Assembly but is a nationwide phenomenon.

6.2.3 Objective III: To find out the strategies that can be adopted to promoting women participation in local government.

The third objective of the study is to find out ways of increasing women participation in local governance in Akatsi South District. Towards achieving improved women participation in the local governance of the Akatsi South District, the Deputy District Coordinator has this to say:

First and foremost, education has to be intensified. We still have to educate the electorates because women in parliament are very outspoken, same can be replicated at the Assembly level since the Assembly represents the central government. Local government ought to be non-partisan but now most of them are affiliated to these political parties so we should educate the electorate or indigenes so they can also see the purpose or how women can really perform. You see, without that if you don't educate

them then they will always be voting for men, men and men and men. But i think the government also does well by appointing women to the assembly but with the elected one i think we should educate the indigenes so that they can also take it up by giving chance to women who they think are capable of addressing their problem.

The above assertion was also buttressed by one of the former women assembly member. She iterates that:

First it is the duty of National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE) to go to the communities to educate electorate frequently about election but the NCCE too has their own problems, they always complain about means of transport to execute their duty. I went to them twice myself for them to come and educate the people, but it reached a point where the director would have to use his own money to take car to the community, which didn't help us. But recently, they gave them some car so it's their work to educate the electorates. Education is the only means through which this phenomenon can be changed. Now we don't have any say, if you want to make any change, you have to be in the assembly but if people do not vote for you, what can you do. No development project can pass through you unless you are in the assembly and lobby for it. I think that intense and frequent voter education on the need to also vote for women could help a lot in changing the situation.

A defeated woman aspirant has this to say concerning education as a means or strategy of letting more women to get involved in local governance. To her:

Public education should be done. House to house education should be done to encourage the women to go to the assembly election or to go into politics. It will help because when

you start from district assembly election you will have the knowledge to hold bigger positions. They should know that very soon a woman could be a president of Ghana. It could be you, it could me and it could be anybody. Some of them think they are not educated so they cannot go into the assembly but district assembly election is not about education. Once you can talk, once you can lobby, once you can humble yourself to acquire certain things you are okay to be an assembly member. So now, what should be done for my fellow women is education from house to house, public education so that they can create the awareness into them that it is now their time, they can also make it. They should come onboard. They should be made aware that anytime any of their colleague women stand for power; they should be behind her and support her to win, because when the women go, she can create room for other women. Some of them are just ignorant about the role of women so they need more education to make them aware.

Another strategy that was suggested as a mechanism of promoting more women participation in local governance is motivation. According to one of the defeated women aspirants:

Apart from education, there should be a motivation. Somebody might have the feeling to contest, but without motivation, the person will not have that confidence to go. It can be in the form of prices or award for female contestants that can drive them to contest. I don't have any motivation before I contested, but after I entered the race, we had a lot of workshops, which gives me motivation.

Based on the quantitative data collated, toward achieving improved participation of women in local governance in Akatsi South District, majority of the respondents

accounting for 50% of the respondents suggested that education and awareness creation is the way forward. This collaborates with the views expressed by the defeated women aspirants, former women assembly members and the Deputy District Coordinating Director. In addition, 21.4% of the respondents identified financial support as a means for improved women participation at the local governance. 10.7% each of the respondents were of the view that, introduction of quota system for women and support from Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and women group should be employed as a strategy for improved women participation in local governance. Again, 7.1 % of respondents suggested that, improved women participation in local governance can be achieved when there are family and husband support for women aspirants. This view is shared by one of former women assembly member when she iterates that:

First of all, if you do not have the support of your husband, you cannot be successful. Your husband has to understand you and give you his full support in the process to become successful in this political terrain

Figure 7: Respondents views on how to improve women participation in local governance
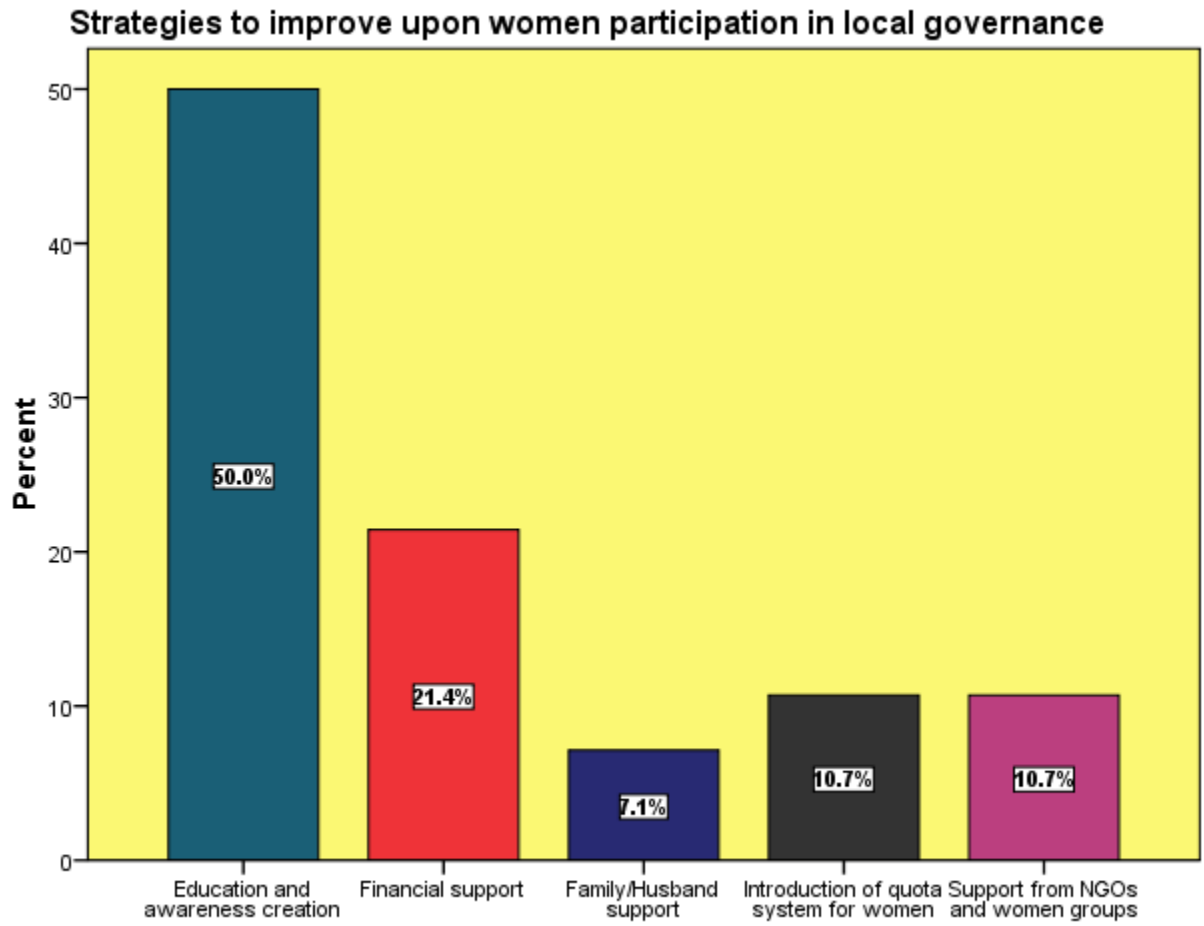
Source: Field Data, 2017

7 RECOMENMDATION AND CONCLUSION

7.1 Introduction

This chapter presents an overview of the findings of the study. The purpose of the study was to make a contribution to the literature on feminism and local governance. The study aimed to assess the extent of women participation in local governance in Akatsi South District Assembly. The study also sought to identify the main factors constraining or supporting women participation in local governance system in the District. It also aimed at finding out strategies that can be adopted to promoting women participation in local government in Akatsi South District Assembly.

Theoretical insight for this study was drawn from feminist theory. Various forms of feminist theories including liberal, socialist and radical theories were discussed in the study. However, liberal feminist theory form the basis of this study accordingly places before this research work the enormous importance of going deeper into the obstructions or challenges militating against the effective participation of women in politics either at the national or at the local level which is the focus of this study.

The study was conducted in Akatsi South District with the use of mixed mode method of enquiry which implies the combination of qualitative and quantitative method in a study. Primary data were collated with the use of interview, observations and administration of questionnaires. 28 questionnaires and eight interviews were administered and conducted respectively. Articles, newspapers, journals and reports on the subject matter form the sources of secondary data with were used to complement the primary data.

7.2 Conclusion

The first objective of the study was to examine the extent of women participation in local governance in Akatsi District of Volta Region. From the 28 respondents administered with questionnaires and the trends from the interviews, it was evident that the level of women participation at the Akatsi South District is very low and discouraging. This is supported by the fact that, there is no elected woman into the assembly. All the 28 elected assembly members are all men this supported a study by Baah-Ennumh, Owusu & Kokor (2005) where they state that generally, there is low representation of women in local level governance in Ashanti Region and this low representation according to them can be attributed to a number of factors.

The second objective of the study was to identify the main factors constraining or supporting women participation in local government in the District. For the elected assembly members who were administered with questionnaires, it was held among 31.7% of the respondents that, financial reasons and monetization of the political space is one of the factors contributing to the low level of participation of women in local governance. Whilst 28.6% of the elected assembly members ascribed lack of education and higher education to the low representation of women participation in local governance, 14.3% of the respondents also attributed the phenomenon to cultural and religious factors which interplay in society. 10.7% each of the assembly members noted that inferiority complex and lack of community support are some of the factors militating against effective representation of women; hence low women representation of women in local governance in Akatsi South District. These factors were collaborated by the qualitative

data gathered through interviews with defeated women aspirants, former women assembly members and also Deputy District Coordinator who happens to be a woman.

The third objective of the study was to find out strategies that can be adopted to promoting women participation in local government in Akatsi South District Assembly. 50% of the respondents administered with questionnaires suggested that education and awareness creation is the way forward to improving upon women participation at the local governance. This collaborates with the views expressed by the defeated women aspirants, former women assembly members and the Deputy District Coordinating Director. In addition, 21.4% of the respondents identified financial support as a means for improved women participation at the local governance. 10.7% each of the respondents were of the view that, introduction of quota system for women and support from NGOs and women group should be employed as a strategy for improved women participation in local governance. Again, 7.1 % of respondents suggested that, improved women participation in local governance can be achieved when there are family and husband support for women aspirants.

7.3 Recommendation

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are made:

- Efforts should be put in place by all stakeholders in local governance to remedy this phenomenon of low women participation at the local governance.

- Inferiority complex on the part of women to contest for District Assembly election should be looked at profoundly.

- There should be an intense electoral education for the electorates on the need for women to be elected as Assembly Members to the District Assembly.

- There should be policy directive to support all women aspirants in the district Assembly Election in the form of financial support.

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APPENDIXES

QUESTIONNAIRE: ELECTED ASSEMBLY MEMBERS (BOTH MALES AND FEMALES)

This interview serves you with an opportunity to share your ideas on women participation in local governance at the Akatsi South District Assembly. Your response will provide important information that will help in finding out the extent of women participation at the District Assembly, specific challenges militating against the effective participation of women in politics and the necessary measures that have been put in place to remedy the situation.

This exercise is first and foremost for academic purposes. Information you provide will be treated as confidential and the anonymity of respondents will be maintained. I will appreciate it, if you could take some time off your busy schedule to respond to the questions. It will not be used for any other purposes other than stated above.

PLEASE TICK AS APPROPRIATE

    A. SOCIAL CHARACTERISTICS OF RESPONDENTS

1. Age   (a) 20 – 29 (b) 30 – 49 (c) 50 – 59 (d) 60 and above

2. Gender   (a) Male (b) Female

3. Religion   (a) Christian (b) Muslim (c) Traditional (d) others (specify)…………

4. Marital Status   (a) Married (b) Divorced (c) Single (d) Widowed

5. Education   (a) Primary/Junior (b) Secondary (c) College/Technical (d) University

    B.

6. Why did you contest in the local assembly elections?

    ……………………………………………………………………………………………………

    ……………………………………………………………………………………………………

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7. For how long have you being an Assembly member? ………………………

8. What is the principal role of an Assembly member?

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9. How many Assembly members are in the Assembly?

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10. How many are women?

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11. Are the numbers of women in the Assembly enough?   (a) Yes (b) No

12. If no, what factors account for the low number of women in local governance?

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13. What distinguished women from men in their assembly work?

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14. Are women more punctual than men? (a) Yes   (b) No

15. If yes what accounts for that phenomenon?

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16. What should be done to increase greater representation (elected members) of women in local governance?

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17. Are there factors that work against women election to the Assembly? ? (a) Yes (b) No

18. If yes what are the factors and why?

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19. Do party affiliation a factor electorates consider in electing members to the Assembly? (a) Yes (b) No

20. If yes, why is that a case?

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INTERVIEW QUESTIONS: DEFEATED CANDIDATES (WOMEN ONLY)

1. Could you please give a brief introduction of yourself and the position you occupy?

2. Why did you contest in the local assembly elections?

3. How do you feel about your loss?

4. Did you have enough financial resources to support your election campaign?

5. How did you finance your campaign?

6. To what extent did gender play a major role in the election?

7. Are there factors that may have made the people not to vote for you?

8. If yes, what are they and how?

9. What major challenges did you face in standing for an election to the District Assembly?

10. Why is it a challenge?

11. What made you to lose the election?

12. Would you contest again?

13. If yes why?

14. What prevents women from being elected to District Assembly?

15. How can these factors (mention in question 12) be overcome?

16. How can women be better represented in local governance?

17. Are there actions from stakeholders to promote greater participation of women in local governance?

18. If there are, what are these actions?

19. Does political affiliation play a part in District Assembly election?

20. If yes how?

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS: FORMER WOMEN ASSEMBLY MEMBERS

1. Could you please give a brief introduction of yourself?

2. Why did you contest in the local assembly elections?

3. How do you feel about being a former Assembly member?

4. Did you have enough financial resources to support your election campaign?

5. How did you finance your campaign?

6. To what extent did gender play a major role in your election?

7. What major challenges did you face in standing for the election?

8. Why is it a challenge?

9. Would you contest again?

10. If yes why?

11. What prevents women from being elected to District Assemblies?

12. How can these factors (mention in question 12) be overcome?

13. How can women be better represented in local governance?

14. Are there actors and actions from stakeholders to promote greater involvement of women in local governance?

15. If there are, what are these actions?

16. Does political affiliation play a part in District Assembly election?

17. If yes how?

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS: **DEPUTY COORDINATING DIRECTOR**

This interview serves you with an opportunity to share your ideas on women participation in local governance at the Akatsi South District Assembly. Your response will provide important information that will help in finding out the extent of women participation at the District Assembly, specific challenges militating against the effective participation of women in politics and the necessary measures that have been put in place to remedy the situation.

This exercise is first and foremost for academic purposes. Information you provide will be treated as confidential and the anonymity of respondents will be maintained. I will appreciate it, if you could take some time off your busy schedule to respond to the questions. It will not be used for any other purposes other than stated above.

1. Could you please give a brief introduction of yourself and the position you occupy?
2. Do you think current elected women to the Assembly adequate?
3. Why?
4. Are there any support package offered to women aspirants in the Assembly election?
5. If yes, what support packages are offered to women aspirants and why?
6. Are there any groups advocating for more women to be elected into District Assembly?
7. If yes, which groups are they and what are their rationales?

8. What challenges do women face in standing as candidates to the District Assembly?

9. How can these challenges be addressed for more representation of (elected) women in District Assembly?

10. How can women be better represented in District Assembly?

11. What do you think about an introduction of specific quotas for women representation in local governance?

12. Does political affiliation play a part in District Assembly election?

13. If yes how?