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COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES

**WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION AND REPRESENTATION IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT:
THE CASE OF YILO KROBO AND GA EAST MUNICIPALITIES BETWEEN 2009
AND 2021**

BY

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**THIS DISSERTATION IS SUBMITTED TO THE UNIVERSITY OF GHANA, LEGON,
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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation is the product of an original work I carried out under the supervision of Dr. Elizabeth A. Asante of the Institute of Statistical, Social, and Economic Research (ISSER), University of Ghana. All citations to other authors' works have been properly cited. This dissertation, in its entirety or in part, has never been submitted for a degree award to any other academic institution.

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DEDICATION

Firstly, I dedicate this dissertation to the Almighty God, who has provided insight and direction for this academic path. Secondly, I dedicate this work to my dear family, and in particular to my late mother, whose steadfast love and support have shaped my life significantly. I am also very grateful to Esther Ojuigo Sunday for her support and confidence in me. I owe Rev. Manuel Tetteh of the Foursquare Gospel Church in Ghana, a debt of gratitude for shaping my academic endeavors through his mentorship and scholarly inspiration. Lastly, this work is dedicated to the Afful family, particularly to Aunty Carole and Uncle Kwesi for their immense contributions toward the completion of this journey.



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ABSTRACT

This study examined women's participation and representation in local government of two municipal assemblies in Ghana, Yilo Krobo and Ga East. The persistent under-representation and low participation of women in local government has attracted worldwide debate and concerns. Globally, women are less represented in position of power at both national and local levels. Most countries in Africa, including Ghana, have very few women in position of power at both national and local levels. The objectives of the study were to assess the trends in participation and representation in local government between the two municipalities between 2009 and 2021, account for the low participation and representation of women in local government and highlight the contributions of political parties and local government authorities in the promotion of women's participation and representation in local government. The method employed to carry out the objectives of the study was qualitative. The methodology effectively involved secondary data and obtained valuable insights from 24 primary respondents through the use of Key Informant Interviews (KII) and Focus Group Discussions (FGD). The study discovered that, there were significantly low representation of women in local government in both Yilo Krobo and Ga East municipalities despite efforts to advance women's involvement in politics. The study also found that women's participation in voter registration and turnout was somewhat better than women's nomination in elections or elected positions. Furthermore, the study discovered that barriers to women's involvement and representation in local government and politics include inadequate financial resources, low levels of education, gender prejudices, lack of support from spouses, lack of self-confidence, and reproductive duties. The study also found that political parties and municipal government supported women's public engagement although not to a greater degree. The study also makes recommendations to increase women's participation and representation in

the political space. Firstly, it suggests that financial support be made available to female candidates to enhance their capacity to compete effectively in elections. Additionally, provide educational scholarships for women to enhance their academic qualifications to enabling them to compete on equal footing with male counterparts. Moreover, undertake public education with a focus on gender bias to foster inclusive political environments that accommodate both genders. Lastly, implement and enforce quotas and affirmative actions to ensure gender parity in local governance and national polity at large.



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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AIHW: Australian Institute of Health and Welfare

CRS: Congressional Research Service

CVM: Civic Voluntarism Model

DA: District Assembly

ESCAP: Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

FGDs: Focus Group Discussions

GSS: Ghana Statistical Service

IDEA: Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance

IPU: International Parliamentary Union

KII: Key Informant Interviews

LI: Legislative Instrument

MCD: Municipal Coordinating Director

MCE: Municipal Chief Executive

MMDAs: Metropolitan, Municipal, and District Assemblies

NDC: National Democratic Congress

NPP: New Patriotic Party

RCCs: Regional Co-ordinating Councils

RM: Resource Model

SDG: Sustainable Development Goal

UN: United Nations

UNDP: United Nations Development Programme

WEF_GGGR: World Economic Forum, Global Gender Gap Report



CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

The persistent issue of low participation and representation of women in national politics and local government has sparked widespread concern on a global scale. Despite various strategies being implemented, progress in this area has been slow. This research delves into the qualitative aspect of women's involvement in local government in Yilo Krobo and Ga East municipalities, spanning from 2009 to 2021. This chapter comprises the background to the study, problem statement, research objectives and questions, significance of the study, and the organization of the study.

1.1 Study Background

Several evidence exist to indicate the global under-representation and low participation of women in politics. For instance, the 15th edition of the World Economic Forum, Global Gender Gap Report (WEF-GGGR) indicates that the representation of women in ministerial positions worldwide stands at a mere 22.6% (2021, p.5). Similarly, a report by UN Women also points to the fact that women's representation in various deliberative bodies in local government stands at 36% (2021, p.7). The presented figures underscore the notable gender disparity in political representation on a global scale.

According to International IDEA et al (2014), the two basic values of democracy are participation and representation. These two values enjoin societies to create an enabling environment to ensure that citizens are not cut-off from the political processes. Democracy is universally recognized as apolitical system that provides equal platform for members of a society to participate in political affairs irrespective of individual's gender, religion, level of education, income, or ethnicity.

The importance of political participation and representation cannot be downplayed in any democratic society, as it affords individuals the opportunity to influence decision-making, development outcomes and institutions. For instance, Verba, Schlozman, and Brady (1995) postulate that political participation enhances the accountability of government officials. Political participation entails a wide range of activities on a global scale, including but not limited to voting and working in campaigns (Verba & Nie, 1972; Moyser & Day, 1992), enrollment in a political party, demonstrations, and standing for elected positions (Teorell et al, 2007).

Despite the many advantages that political participation and representation present to societies, they are not equally accessible to everyone. Mansbridge (1999) argues that representation is vital because it ensures that the views and concerns of all groups are considered in the political processes. This may lead to informed decisions and improved policy outcomes. However, there is a high tendency for uninformed decisions and poor policy outcomes in societies where minority groups are neglected in decision-making. Minority groups are often denied a voice in decision-making and political processes (UNDP, 2019). In many countries, specific group of people faces diverse impediments that keep them far away from decision-making and the political processes. Some of the challenges that confronts these minority groups may take the form of legal, cultural, institutional, economic or social. These setbacks may lead to the undermining and neglect of issues that affect these minority groups. As a result, the need to ensure political inclusivity has become an urgent call.

Women's political participation and representation shows a significant regional imbalance. For instance, a report by the International Parliamentary Union (IPU) indicates that the representation of women in parliamentary offices in Americas and Europe stands at 33.8% and 31.1% respectively (2021, p.2). The IPU also noted that women's political participation is significantly

lower in the Sub-Saharan Africa, Asia, and the Middle East with rates of 25.9%, 20.7%, and 16.9% correspondingly (2021, p.2).

Throughout the world, the presence of women in politics has seen a slow progress. In 2010, as contained in a CRS report, the global average for women's representation in national parliaments was at 19%, and by 2012, it had risen to 20.4% (2023, p.7). This upward trend has continued in subsequent years, yet the goal of reaching 30% representation still remains out of reach. As noted by UN Women, women have made significant strides in local government, holding 36% of elected positions worldwide, exceeding the 2020 global average of 25.4% in national parliaments (2021, p.8). When it comes to regional comparisons, Central and South Asia have emerged as leaders with 41%, closely followed by Northern America and Europe at 35%. Sub-Saharan Africa has also shown promising progress at 29%, outperforming Eastern and South-eastern Asia, which stand at 25%. However, Western Asia and Northern Africa continue to lag behind with only 18% representation for women. In Africa, there is a 21% representation of women in local government, while the overall participation of women in national parliament stands at 24%. Interestingly, Eastern Africa takes the lead in both areas, showcasing their commitment to female representation. Historically, women's political participation and representation in Ghana has been low. Although women's political participation and representation have increased over the years, these increments are quite insignificant compared to the sharp rise in male's participation and representation. According to Sasu, women's representation in the national parliament of Ghana in 2021 stood at 14.5%, however, in 2019, 2018, 2017, and 2015 it stood at 13.1%, 12.7%, 12.7%, and 10.9% respectively (2022, p.2). Nevertheless, these percentages are nowhere close to reaching the gender equality targets established by the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5.

1.2 Problem Statement

The issue of low participation and representation of women in local government in Ghana has gained increased attention in recent decades. Despite various initiatives aimed at enhancing women's political engagement at both national and local levels, women continue to face significant challenges, leading to a persistent gender gap in political representation. Studies such as Abakah (2018) and Kpentey (2019) have identified multiple socioeconomic and cultural barriers that contribute to this trend. Among these, entrenched cultural norms favoring male leadership, female subordination, and restricted access to political and economic resources remain significant impediments (Owusu-Amponsah et al., 2017).

In an effort to address these barriers, strategies such as women's empowerment initiatives, affirmative action policies, and the enforcement of quota systems have been proposed (Abakah, 2018). However, the effectiveness of these measures in increasing women's political participation and representation in Ghana remains debatable. This necessitates further research to assess the impact of such interventions and develop more effective strategies for ensuring gender inclusivity in local governance.

Despite efforts to promote gender equality in local government, women's representation in both elected and appointed positions remains inadequate. This study focuses on the Yilo Krobo and Ga East Municipal Assemblies because these two municipalities present distinct socio-political and economic characteristics that influence women's participation in governance. Yilo Krobo, a predominantly rural municipality, reflects challenges associated with traditional gender roles and socio-cultural constraints, while Ga East, a peri-urban municipality, highlights the intersection of urbanization, political engagement, and gender disparities in governance. A comparative study of these municipalities provides an opportunity to analyse how varying socio-economic and cultural

dynamics shape women's participation in local governance.

The study period, 2009 to 2021, is selected to capture over a decade of local government elections and appointments, allowing for an assessment of trends, policy changes, and their effects on women's participation. Although Ghana's local government framework has been in place since 1988, focusing on this period enables a detailed examination of more recent developments, including policy interventions and shifts in political dynamics that have influenced women's representation in local government.

This research is necessary to identify the underlying factors precipitating the consistent low participation and representation of women in local government in the two areas. This will provide insights into effective strategies for enhancing women's participation and representation in local government and attaining gender parity in elected and appointed positions within the local government framework.

1.3 Research Objectives

The objective of this study is to examine the participation and representation of women in local government within the Yilo Krobo and Ga East Municipalities during the period spanning from 2009 to 2021. Specifically, the study will seek:

1. To examine the trend and extent of women's participation and representation in local government systems of Yilo Krobo and Ga East Municipalities from 2009 to 2021.
2. To investigate the factors accounting for the low participation and representation of women in local government in Yilo Krobo and Ga East municipalities.
3. To identify the contributions of political parties and assembly authorities in the promotion of women's participation and representation in local government from 2009 and 2021.

1.4 Research Questions

1. What is the trend and extent of women's participation and representation in local government in Yilo Krobo and Ga East Municipalities from 2009 to 2021?
2. What factors account for the low participation and representation in local government in Yilo Krobo and Ga East municipalities?
3. What were the contributions of political parties and assembly authorities in the promotion of women's participation and representation in local government during 2009 to 2021?

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study addresses the issue of gender parity in political affairs at the local government level in Ghana, which constitutes an important facet of democratic institutions. The comparative approach of this study helps to examine the similarities and differences in the level of participation and representation of women in the local government systems of Yilo Krobo and Ga East Municipalities. By doing so, it provides valuable insights into the systemic barriers that hinder women's full participation in governance.

Beyond these municipalities, the findings of this study have wider societal significance. Firstly, enhancing women's representation in local government promotes inclusive decision-making, which leads to policies that better reflect the needs of diverse communities. Again, increased female participation can contribute to social and economic development by ensuring that issues such as education, healthcare, and gender equality are prioritized in governance. Additionally, the study offers useful insights and recommendations for policymakers, civil society organizations, and other stakeholders at the national level to implement tailored strategies that can be replicated in other districts and municipalities across Ghana. Ultimately, improving women's political representation strengthens democracy, fosters social equity, and contributes to national development.

1.6 Organization of the Study

The study is divided into five chapters. The first chapter comprises the introduction, background of the study, problem statement, research objectives and questions, significance of the study, and the organization of the study. The chapter two contains the literature review. It presents a broad review of empirical literature on women's participation and representation in politics. The third chapter captures the research methodology. It includes the research design method, sampling technique and size, data type and source, method of data collection, techniques for data analysis, and a description of the study areas. The findings and analysis of the study is contained in the fourth chapter. The final chapter, chapter 5, deals with the summary, recommendations and conclusions of the study.



CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This section examines the most current writings in the field that are pertinent to the study. It commences with the different theories of political participation as a way comprehending women's involvement in politics. In this section, some of the most important concepts used throughout the study are defined. In addition, it offers rational discussion of topics such as political participation, political representation, and the local government. Furthermore, the chapter contains a historical trends of women's political participation and representation, the causes of women's underrepresentation in politics, implications of women's presence in politics and the strategies proposed to increase women's political participation and representation.

2.1 Theoretical Framework

The Resource Model (RM) proposed by Sidney Verba and Norman Nie is related to the Civic Voluntarism Model (CVM), a prominent theory of political participation. The model, developed in 1995 by Verba, Scholozman, and Brady, provides a framework to identify and understand factors that impede women's full participation in politics or decision-making. CVM postulates that resources, psychological engagement, and recruitment networks, often classified as components of CVM, are necessary for political participation.

The first component of CVM, resources, relates to time, money, education, and civic skills that provide the means for individuals to participate in politics. Here, individuals who are well-educated, have high income, time, and civic skills, such as being able to communicate publicly, are more likely to fully participate in political discourses than those who lack these. In simple terms, this proposition suggests that individuals with high social status are more likely to

participate in politics than those with lower statuses. In the context of this study, this model helps explain how women's limited access to education, financial constraints, and the burden of domestic responsibilities contribute to their underrepresentation in local politics in Ghana. However, while this theory provides a useful explanation, it does not account for women who possess these resources but still choose not to participate due to societal and cultural barriers.

The psychological engagement component of the CVM deals with individuals' attitudes toward politics. It stresses that a positive attitude toward politics yields a positive reaction to political engagement. As such, if an individual believes that their actions can cause change and influence decision-making processes, they would be more drawn to political activism. In the Ghanaian context, societal norms often discourage women from viewing themselves as political actors, which diminishes their psychological engagement with politics. While the CVM effectively explains the role of self-perception in political participation, it does not sufficiently address the structural and cultural factors that shape these perceptions.

The third component, recruitment networks, indicates that people's involvement in politics can be attributed to their association with politically inclined individuals or groups. This means that individuals can become politically active through invitations or recruitment by friends, work colleagues, or religious organizations to engage in political actions such as demonstrations, voting, campaigning, contesting for elected office, or voter registration. In Ghana, political networks are often male-dominated, making it difficult for women to gain access and support. While CVM highlights the importance of recruitment, it overlooks the gendered nature of political networks, which can exclude women from critical political opportunities.

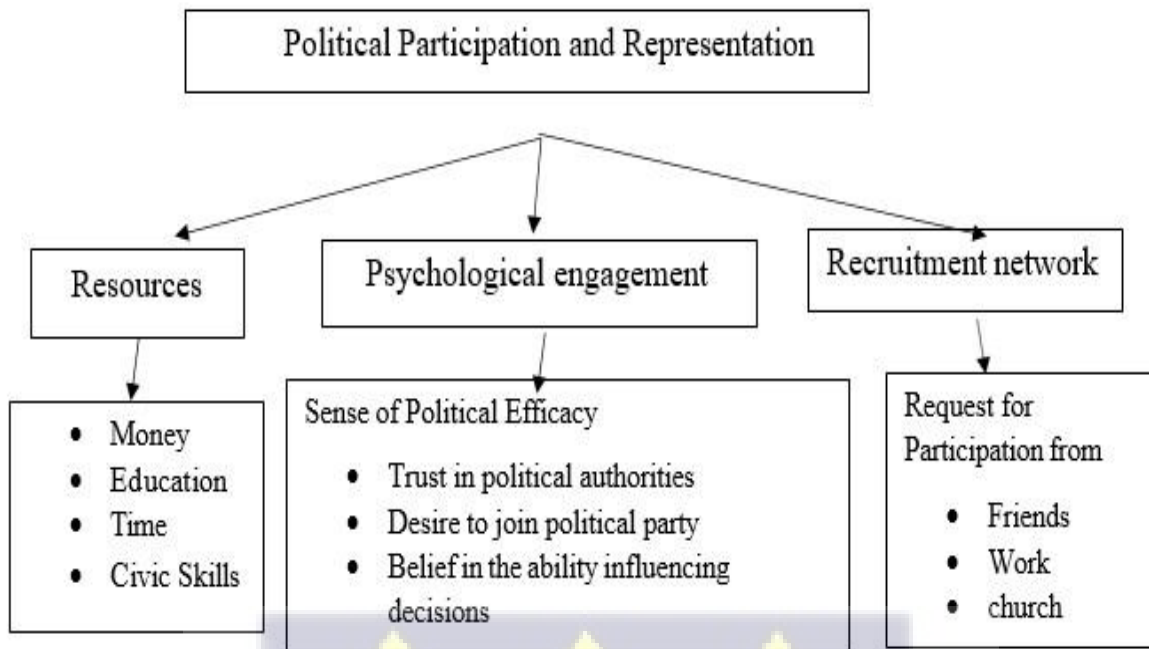


Figure 1: Demonstration of the Civic Voluntarism Model

Within the context of the Civic Voluntarism Model, women's low participation in politics can be well understood. For instance, under the resource component of the model, women generally lack adequate financial resources to run for political office. Again, women's multiple roles as wives, mothers, and domestic caretakers do not afford them enough time to participate in politics. Additionally, the high rate of illiteracy among women, particularly in Africa, inhibits their participation. Moreover, cultural conventions and traditions often condition women to believe that politics is the preserve of men. While the CVM provides significant insights, its limitations suggest the need for additional theoretical perspectives.

Even though the Civic Voluntarism Model provides an understanding of the low participation and representation of women in politics, it has some shortcomings. For instance, the model significantly stresses the resource component as a fundamental factor for political participation. However, this is not always the case. There are a number of women who are highly educated, financially resourceful, and

possess incredible civic skills but still do not participate in politics. This indicates the presence of other barriers, which are better explained by the Glass Ceiling Theory.

The glass-ceiling theory, developed by Lorber (1994), provides an understanding of the several impediments that confront women's effective and full participation and representation in political spheres. This theory suggests that the low participation and representation of women in political spheres are not because women are unambitious, but rather due to the presence of invisible barriers limiting their level of involvement in decision-making.

Lorber described the glass ceiling as “those artificial barriers based on attitudinal or organizational bias that prevent qualified individuals from advancing upward in their organization into management-level positions” (1994, p.227). Lorber used the term "artificial" because these barriers are socially constructed, meaning they can be changed. In the Ghanaian political context, deeply ingrained cultural biases and patriarchal structures continue to prevent women from ascending to leadership positions.

A study by the World Value Survey (2022) between 2017 and 2020 noted that the percentage of respondents who concurred with the notion that “men make better politicians than women” in Kazakhstan, Russia, and Armenia were 50%, 58%, and 68%, respectively. These perceptions undermine women's full participation in politics. Similarly, in Ghana, societal expectations and stereotypes continue to reinforce male dominance in politics. The glass-ceiling theory is particularly relevant to this study as it sheds light on the invisible yet powerful forces that prevent women from advancing in the political sphere, even when they possess the necessary resources and skills.

Over the years, a number of feminist theories have evolved to provide us with an understanding of women's issues, such as women's low participation in decision-making, social inequality, and lack of access to productive resources. Among these theories is the feminist standpoint. Feminist epistemology

views social reality through the eyes of subjugated or disadvantaged women. This is accomplished through documenting the lived experiences of women. They presume that adding women's experiences and knowledge to conventional or androcentric epistemologies will improve an objective reality. In the study of social phenomena, a feminist perspective requires the researcher to support the marginalized.

Standpoint theories are based on the notion that society is organized around power dynamics that form two unequal groups: the dominant group and the subordinate group. The theory contends that a person's experiences with social inequality are influenced by their place within social structures such as gender, ethnicity, and class (Harding, 1986). Feminist standpoint theory contends that women's lives differ functionally from men's lives. Men and women are not engaged in the same activities, and they are granted distinct levels of rights and benefits. For example, women carry out reproductive activities such as housekeeping and childcare, while men perform productive functions such as working in industries.

Another important proposition of feminist standpoint theory is the belief that the distinct social standings that males and females occupy result in diverse knowledge that is unique to them. According to Ruddick (1989), nurturing skills are not a byproduct of maternal instinct, but rather a result of girls and women being given caring duties significantly more frequently than boys and men, thereby developing competence in delivering care. Being a caretaker, rather than being female, fosters knowledge on how to care. Additionally, Wood asserts, "Studying subordinated locations and the knowledge they foster not only provides insight into the lives of members of subordinated groups but also casts light on dominant group practices, especially those that create and reproduce inequality" (2012, p.3). This underscores the importance of studying marginalized groups to understand how dominant structures perpetuate inequality.

This study employs the Civic Voluntarism Model, Glass Ceiling Theory, and Feminist Standpoint Epistemology to explain the limited participation of women in local politics. Each of these theories

contributes to developing plausible explanations for the persistently low participation and representation of women in Ghana's political system, highlighting the interplay between structural, cultural, and individual factors that shape women's political engagement.

2.2 Operational definitions of key terms

Participation: Within the framework of this study, the concept of participation pertains to the active engagement of individuals, particularly women, in the processes of decision-making and governance within the realm of local government. The process encompasses various activities, including the act of registering for voting, participating in the voting process, and presenting oneself as a candidate in electoral contests.

Representation: In the context of this study, representation refers to the extent to which the priorities, concerns, and choices of women are sufficiently taken into account in the decision-making procedures at the local government. It involves the inclusion of women in positions of power and authority, active promotion of women's concerns, and the guarantee that women's perspectives are acknowledged and taken into account in the process of decision-making. The measurement of representation in the local government would be based on the statistical measurement of women occupying political positions within the Metropolitan, Municipal, and District Assemblies (MMDAs).

Politics: In the context of this study, politics encompasses the various activities and processes that are associated with decision-making and governance within a given society. Political participation encompasses a range of activities, including the pursuit of political or elected positions, engaging in the electoral process through voting, and exerting influence over the distribution and exercise of political authority.

Women: Women used in this study relates to females who have attained the age of eighteen and above and are constitutionally or legally eligible to vote and be engaged in political discourses or activities.

2.3 The Concept of Participation

Participation is an essential concept in modern development and political discourses. The term has been defined differently by development experts and scholars. The Merriam-Webster dictionary (n.a) defines participation as ‘the action or state of taking part in something’. This action may include having the opportunity to share an opinion on public issue, influence decision, vote, demonstrate, appointed to serve in an office and stand to be elected into a political office.

On the other hand, The World Bank defines participation as “a process through which stakeholders influence and share control over development initiatives and the decision and resources which affect them” (1996, p.3). In the context of Africa, and in particular Ghana, the human society is made up of two groups of people, males and females. In view of that, the stakeholders in the above definition implies involving both sexes in decision-making processes. When decisions are made, it affects both males and females. Due to this, it is imperative for both males and females to partner in decision-making to avert the negative influences of policies or projects on the other (Markham, 2013).

The term participation can be categorized into three main types: social, economic, and political (Levasseur et al, 2010; Moghadam, 2005; Agbaje, 1999). According to Levasseur et al social participation can be defined “as a person’s involvement in activities that provide interaction with others in society or the community” (2010, p.2148). Actions such as joining social groups, volunteering, and taking part in social events may provide individuals with an avenue to interact with other members of the society. Social participation helps to foster social cohesion and

integration which are crucial for society's stability.

The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) defined economic participation as “an individual's engagement in work and/or education, and their access to economic resources that result from such participation” (2015, p.24). Economic participation provides a means for individuals to work and gain income to meet their basic needs. Macintyre et al (2018) have established a strong association between access to economic resources or high income and mental health. The study reveals that economic inequalities or exerts negative influences on individual's mental health. Generally, economic participation enhances well-being and helps to eradicate absolute poverty in society.

2.4 The Concept of Political Participation and Representation

The meaning of political participation has evolved over the years. The concept has been defined in several different ways with some contradicting the other. Due to the broad scope of the term, the debate regarding what constitute political participation and what do not still persist.

According to Verba, Scholzman, and Brady political participation can be defined as an “activity that has the intent or effect of influencing government action – either directly by affecting the making or implementation of public policy or indirectly by influencing the selection of people who make those policies.” (1995, p.38). Similarly, Huntington and Nelson define political participation as “activity by private citizens designed to influence decision-making” (1976, p.3). From these two definitions, it can be deduced that political participation has three key features. The first is an action or activity that individuals engage in. The second pertains to private or ordinary citizen. This relates to persons who do not wield political power or form a part of the government. The final feature pertains to influencing those in authority as well as policy and decision outcomes.

A slightly different definition of political participation is given by Meyer “all voluntary activities by which individuals or groups want to influence the selection of rulers and representatives and/or the making and outcome of public policies” (1991, p.11). This definition agrees with Kaase and Marsh who defined the concept as “all voluntary activities by individual citizens intended to influence either directly or indirectly political choices at various levels of the political system” (1972, p.42). A distinct feature in the two definitions is the use of the word voluntary. This means that, for an action to be regarded as a form of political participation, it must not be through compulsory but rather from the individual’s own choice.

Scholars over the years have debated and presented contrary ideas in relation to what clearly constitute or qualifies as political participation. For instance, Oser and Hooghe (2018) regards wearing a political badge or sticker as a form of political participation. In most part of world today, political parties distribute badges and stickers to their followers usually during campaign times. Members of political parties often post these badges and stickers on their doorposts and cars. These badges and stickers in a subtly way may influence a voter’s choice of a candidate in an election. Yamamoto and Nah (2018) also consider attending civic meetings and volunteering to assist a politician to campaign in an election as a form of political participation. The role of individuals who sign up to campaign for politicians are essential to every political party. The roles assign to these individuals may include acting as polling station agents for a candidate, canvassing for vote for a candidate as well as helping in the organization of rallies.

Political participation is a vital feature of democracy. It embodies the notion of equitable representation and allows individuals to participate in societal decision-making processes. In a democratic context, recognizing the equality of all people is critical, since it ensures that everyone, regardless of background or status, has the opportunity to participate meaningfully in political

action. According to Parry et al (1992) Individuals use tools like voting, activism, and advocacy to assert their voices and influence the direction of government, which helps to sustain the concepts of inclusion and accountability. Verba and Nie portray the inseparability of participation and democracy in their statement, “Where few take part in decisions there is little democracy; the more participation there is in decisions, the more democracy there is” (1972, p.1). This therefore implies that, the degree or extent of participation in decision-making forms a critical measure for examining the quality of democracy practiced in society. In consonance, Whiteley (2012) avers that there can be no effective democracy without political participation.

Verba and Nie (1987) and Parry et al (1992) expands political participation to include voting, campaigning for a political party, registering to become a member of a political party, and joining a collective social action. In modern times, voting has become an essential criterion in assessing political participation. High voter turn-out is associated with a high political participation and vice versa. In most democratic societies, individuals register to become members of political parties whose ideologies are in synched with theirs. In the United States, most individuals are either Democrats or Republicans. In Ghana, most people are either a member of the New Patriotic Party (NPP) or the National Democratic Congress (NDC).

Additionally, Kilybayeva, Nassimova, and Massalimova (2017) regards the non-institutional way of discussing political issues with peers, friends, and family relations, and reading or watching news as a form of political participations. However, Teorell, Torcal, and Montero (2007) perceives political participation as a deliberate and voluntary actions such as voting in an election, taking part in political party membership registration exercise, donating to support political campaigns, campaigning, joining protests, and engaging with political authorities.

The concept of political representation does not have a universally accepted definition. However,

a review of some of the various definitions would provide a better understanding of what political representation stands for. One of the simplest definitions of political representation comes from Pitkins (1967, p.6) who defined it as to “make present again”. From this definition, we can infer political participation as an activity of considering the opinions and concerns of members of society in decision making and policy making. Basically, it is when a political agent communicates, lobby, symbolize, and perform on behalf of others in the political spheres.

Similarly, Saward’s (2010) definition of political representation underscores the relationship between two parties, the represented and those being represented in the political arena. He puts it as an activity of mediating or representing the interest, requests, and concerns of a group in a political setting. From this definition, we can deduce that there is a political agent whose duty is to work in the sole interest of the group that legitimized his/her authority to act on their behalf. This corroborates Mansbridge’s (2003) definition of political representation which related the concept to the link that exist between rulers and the ruled, especially in an environment where democracy thrive, wherein the ruled or represented acts in the sole interest of the people they are representing.

2.6 The Concept of Local Government

Scholars are yet to agree on a single definition of the local government (Kpentey, 2019). The concept has been described and characterized differently by several scholars. However, according to Kpentey (2019) the term is often associated with governance, democracy, and decentralization. Despite the contrast in the characterization of the terms, scholars generally concur that the objective of local government is to bridge the gap that often exist between the central government and those located in distant regions.

According to (Özer & Akçakaya, 2014) local governments are public legally created institutions

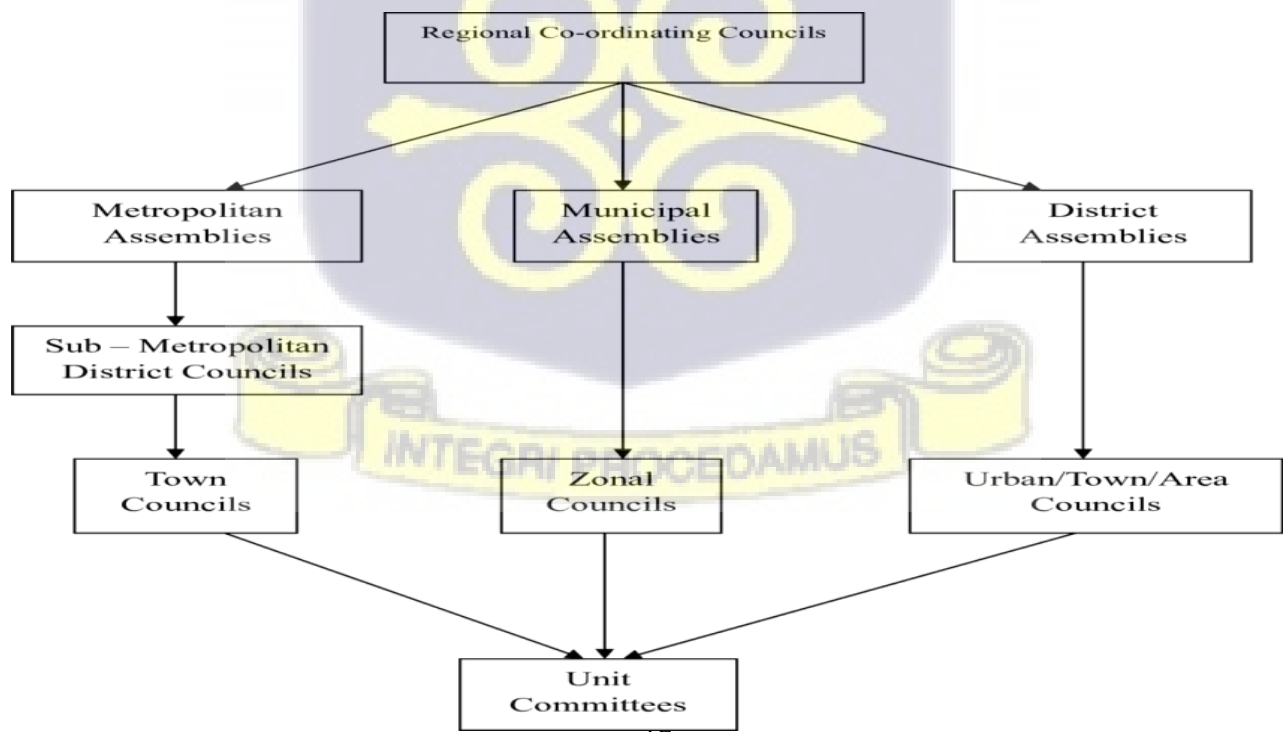
with personnel whose mandate are guaranteed and legitimized by legislative instruments, to undertake activities to meet the collective needs of members of a local community, using specialized budgets and revenues. Under local government, members of the community are determiners of policy, project, and programme directions.

Besides, the Merriam-Webster dictionary (n.a) defines local government as ‘the government of a specific local area constituting a subdivision of a major political unit (such as a nation or state). The creation of local governments by the state ensures development and inclusion in the democratic processes. The term also relates to the body of individuals who make up the government at the grassroots level.

2.7 The Local Government Structure of Ghana

The local government structure of Ghana consists of a Regional coordinating Council, four-tier metropolitan and a three-tier municipal and district assemblies as depicted in figure 2.

Figure 2: The Local Government Structure of Ghana



Source: Forkuor & Adjei (2016)

The Regional Coordinating Councils (RCCs) are found in all 16 regions of Ghana. They serve as the channel or link between the central government and the local government. Their role involves to co-ordinate activities at the local level to meet the development expectations of the central government. Mahama describes the RCCs as “the central government deconcentrated administrative body responsible for coordinating, supervising and the harmonizing the activities of all the local government authorities of the region” (2009, p.20).

The Metropolitan, Municipal, and District Assemblies (MMDAs) is constituted by elected and appointed officials. According to Ayee, 30% of the members of MMDA's are appointed by the central government while the remaining 70% are elected via a universal adult suffrage (2012, p.628). It is important to note that in most literature, District Assembly (DA) is used in place of MMDAs. The district assemblies are the ultimate decision-makers in the district and wields significant amount of power to take decisions and make laws at the local level according to the 1992 Constitution of Ghana, article 241 clause 3 (Government of Ghana). Besides, MMDA's implement local development policies, provide essential services, mobilize resources, and ensure grassroots participation in governance within their jurisdictions.

The Sub-district structures are merely consultative bodies with no specialized budget of their own (Ayee, 2008). They serve as the link between the local government and the individuals at the grassroots level. In the view of Crawford (2009) the creation of the sub-district structures stimulates grassroots participation in government or the political processes. The Sub-district structures have two tiers, the Unit Committees and the Urban, Zonal and Town Councils.

2.8 Trends in women's political participation and representation in politics

Since 2010 the percentage of seats held by women in national legislatures has increased globally even though at a lower rate.

Figure 3: Global proportion of seats held by women in parliament 2010 - 2020.



Source: Adapted from CRS Report (2023, p.7, figure 1)

Figure 3 reveals that in 2010, women's representation worldwide stood at 19%. In 2012, women's presence in parliament increased to 20.4%. During 2014, 2016, 2018, and 2020, there was a consistent rise in women's representation in national legislatures. Although female representation in parliament globally has increased continuously, the objective of attaining 30% in women's representation in global and national parliament remains unlikely.

According to UN Women (2021, p.7), data from 141 countries show that women constitute more than 3 million (35.5%) of elected members in local deliberative bodies. This suggests that women's representation in local government is higher than the global average for national parliaments, which stood at 25.4% in 2020. At the regional level, as depicted by Table 2.1 below, UN Women posits that Central Asia and South Asia tend to have the highest amount of women representation in local deliberative bodies with an average of 41%, followed by Northern America

and Europe with a percentage of 35. Sub-Saharan Africa performed better than Eastern Asia and South-eastern Asia with a mean score of 29% and 25% respectively (2021, p.8). Western Asia and Northern Africa recorded the least amount of women representation at the local level with an average of 18%.

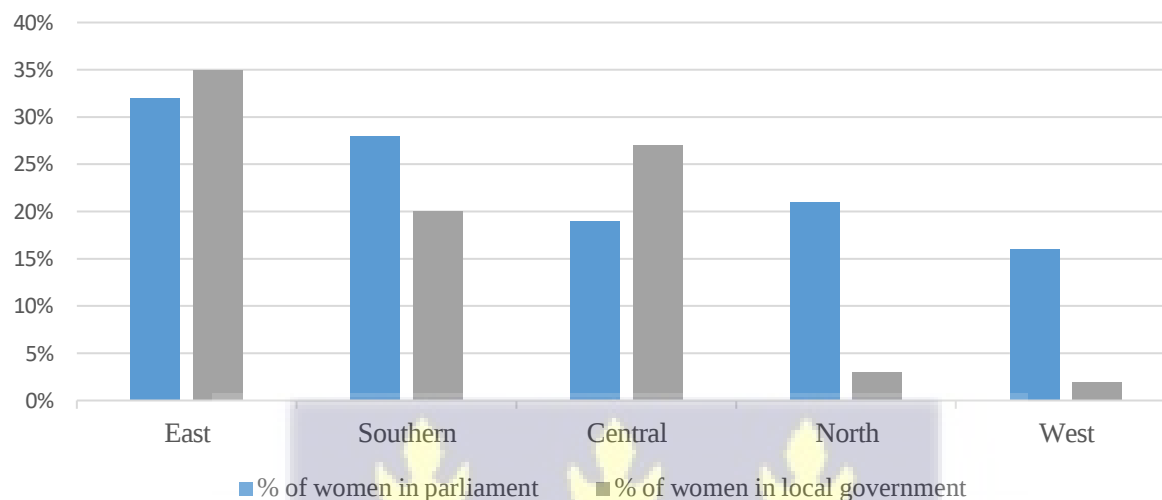
Table 2.1: Proportion of elected seats held by women in local deliberative bodies in 2020

No. of elected members	Region	% of seats held by women
3,471,908	Central Asia and Southern Asia	41%
1,119,000	Northern America and Europe	35%
7,894	Oceania	32%
160,366	Sub-Saharan Africa	29%
940,567	Eastern Asia and South-eastern Asia	25%
149,873	Latin America and the Caribbean	25%
156,111	Western Asia and Northern Africa	18%

Source: Adapted from UN Women (2021, p.8, figure 2)

According to Africa Barometer, in Africa alone, women's participation in local government stood at 21% in 2021 (2021, p.7). However, the overall participation of women in national parliament was 24%. Also, some regions in Africa seems to perform better than others in terms of women's participation and representation at the national and local levels. Overall, countries in the Eastern part of Africa have higher women participation and representation in parliament and at the local government level than in other regions.

Figure 4: Women's political participation and representation in Africa.



Source: Adapted from Africa Barometer (2021, p.7, Table 1)

While some regions in Africa tend to have more women in parliament than in local government, other regions tend to experience the opposite (See figure 4). For instance, in East Africa, there is more women representation in local government with an average of 35% than there is at the national deliberative level with a mean of 32%. However, in Southern Africa, women have more representation in parliament with 28% than there is in local government which has a mere 20% of women representation. Overall, West Africa tend to have the lowest representation of women in both parliament and local deliberative levels with just 16% and 2% representation respectively.

Ghana is a member of the West African region. Women's participation and representation in parliament seems to be improving after every election. However, the same cannot be said at the local deliberative level. The data presented in Table 2.2, gives a snapshot of women's representation in the legislative bodies of a Ghana across four different election years: 2008, 2012,

2016, and 2020. Over this period, there is a noticeable trend of gradual improvement in the number of seats held by women. In 2008, women occupied 8.7% of the total seats, which increased to 10.87% in 2012, then to 12.73% in 2016, and finally to 13.1% in 2020. While these figures indicate progress in women's political representation, they also underscore persistent gender disparities within the political sphere.

Table 2.2: Proportion of seats held by women in Ghana's legislative assembly.

Year	Total seats	Seats held by women	% of seats held by women
2020	275	40	13.1
2016	275	37	12.73
2012	275	30	10.87
2008	230	20	8.7

Source: Citi Newsroom (2021)

Women's participation in district assembly elections between 2010 and 2019 experienced a significant decrease in terms of the number of individuals who contested for the position and those elected to office. In 2010, a total number of 1,376 women filed to contest in the district assembly elections. Out of this number, only 412 women were elected, representing 7.95% of the total elected members. However, in 2015, the number of female candidates reduced to 1,182, relative to the number recorded in 2010. Again, a mere 282 women were elected, representing 4.65% of the total elected members. While females recorded a decline in the number of candidates and elected officers in the 2010 and 2015 elections, males recorded an increase in various areas.

This downward trend continued in the 2019 district assembly elections, where only 234 women were

elected, making up 3.8% of the total elected members. In contrast, 5,924 men secured seats, representing 96.2% of the total elected members. The total number of female and male candidates who contested the 2019 elections is not readily available, but the results indicate a continued decline in women's representation at the local government level. (See Table 2.3 below).

Table 2.3: Ghana district assembly elections: Male and female participation

Year	Contested			Elected				
	Females	Males	Total	Females	%	Males	%	Total
2015	1182	17756	18938	282	4.65	5779	95.35	6061
2010	1376	15939	17315	412	7.95	5681	92.05	6093
2019	N/A	N/A	N/A	234	3.8%	5924	96.2%	6158

Source: Adapted from Boateng (2017, p.5); Adapted from Graphic Online (2023)

2.9 Factors accounting for the low participation and representation of women in politics.

Several factors have been highlighted by scholars as accounting for the low participation and representation of women in politics. Sindhuja and Murugan (2017) categorized these factors under three broad themes namely, Political, Socio-economic and Ideological and psychological. The authors related the political factor to the lack of party support towards the advancement of women in political spheres. They aver that though women play a key role in political party activities such as campaigning and organization of rallies, women are often sidelined when it

comes to political positions. Again, male candidates are often preferred over female candidates. These issues impede women's full and effective participation in the decision-making process.

Sindhuja and Murugan (2017) argues that socio-economic factors such as poverty among women and the triple burden role of women inhibits the full and effective participation and representation of women in politics. Globally, women are disproportionately disadvantaged when it comes to access to and control of economic or productive resources. This situation limits women's full participation as politics in recent times have become expensive. Electoral campaigns in modern times requires significant financial investments, of which women do not have, hence their low presence (Munemo, 2017). The triple burden role perform by women pertains to women's reproductive, domestic, and productive roles at the same time. These triple burden roles do not make room or time for women to be politically engaged.

Again, Sindhuja and Murugan argues that the ideological and psychological factors relate to women's low confidence and the belief that politics is a 'dirty' game (2017, p.565). Women's low participation and representation in politics have been attributed to their low level of confidence. Some women think that they do not qualify to participate in politics because they lack some educational qualifications and do not have civic skills which are basic prerequisite for effective political participation (Baba et al, 2019). Again, some women shy away from politics because they consider it as a dirty game. At present times, politics is associated with violence, intimations, and threats of war. These issues underscore the notion that politics is a dirty game, hence women's low involvement.

Additionally, Munemo (2017) attributes the low participation and representation in politics to patriarchy. The Merriam-Webster dictionary (n.a) defines patriarchy as a "social organization marked by the supremacy of the father in the clan or family, the legal dependence of wives and

children, and the reckoning of descent and inheritance in the male line”. Women’s participation in decision-making are curtailed in patriarchal societies. The power to make decisions are vested in the men while women and children are made subordinates in society. Patriarch is often rooted in the culture of societies.

2.10 Proposed strategies for enhancing women’s participation and representation in politics.

A plethora of strategies and measures have been proposed by development experts, policy makers, and scholars to increase or improve women’s participation and representation in politics. For instance, ABANTU for Development (2017) argues that a policy advocacy for affirmative action can enhance and ensure women’s full participation in decision-making processes. The United States Commission on Civil Rights has described affirmative action as “any measure, beyond simple termination of a discriminatory practice, adopted to correct or compensate for past or present discrimination or to prevent discrimination from recurring in the future” (In Murrell and Jones: 1996, p.78). Affirmative action such as the adoption of a quota system can bridge the political gap between men and women in society. According to IPU, on a global scale, Rwanda is the only country that has attained 61.25% of women’s representation in parliament (2023, p.8). This significant achievement in Rwanda, has been largely attributed to the effective adoption and implementation of affirmation actions policies.

Figure 5: Representation in local elected bodies using quotas and regional distribution.



0%

World

Sub-saharan Africa

Latin America and
the Carribean

Northern Africa
and Western
Asia



■ regions with legislated quota ■ regions without legislated quota

Source: Adapted from UN Women (2021, p.11, figure 4).

Figure 5 underscores the need for countries to adopt legislated quota systems to enhance the promotion of women's representation in governance. It is obvious from Figure 5 that women are better represented in regions with legislated quota than those without legislated quota.

Okonkwo (2022) also argues that women's participation and representation in politics can be enhanced through the establishment of support network by political parties to assist aspiring female politicians. This support network involves the provision of mentorship and capacity building of females to equip them with the requisite civic skills needed for effective participation in the political spheres.

Finally, Asekere (2020) avers that a deliberate and determined effort at both national and local levels to tackle patriarchy which is strongly rooted in the religious and cultural practices and beliefs of the society can break the barriers which often deter women from actively engaging in politics. In the view of Asekere (2020), traditional and religious leaders should sensitize members of their community about the need to reject gender-based stereotypes that discriminate against women.

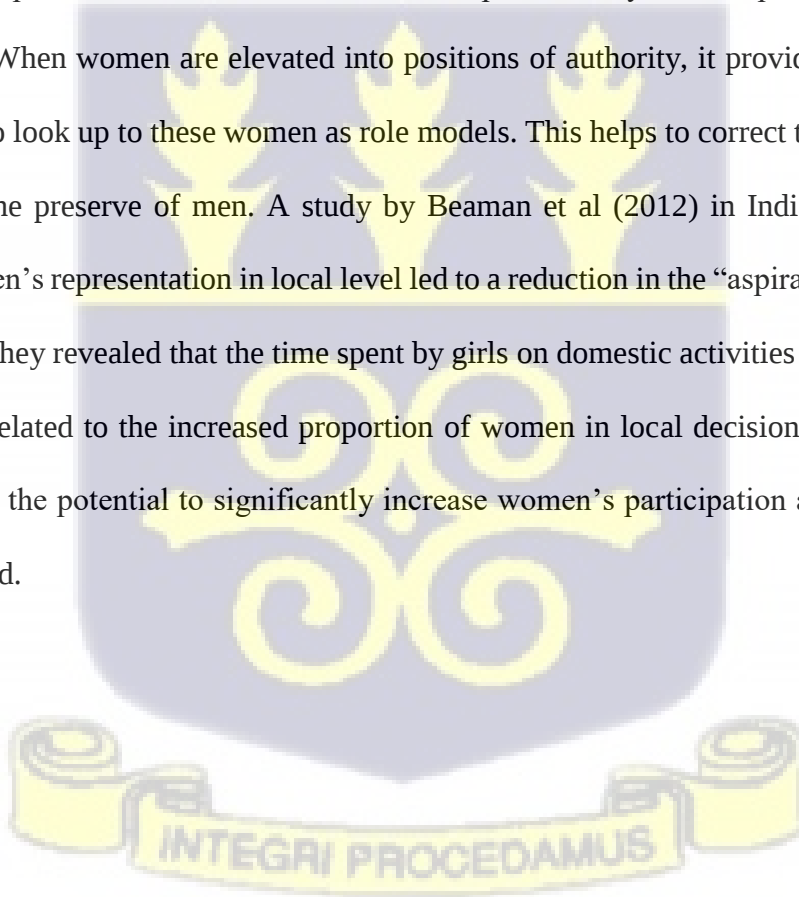
2.11 Implications of Women's Political Participation and Representation

A significant number of studies have underscored the importance of fully integrating women in decision-making. For example, World Economic Forum (2017) argues that women's political participation and representation reduces inequality. Traditionally, there exist a significant socio-economic disparity between males and female worldwide. However, an improvement in the participation and representation of women in politics has witnessed a substantial reduction in

social, political, and economic inequalities (World Economic Forum report, 2017).

Additionally, Markham (2013) avers that women's involvement in politics results in increased prioritization of social problems such as education, health, and pension. It is believed that when women are in position of influence, they generally tend to allocate significant resources to social welfare programmes relative to their male counterparts who often places importance in productive sectors of the economy.

Furthermore, the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) (2019) posit that women's involvement in politics may serve a positive influence on young females. When women are elevated into positions of authority, it provides an opportunity for young girls to look up to these women as role models. This helps to correct the long-held view that politics is the preserve of men. A study by Beaman et al (2012) in India reported that an increase in women's representation in local level led to a reduction in the "aspiration gap" between boys and girls. They revealed that the time spent by girls on domestic activities have declined and this is strongly related to the increased proportion of women in local decision-making. The role model effect has the potential to significantly increase women's participation and representation in the years ahead.



CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter presents a comprehensive description of the methodology employed to accomplish the study's objectives. The chapter is in two parts. Part I of the chapter encompasses the research design, data collection methods, sample size determination, sampling technique employed, and data analysis methods. Part II of the chapter presents a detailed description of the study area.

PART I

3.1 Method

The study relied mainly on the qualitative research approach to achieve the objectives of this study. The qualitative research approach has its own techniques and objectives (Verhoef & Casebeer, 1997). Holloway and Wheeler characterize qualitative research approach as a “form of social enquiry that focuses on the way people interpret and make sense of their experiences and the world in which they live” (2002, p.30). Creswell (2009) also asserts that the qualitative approach addresses the “why” behind a phenomenon, correlation, or behavior. Accordingly, in this study, the study employs the qualitative approach to investigate the factors that impede women’s full and effective participation and representation in local government at the district level. The qualitative method adopted in this study would help to unravel the fundamental issues that challenge effort towards the promotion and integration of women in politics, predominantly from the perspective of women within the two districts under consideration in this study.

3.2 Methodology

This section looks at the sampling procedure for the study, tools that were used for gathering data and how data obtained from the field were analyzed.

3.2.1 Target Population

The target population of the study were individuals who have relevant insights and experiences related to the topic under examination. This included women who are actively involved in local government in the two districts, such as elected official, local government employees, community leaders, and women's right advocates. A woman here relates to a female who has attained age eighteen and above. Though women were the primary target in this study, some few men were included in the study as well.

3.2.2 Sampling

The purposive sampling technique, which is a non-probability sampling tool was used in this study. Under this technique, a researcher uses his own judgement to select participants for the study. Parahoo describes purposive sampling as “a method of sampling where the researcher deliberately chooses who to include in the study based on their ability to provide necessary data” (1997, p.223). A total of 24 participants were engaged in the study. The sample size was influenced by the saturation effect, which implies that additional data collection would not yield substantially new information, and thus, a larger sample was unnecessary.

In Yilo Krobo district, the sample was drawn from two key locations: Somanya and Nkurankan. Meanwhile, in the Ga East district, the sample was drawn from four distinct locations, namely Abokobi, Kwabenya, Agbogba, and Haatso. These strategic locations afforded the study the opportunity to capture a diverse range of perspectives and demographic characteristics within the two districts.

3.2.3 Methods of Data Collection and Sources

Data for the study was collected from both primary and secondary sources. Secondary statistical data were collected from the research department of the Electoral Commission of Ghana to

examine the trends of women's participation and representation in local government in the two districts between 2009 and 2021.

Primary data was collected through Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and Key Informant Interviews (KII) using semi-structured interviews. Primary data were collected from community leaders, current and past assemblywomen, district gender officers, and a district officer.

There were two focus groups, one for each of the two municipalities. Each focus group was made up of 7 women within the assembly. However, while FGDs was taking place in Yilo Krobo, two men overheard the conversation and requested to join and share their views. So, in all 9 participants were engaged in FGDs in Yilo Krobo, totaling 16 participants for the two FGDs. The FGDs were held on 2nd August and 11th August 2023 in Yilo Krobo Municipality and Ga East Municipality.

Semi-structured interviews were also carried out with 8 key informants due to their strategic positioning within the assemblies and their rich experiences. In terms of sex, only one key informant was a male. The key informants included: a district officer, a former assemblywoman, two current assemblywomen, one representative each from NPP and NDC women's wing, and two gender officers, one from each district. These interviews were held between July 15th and 23rd August, 2023. Due to issues with proximity and high cost of transportation, interviews with the two gender officers and a former assemblywoman were conducted over the phone. Also, interviews with the former assemblywoman and a gender officer were tape-recorded.

3.3 Data Analysis

The secondary statistical data collected to determine the trends in women's political participation and representation in the two districts were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including tables, columns, and histograms.

On the other hand, thematic analysis was used to analyze the qualitative data obtained through semi-structured interviews and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs). The notes that were taken during the interviews and focus group discussions were carefully reviewed and studied to identify trends or patterns of ideas or thoughts or experiences.

The data collected through tape-recording were all transcribed. In order to refine the language and ensure clarity and readability, the study employed edited transcription in the transcription of the qualitative data gathered. According to Walker (2018) edited transcription pertains to the omission of some sentences deemed unnecessary or grammatically incorrect, while still maintaining the core or original idea of the text. Subsequently, the transcribed data were organized in an orderly manner.

All primary data gathered were transcribed. Next, the data were coded from which themes were generated. The generated themes were reviewed to ensure that they do not vary from what the respondents actually sought to communicate. The themes were defined and given a name for analysis purposes.

PART II

3.4 Description of Study Area

This section presents a comprehensive description of both the Yilo Krobo and Ga East Municipalities. This section offers crucial contextual information for comprehending the specific geographical environments in which the study was conducted. Assessing the context and understanding the distinctive characteristics that could have influenced the outcomes of the study can be beneficial as the description of the study area can assist in the interpretation of the research findings.

3.5. Ga East Municipality

The Ga East Municipality lies in the northern part of the Greater Accra Region. According to the Ghana Statistical Service (GSS), Ga East municipality is one of the twenty-nine administrative divisions within the region, encompassing an approximate land area of 85.7 square kilometres (2014a, p.1). Abokobi serves as the capital. The Municipality is geographically adjacent to the Ga West Municipal in the western direction, the La-Nkwantanang Municipal in the eastern direction, the Accra Metropolitan in the southern direction, and the Akuapim South District in the northern direction. The Municipality is divided into two administrative zones, specifically the Abokobi Zonal Council and the Dome Zonal Council (Ghana Statistical Service, 2014a).

3.5.1 Population

Based on the findings of the 2021 Population and Housing Census, the Ghana Statistical Service reports that the Ga East Municipality currently has a total population of 283,379 individuals (2021, p.44). GSS further reveals that the district is primarily composed of females, who make up the majority of the population with a total of 158,756 individuals. In contrast, the male population stands at 155,543 (2021, p.44). Additionally, in regard to the residential distribution, GSS reveals that Ga East exhibits a notable concentration of urban inhabitants, with a total of 217,076 individuals residing in urban areas while the remaining 97,223 individuals are found in the rural communities (2021, p.44).

3.5.2 Economy

GSS states that nearly 55% of the economically active population is engaged in farming, which serves as the primary economic activity (2014a, p.6). GSS also indicates that around 70% of the rural population relies on agriculture as their primary means of sustenance (2014a, p.6). The primary agricultural activities include crop production, as well as poultry and livestock production.

The assortment of vegetables cultivated includes okra, garden eggs, pepper, tomatoes, and cabbage. Livestock production covers the rearing of various animals, such as poultry, rabbits, and cattle. The majority of women residing in rural communities are engaged in agricultural activities, specifically in the cultivation and processing of cassava into gari and cassava dough. Additionally, the municipality also encompasses various economic activities such as industry, service, and commerce (Ghana Statistical Service, 2014).

3.5.3 Education

GSS reveals that among the population aged 11 years and above, 93.6% possess literacy skills, while 6.1% do not possess literacy skills. The literacy rate among males is higher at 96.7% compared to females at 91.1%. Approximately 59.3% of the population possesses the ability to read and write in both English and a Ghanaian language (2014, p.7).

3.5.4 Political Administration

According to the Ghana Statistical Service report (2014a), in 2004, the Ga East Municipal Assembly was established as a district by an Act of Parliament (Legislative Instrument 1864) that divided the previous Ga District into two districts. In 2007, LI 2061 elevated it to the status of municipality. It has authority over deliberation, legislation, and administration. In July 2012, LI 2136 split the municipality in two, creating the Ga East and La-Nkwantanang Madina Municipalities. It has the power to discuss, legislate, plan, and develop the entire municipality through the formulation and successful execution of development plans and budgets.

The Municipality is comprised of ten (10) electoral districts, which are represented in the general Assembly by elected and appointed Assembly members. 10 elected members, 4 appointed members, the Member of Parliament representing the Abokobi and Dome-Kwabenya constituency, and the Municipal Chief Executive make up the Assembly. Therefore, the General

Assembly has sixteen members. Taifa South, Taifa North, Abokobi, Agbogba, Kwabenya, Haatso, Atomic, Dome East, Dome West, and Abladjei are the 10 electoral districts. The General Assembly is led by an elected Presiding Member, while the Municipal Coordinating Director serves as Secretary.

At the local level, the allocation of authority is entrusted to traditional rulers along with their council of elders or subordinate chiefs. The enduring authority of traditional chiefs grants them a significant degree of influence, thereby necessitating recognition of their contributions and impact on the decision-making process. Regrettably, the capacity of these individuals to effectively coordinate and mobilise their constituents in favor of development initiatives is currently jeopardized due to their entanglement in multiple chieftaincy conflicts and land-related legal disputes.

3.6 Yilo Krobo Municipality

The Yilo Krobo Municipality is situated in Ghana's Eastern Region. According to GSS, the district was established in 1988 and encompasses roughly 805 square kilometres (2014b, p.2). It is situated in the central portion of the Eastern Region, with Somanya serving as its district capital. The Municipality shares common northern and eastern boundaries with the Lower and Upper Manya Krobo Districts. The Municipality shares a southern border with the Dangme West and Akwapim North Districts. In addition, the Municipality shares southwestern borders with New Juaben and East Akim. The Municipality's western boundary is shared with Fanteakwa District (Ghana Statistical Service, 2014).

3.6.1 Population

According to GSS, the population of Yilo Krobo Municipal as of 2021 is recorded to be 122,705 individuals. The male population comprises 59,656 individuals, whereas the female population

consists of 63,049 individuals. Hence, it is evident that women comprise the majority in the Yilo Krobo region. The urban areas are inhabited by approximately 58,096 individuals, whereas the rural areas are home to 64,609 residents. Once again, the data indicates that the Municipality has a higher proportion of residents living in rural areas compared to those residing in urban areas. (2021, p.50).

3.6.2 Economy

Agriculture, services, trade, and small-scale manufacturing are the municipality's main economic activity. GSS indicates that agriculture employs 58% of the working population, largely producing basic crops such as maize, cassava, plantain, and cocoyam (2014b, p.4). The Service Sector is mostly made up of government personnel. The vast majority of farmers in the municipality are involved in mango growing, which is exported and eaten locally in its natural condition. The municipality has enormous reserves of limestone that might be exploited to produce cement and other building materials for both internal and international usage. Somanya is also known for producing high-quality beads used by ancient kings and queens (Ghana Statistical Service, 2014b).

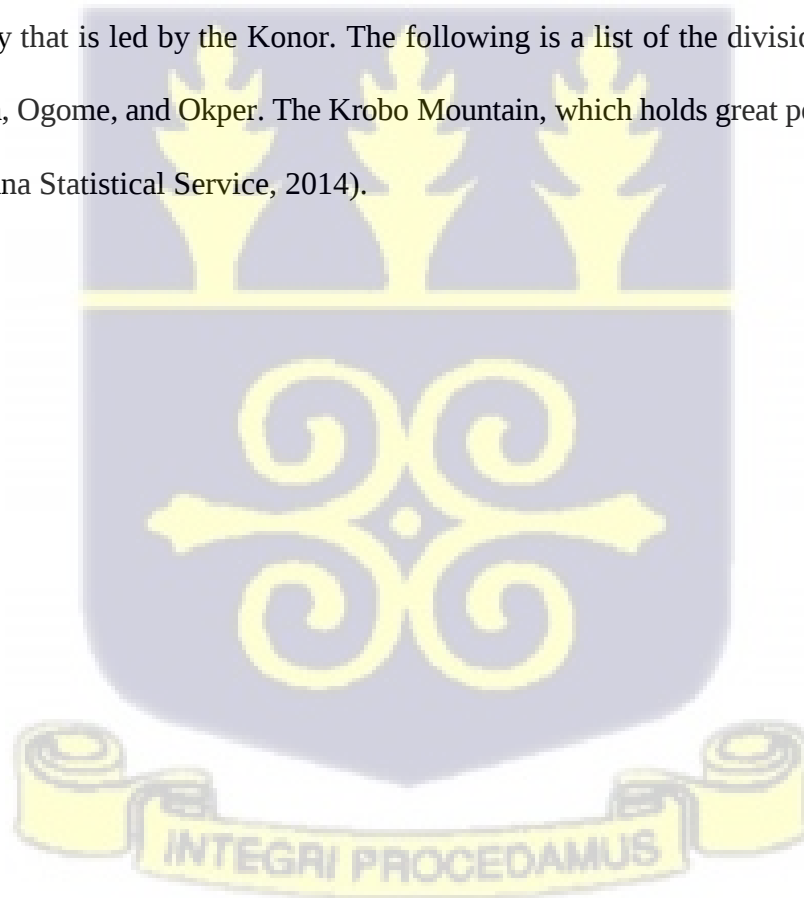
3.6.3 Education

GSS indicates that among individuals aged 11 years and older, a majority of 79.0% possess the ability to read and write, while the remaining 21.0% lack this literacy skill. The literacy rate among males is significantly higher, with 87.9% compared to females, who have a literacy rate of 71.0%. The majority of individuals residing in the Municipality, specifically 57%, possess literacy skills in both English and the Ghanaian languages including Dangme, Twi, and Ewe. Approximately 36.8% of the population exclusively speaks English, while 5.1% primarily communicate in the Ghanaian language, precisely Dangme (2014b, p.34).

3.6.4 Political Administration

The Municipal Chief Executive (MCE) serves as both the political and administrative head of Yilo Krobo Municipality. The MCE performs executive duties and also acts as the representative of the central government at the district level. He/She works with the Municipal Coordinating Director (MCD), who is in charge of managing the day-to-day functions of the thirteen (13) autonomous divisions. There is one (1) constituency for the whole municipal government and forty-four (44) electoral districts. There are 7 Zonal Councils and 44 Unit Committees (Ghana Statistical Service: 2014b, p.2).

Within the Yilo Krobo Traditional Area, there are a total of six (6) chieftaincy divisions as well as one paramountcy that is led by the Konor. The following is a list of the divisions: Bornya, Plau, Bunase, Nyeweh, Ogome, and Okper. The Krobo Mountain, which holds great potential as a tourist destination (Ghana Statistical Service, 2014).



CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS AND DATA ANALYSIS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents and analyzes the empirical findings of the study. This section is divided into two parts. The first part present a report of data gathered from the research department of the Electoral Commission's headquarters and interviews which are arranged along the main objectives of the study. The second part of this chapter seeks to answer the research questions of the study by thematically analyzing and discussing data gathered from primary and secondary sources.

PART I: PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

4.1 Demographic background of respondents

The demographic background of individuals exerts tremendous influence on how they perceive their social world. Accordingly, demographic data were collected on respondents' gender, age, education, occupation and marital status.

4.1.1 Gender and age of respondents

In terms of gender of respondents, three (12.5%) were males while the remaining 21 (87.5%) were females. On the age distribution of respondents, two (8.3%) were between 20-25 years old, six (25%) were between 26-30 years old, five (20.8) were between 30-35 years old, seven (29.2%) were between 35-40 years old, two (8.3%) were between 41-45 years old, and two (8.3%) were between 46-50 years old. This indicates that the majority of respondents were between 35-40 years old. The mean age of respondents is 33 years. Table 4.1 below indicates the age distribution of respondents.

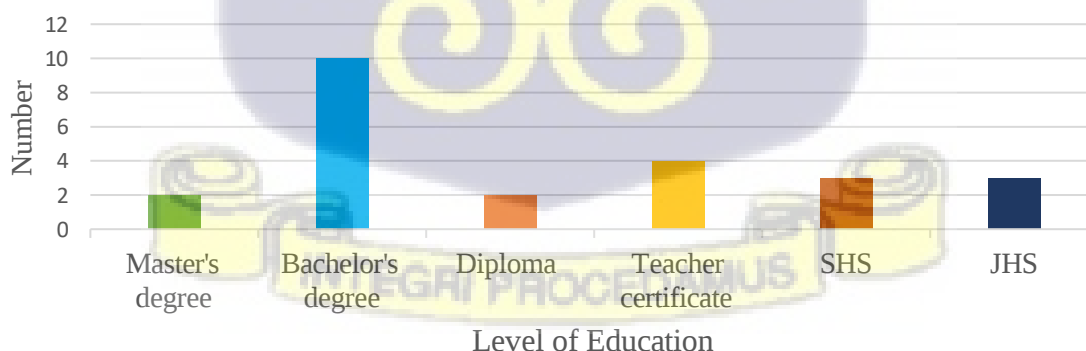
Table 4.1: Age distribution of respondents

Year	Frequency	Percentage (%)
20 – 25	2	8.3
26 – 30	6	25
31 – 35	5	20.8
36 – 40	7	29.2
41 – 45	2	8.3
46 – 50	2	8.3

Source: (Field data, 2023)

4.1.2 Educational level of respondents

All the respondents of this study were literate and have varying levels of educational attainment. Two (8.8%) respondents have master's degree, 10 (41.7%) holds bachelor's degrees, two (8.3%) holds diploma certificates, four (16.7%) graduated from teacher training college, three (12.5%) were senior high school graduates, and three (12.5%) were junior high school graduates. Figure 6 below shows the level of education of respondents.

Figure 6: Educational attainment of respondents.

Source: (Field data, 2023)

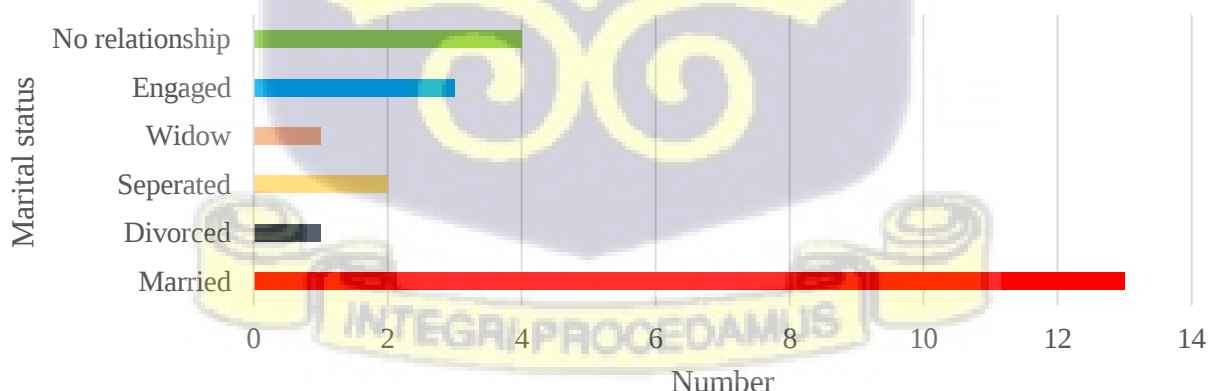
4.1.3 Occupational background of respondents

Among the respondents, there was a diverse range of occupations. Two (8%) were gender officers, while five (21%) were assemblywomen who also balanced their roles as businesswomen. An additional two (8%) respondents held positions as political party executives, each actively involved in leading roles within the women's wing of their respective political parties. Six (25%) were local government employees working in finance, social welfare, and planning departments. Two (8%) worked as district officers. Meanwhile, four (17%) were engaged in careers as women's right advocates, and three (13%) worked as community leaders.

4.1.4 Marital status of respondents

Figure 7 below shows the marital status of respondents. Among the 24 respondents, 13 (54.2%) are married, two (8.3%) indicated that they are going through a period of separation, one (4.2%) is divorced, three (12.5%) are engaged, one (4.2%) is a widow while the remaining four (16.7%) respondents are neither married nor in a relationship..

Figure 7: Marital status of respondents.



Source: (Field data, 2023)

4.2 Trends of women's participation and representation in local government.

In order to identify trends of women's participation and representation in local government in the Yilo Krobo and Ga East Municipalities between 2009 and 2021, sex disaggregated data were gathered on voter registration, voter turnout, nomination (candidates in assembly elections), and elected candidates between the years under review. Between 2009 and 2021, there were three assembly elections (2010, 2015 and 2019) within the two districts.

4.2.1 Trends in voter registration

Table 4.2 below provides a sex disaggregated data on voter registration trends in Yilo Krobo and Ga East Municipalities.

Table 4.2: Voter registration statistics

Voter Registration				
	Area	Men	Women	Total
2010	Yilo Krobo	26,227	32,056	58,283
	Ga East	61,772	64,293	126,065
2015	Yilo Krobo	70,695	48,851	119,546
	Ga East	69,684	53,228	122,912
2019	Yilo Krobo	31,161	36,267	67,428
	Ga East	74,655	70,125	144,780

Source: (Electoral Commission, 2023)

In 2010, Yilo Krobo Municipality had a total of 58,283 registered voters, with 32,056 (55%) females and 26,227 (45%) males. The number of female voters exceeded that of males. However, in 2015, the total number of registered voters increased more than 100% to 119,546, with 70,695

(59%) males and 48,851 (41%) females. In 2015, the number of male voters exceeded that of the females by 18%. In 2019, however, the number of registered voters declined significantly; a total of 67,428 registered voters were recorded, with 36,267 (54%) females and 31,161 (46%) males. The number of males and females registered voters experienced a decline in 2019 compared to 2015. However, we see a resurrection of female majority in the number of registered voters in 2019.

In the case of Ga East Municipality, the total number of registered voters in 2010 was 126,065 with 64,293 (51%) females and 61,772 (49%) males. Female registered voters exceeded the males by a small margin, 2%. However, in 2015, the total number of registered voters declined to 122,912 with 53,228 (43%) females and 69,684 (57%) males. While the number of female registered voters depreciated, that of the males appreciated. In 2019, the number of registered voters increased to 144,780 with 70,125 (48.5%) females and 74,655 (51.5%) males. Here, we see a rise in the number of female and male values. However, the males dominated the voter register in 2019.

4.2.2 Trends in voter turnout

Table 4.3 below shows the statistics on voter turnout in district assembly elections in Yilo Krobo and Ga East Municipalities in the years 2010, 2015 and 2019. In 2010, a total of 22,956 voters participated in the district assembly elections in Yilo Krobo Municipality. This represents 39.4% of the total eligible voters. Out of the 22,956 individuals who participated in the elections, 10,334 (45%) were males and 12,622 (55%) were females, indicating a higher female participation.

Table 4.3: Voter turnout statistics in Yilo Krobo and Ga East Municipalities

Voter turnout			
Area	Men	Women	Total

	Yilo Krobo	10,334	12,622	22,956
2010	Ga East	9,932	7,786	17,718
	Yilo Krobo	20,669	16,995	37,664
2015	Ga East	6,811	5,326	12,137
	Yilo Krobo	10,663	12,411	23,074
2019	Ga East	13,423	12,608	26,031

Source: Electoral Commission, 2023

In 2015, the voter turnout increased to 37,667, representing 31.5% of total eligible voters, showing a decline in voter turnout compared to 2010. Out of the 37,667 individuals who voted in the district assembly elections in 2015, 20,669 (55%) were males and 16,995 (45%) were females. While we see an increase in both males and female's voter turnout in 2015, female dominated voter turnout was reversed in 2015 with males leading by 10%. However, in 2019, the voter turnout decreased to 23,074, representing 34.2% of the total eligible voters. The decline in voter turnout was associated with the fall in the number of registered voters in 2015. Out of the 23,074 individuals who participated in the elections in 2019, 10,663 (46%) were males and 12,411 (54%) were females.

In Ga East Municipality, a total of 17,718 individuals took part in the district assembly elections, representing 14.1% of the total eligible voters, with 9,932 (56%) males and 7,786 (44%) females. The year 2015 recorded a decrease in the voter turnout with a total of 12,137, representing 9.9% of total eligible voters. Out of the 12,137 individuals who participated in elections, 6,811 (56%) were males and 5,326 (44%) were females. However, in 2019, the voter turnout increased to 26,031, representing 18% of the total eligible voters, with 12,608 (48%) female voters and 13,423 (52%) male voters.

4.2.3 Trends in nomination

Nomination serves as a crucial aspect of the electoral process, as it directly impacts the presence and visibility of males and females in decision-making. Table 4.4 below contains sex disaggregated data on the number of individuals who filed to contest in district assembly elections in Yilo Krobo and Ga East Municipalities in the years 2010, 2015, and 2019. In 2010, a total of 123 candidates filed to contest in the district assembly elections in Yilo Krobo municipality, with 116 (94%) males and seven (6%) being females. In 2015, the total number of nominations increased to 137, with 134 (98%) males and three (2%) females. Similarly, a total of 126 nominations were recorded, with 124 (98%) males and two (2%) females.

Table 4.4: Statistics on nomination in Yilo Krobo and Ga East Municipalities

Nomination				
	Area	Men	Women	Total
2010	Yilo Krobo	116	7	123
	Ga East	58	10	68
2015	Yilo Krobo	134	3	137
	Ga East	35	1	36
2019	Yilo Krobo	124	2	126
	Ga East	58	10	68

Source: (Electoral Commission, 2023)

In contrast, a total of 68 nominations were recorded in Ga East municipality in 2010. Out of that number, 58 (85%) were males and 10 (15%) were females. However, in 2015, the total number of nominations declined to 36, with 35(97%) males and only one (3%) female. In 2019, the total

number of nominations increased to 68, with 58 (85%) males and 10 (15%) females just as was recorded in the year 2010.

4.2.4 Trends in elected candidates

Table 4.5 below depicts the number of males and females elected in the district assembly elections in Yilo Krobo and Ga East municipalities. In 2010, a total of 44 individuals were elected in the district assembly elections in Yilo Krobo municipality. Out of that number, 42 (95.5%) were males and two (4.5%) were females. Similarly, a total number of 44 candidates were elected in 2015, with 42 (95.5%) males and two (4.5%) females. However, in 2019, a total of 44 candidates were elected, with 44 (100%) males.

Table 4.5: Statistics on trends in elected candidates in Yilo Krobo and Ga East Municipalities

Elected candidates				
	Area	Men	Women	Total
2010	Yilo Krobo	42	2	44
	Ga East	9	0	9
2015	Yilo Krobo	42	2	44
	Ga East	9	1	10
2019	Yilo Krobo	44	0	44
	Ga East	9	1	10

Source: Electoral Commission, 2023

In the case of Ga East municipality, a total of nine candidates were elected, with no female candidate winning, resulting in 100% male representation. However, in 2015, out of a total of 10 elected candidates, nine (90%) were males and one (10%) female. Similarly, the year 2019

recorded nine (90%) male representation and one (10%) female representation out of a total of 10 elected candidates.

4.3 Factors undermining women's participation and representation in local government

With the aid of an interview guide, the study gathered qualitative data from key informants and focus group discussions (FGDs). These interviews and discussions were carried out to unravel the factors that impede women's participation and representation in local government. Additionally, the study aims to identify and highlight the contributions of local assemblies and women's wing of political parties in the promotion of women's participation and representation in local politics. The list of focus group discussion questions and semi-structured interview questions for key informants are available in appendices A and B respectively.

The two other research questions that the study sought to answer were:

2. What factors account for the low participation and representation in local government in Yilo Krobo and Ga East Municipalities?
3. What are the contributions of political parties and local assembly authorities in the promotion of women's participation and representation in local government?

4.3.1 Responses to participation and motivation as registered voters

Respondents were asked if they were registered voters and what motivated them to register. For those who responded in the negative, reasons were sought for their non-participation. There were two focus groups in this study, one for each of the two study areas. Each focus group comprised of eight participants. In total, 16 participants took part in the focus group discussions. 14 of the participants revealed that they are registered voters. The remaining two were not registered voters.

Whiles the majority of the respondents from the two focus groups indicated that their primary motive for getting registered as a voter was to take part in elections, a respondent, on the other

hand, revealed that her motivation to get registered was primarily to obtain the voter's card for transactional purposes as she lacks a national identification document. The following quote illustrates this point:

"I one time wanted to transact a business with a client and he asked me to add a national identification document to the other required documents. Unfortunately, I was not considered for the opportunity because I didn't have any national identification document to complete the requirements. So, I made it my goal to get registered as a voter in order to obtain the card for any business-related activities" (FGD, Yilo Krobo municipality, Somanya)

In contrast, the dialogue below, extracted from a focus group discussion in Ga East municipality, captures some of the reasons for non-participation in voter registration exercise:

Interviewer: But why are you not a registered voter?

"It is stressful getting registered as a voter here. The registration centres that are created are usually few so when you go there, you'll see long queues which can discourage you from the registration exercise if you are a busy person or the nature of your work is such that you can't wait that long. For all the days that I attempted to get registered, the queue was long so I just decided not to go anymore" (FGD, Ga East municipality, Abokobi)

"As for me, it's not about the queue but I just didn't have the time. At the time the electoral commission opened for people to go and get registered, I had landed a new job. So, I had to go to work early and close late in order to impress my employer." (FGD, Ga East municipality, Abokobi)

4.3.2 Responses to participation in district assembly elections

Respondents were asked whether they have participated in district assembly elections. Below are some typical responses to the questions. Out of the 16 respondents from the FGDs, 10 indicated that they have always voted in district assembly elections. Of the 10, 6 were from Yilo Krobo municipality and 4 were from Ga East municipality. Two key reasons were identified as influencing the respondents' decision to participate in district elections. The first relates to the recognition of voting as a civic right and duty. The second, pertains to voting as an opportunity for change and influencing decision-making. The following quotations captures these views:

“The constitution of this country gives all persons who have attained the age of eighteen and above the chance to vote in elections. This is my right and I need to exercise it during voting. Also, a sign of a democratic society is when eligible members of the society take part in voting. So, inasmuch as it is a right that I am exercising, it is also a duty that I need to honour.” (FGD, Yilo Krobo municipality, Somanya)

“My vote can make a difference in an election and also in the development of my community. Sometime ago, we voted for a leader who promised a whole lot. Unfortunately, he failed to fulfil his promises so we kicked him out in the last elections. Just imagine if we all had sat down and say we would not vote. He would still be in office and no development would have taken place. So, for me, my vote is my voice and power” (FGD, Ga East municipality, Abokobi)

Conversely, while some women regard that vote as capable of influencing outcomes, others do not. A key informant asserts that some women do not take part in district elections because they do not consider their vote as important or able to influence decision-making. She stated that:

“I have heard many women say that, whether I vote or I do not vote, the person who is supposed to win in the election will win. These women hold the view that their vote is insignificant to influence the outcome of an election, so they see no reason to bother themselves to vote in an election.” (Key Informant, Yilo Krobo municipality, Somanya)

Six out of the total 16 respondents of the FGDs indicated that they have never voted in a district election. Although one is not a registered voter, all asserts that the inability of local governments to deliver on their mandate is the primary reason for their lack of involvement in district elections. A respondent puts it this way:

“We do not see what the local government does in this community. What they are really known for in this community is to collect tax. Our roads are bad. The school buildings are not in good shape and so on. So, why should we wake up and go and vote for someone who will come and do nothing for us?” (FDG, Ga East municipality, Abokobi)

An interaction with a key informant also revealed that, failed campaign promises on the part of elected officials is a significant contributing factor for women’s low involvement in district elections. This view is captured below:

“In fact, some of the women are not showing interest in voting because over the years, elected district officers have failed to fulfil their campaign promises. During the election campaign, a whole lot of promises are made out there but when they (candidates) eventually get elected, they fail to fulfil their own campaign promises. This situation discourages individuals here, particularly the women from participating in district assembly elections.” (Key informant, Ga East municipality, Kwabenya).

4.3.3 Responses to level of women's participation and representation

Perceptions were sought of the level of women participation and representation in local government in the districts. All 24 respondents of the study, including key informants and respondents from the FGDs acknowledged the low representation of women in local government in their community. However, they assert that participation has improved in terms the number of women who vote in district elections and voter registration exercises.

An informant stated that:

“Over the years, we have seen an improvement in women voters. But, in terms of the number of women who run for political office and those who are elected, it's been very poor.” (Key Informant, Ga East municipality, Abokobi)

Another informant also stated that:

“In this district, we have more women voters than men. It is therefore not surprising that voter turnout has usually female majority. This clearly shows that, women are politically active in the district. But the area that needs much attention is their representation in places of authority. Only few women are in places of power here. So, for women's voice to count at the table of power, the numbers must be high” (Key Informant, Yilo Krobo municipality, Somanya)

4.3.4 Responses to factors influencing decisions for political office.

More questions were raised in order to understand personal decision to run or not to run for political office. Respondents were asked if they had ever run for political office at the local level and what factors had influenced their decision.

No respondent from the FGD has contested for political office at the local level. However, out of

the eight key informants, six had contested for political office at the local level. These include: a district officer, two current assemblywomen, a former assemblywoman, NPP women's wing representative, and the NDC women's wing representation.

In responds to why they decided to run for political office, some of the respondents answered as:

"Men have a way of thinking. So does women. Men have unique problems. So, does women. If we leave men only to make decisions, women's issues would not be fully tackled because those taking the decision to solve women's issues are not women. And so, I decided to run for office in order to present the feminine voice at the table of power." (Key Informant, former assemblywoman, Yilo Krobo)

Other respondents indicated that:

"You can never make any important changes or difference if you don't have power. So, my decision to run for political office was influenced by my drive to make a difference in my community." (Key Informant, an assemblywoman, Ga East municipality, Abokobi)

A significant number of respondents from the FGD, revealed that although they have not run for any political office, they have strong desire to contest in the near future. One of the respondents stated:

"Not that I don't have interest in politics. I strongly do, but for now, I am grooming myself for the future" (FGD, Yilo Krobo municipality, Somanya)

Respondent 7 also replied that:

"I am not ready now. I belong to a political party and I am very active in it. Who knows? I may contest in the next district election." (FGD, Ga East municipality, Abokobi)

4.3.5 Responses to factors hindering women from running for political offices.

A key informant asserts that, inadequate finances is a key setback to women's representation in local government. The quotation below captures this view:

“Political campaign right now is very expensive. If you carefully look at the way politics is done today, you definitely will need money to print flyers, do billboards, and establish a campaign team so that you can be visible within your area. All of these things require a good amount of money to finance them. Most women here do not have what it takes to do it.” (Key Informant, a former assemblywoman, Yilo Krobo municipality)

Additionally, a current assemblywoman in Ga East municipality argued that because women generally lack the financial resources to run a successful campaign, they sometimes become vulnerable to men who they (the women candidates) approach for sponsorship. She explains that this situation accounts for why some women do not run for political offices. She stated it this way:

“We all know and agree that running a political campaign in our world today requires money and most women generally lack that resource. So, sometimes in our quest to run for political offices, we do write to or try to network with individuals who have the financial capabilities to support our campaign. But, sometimes, these sponsors, who are mostly men, want to have sexual affairs with us before they help us. This really puts a lot of women off when it comes to running for political offices.” (Key informant, Ga East municipality)

Another factor that was identified as limiting women's representation in local government is the perceived lack of education or high illiteracy among women. A participant of the focus group discussion expressed this view this way:

“Many of the women in our municipality do not have the educational qualification to contest and win in an election. Becoming an assemblywoman, would mean that, one must be a good communicated, able to solve problems, be knowledgeable among other things. How many women here have had good education to have all these? So, for me, low education really undermines women representation at the local level.” (FGD, Yilo Krobo municipality, Somanya)

A key informant corroborated this view when she stated:

“Education is very important in the selection of public figures. Virtually what we do involves the creation and processing of information which most comes in written form. So, voters usually assess the level of education of candidates when making a choice of candidate. So, the women not getting elected may also be due to the low level of education among women.” (Key Informant, Ga East municipality, assemblywoman, Abokobi)

Furthermore, the study found that lower preference and support for female candidates account for the low representation of women in local government. It was revealed that although the voter turnout of females often outweighs that of males in district elections in the two study areas, male candidates often get voted for. A key informant stated that:

“Women candidate do not often receive the needed support from community members and leaders. The way community leaders and members receive and rally behind male candidates, it is not the same with female candidates and this influences the outcome of every election. What is shocking to me is that, usually women participate more in district elections than males. But, in the end, women candidates do not get the nod. This is a clear

indication that the community have greater preference for men than for women.” (Key Informant, Assemblywoman, Yilo Krobo municipality)

Another key informant revealed that, masculine features or attributes are believed to be essential for effective leadership. Hence, until a female acquires those attributes, she is never supported. She stated it this way:

“When I was running for office, my campaign manager was a male. We one-time had a meeting with the community members and when it was time for him to introduce me to the audience, he described me as a woman who have a heart of a man, literally telling them that I am as fierce as a man. When the crowd heard it, they cheered it loudly. Through some of these subtly means, I discovered that males are often preferred for political office than females.” (Key Informant, Ga East municipality, Assemblywoman)

Again, the study found that the lack of spousal support is a crucial factor that account for the low representation of women in local government. A gender officer at the Ga East municipality revealed that:

“Some women do not participate in local politics because their husbands do not approve it. I remember that woman one time called me to inform me that she has an interest to run for a political office, but her husband does not approve it so I should come and intervene. I went there and spoke with the man, but he did not budge. In the end, I told her to rescind her decision to ensure that her marriage do not collapse. She listened to my advice and aborted her dream.” (Key informant, Gender Officer, Ga East municipality)

The key informant attribute men’s decision to hinder their wives to run for political office to insecurity. This view is captured as:

“The men sometimes do not support their wives to go into politics because there is this uncertainty that the woman will still be committed to her domestic responsibilities such as cooking for the family, ensuring home management, and taking care of the children after obtaining political power.” (Key informant, Gender Officer, Ga East municipality)

She further explained that a section of men also holds the view that allowing women to hold political power is a deviation from traditional norms. She explained it this way:

“Allowing women to get hold of power is a violation of traditional cultural norms and gender roles. They believe that, in a traditional society as ours, men are recognized as the head and women are only supposed to play a supporting role. So, approving a women’s decision to run for political power would mean that, they (men) are deviating from the standard that was set by their predecessors.” (Key informant, Gender Officer Ga East municipality, 2023)

Moreover, while the female respondents attributed the low representation of women in local government to external factors, two male respondents in the study attributed the problem to internal factors. The first respondent, explained that women are not motivated to run for political office because they lack self-confidence. This view is captured in the quotation below:

“Women usually say that we men do not allow them to participate in politics. They often say that the culture favours the men and so on and so forth. See, the women themselves lack self-confidence to participate in politics. Most women cannot talk publicly to convince a crowd. They cannot talk to lobby things for us and they themselves do not believe that they have what it takes to be effective even when they are given the opportunity. So, how

do we give political power to such a person?” (FGD, Ga East municipality, Abokobi)

The second male respondent also attributes the problem to biological factor. He explains that women’s biological make-up hinders their effective participation and representation in local government.

“The work of a representative of a people is not easy. I personally cannot vote for a woman because if she gets pregnant, she cannot be there to serve us. This basic factor should even be clear to everyone that women are only to play a supporting role. Just imagine that our MCE is pregnant, would she send her nursing baby to a board meeting? She just won’t be effective. So, for me, women should just be okay where they are” (FGD, Ga East municipality, Abokobi)

4.4 Contributions of political parties/assembly to women’s participation and representation

To provide answers to the third research question were asked seeking to understand the contributions of political parties and assembly authorities in the promotion of women’s participation and representation in local government during 2009 to 2021.

4.4.1 Responses to efforts of assembly and party to women’s participation and representation

Respondents indicated two local government authorities promote women’s participation and representation in local government through the appointment and recruitment of females in various sub-committees. A district officer revealed that:

“We have no direct influence on the outcomes of district elections. So, what sometime we do here is to ensure that women are represented in local government through others ways

such as appointment and recruitment into various sub-committees. The local government assembly is made up by both elected and appointed officials. Sometimes, we intentionally appoint more women than men in order to balance the equation. If you also check the various sub-committees, you will see that a lot of women have been recruited or employed to work there.” (Key informant, District officer, Yilo Krobo municipality)

Additionally, the study found that local government authorities do provide public education and awareness on biased gender stereotypes with the aim of eliminating these stereotypes that fights against women’s representation in local government. An officer at the Ga East municipality stated:

“At the local level, we do sometimes partner with National Commission for Civic Education to provide public education and awareness on biased gender stereotypes with the aim of eliminating these stereotypes against female candidates to improve their level of participation and representation in local politics” (Key informant, District officer, Ga East municipality)

Moreover, it was revealed that local government authorities promote women’s representation in local government through advocacy for the adoption of quota system and the enforcement of affirmative action. For instance, a district officer in the Ga East municipality revealed that, the assembly through its Gender desk office has advocated for the adoption of gender sensitive alternatives to improve women’s representation in local government. She stated that:

“We acknowledge that women’s representation in the assembly is low. Due to this, my office in partnership with the Gender desk office have advocated for the adoption and implementation of quota systems and the enforcement of affirmative actions” (Key informant, District officer, Ga East municipality)

The study also found that, political parties promote women's representation in local government through mentorship. The two political party representatives acknowledged that though the local government structure is a non-partisan institution, they groom women to be suitable candidate for district assembly elections. A representative of the NPP women's wing in Ga East municipality indicated that:

"We have a lot of training and mentorship programmes for women. These activities are aimed at preparing women for leadership roles. I am a product of such activities and so, since I took over this office, I ensure that we have regular training workshop for women. We as a party are committed to nurturing women leaders within the party. Through training and mentorship, we are giving the women the tools and skills that they need to run successful campaigns" (Key informant, NPP respondent, Ga East municipality)

The NDC women's wing representative in the Yilo Krobo municipality similarly disclosed that the party has intentionally created several platforms for nurturing women leaders. She indicated that while the party does not present a candidate for district assembly elections, the party prepares and sharpens the skills of women to be fit for political office. This view is captured in the quote below:

"In our party, we have several platforms that have been created to accommodate women. The plan is to groom these women to become fit for political office. Even though we do not present candidates as a political party in district assembly elections, the skills we give to our women, qualifies them to contest in district elections." (Key informant, NDC respondent, Yilo Krobo municipality)

The respondent added that:

“Women within our party are usually provided with leadership training just like any other political party in the country. We all are aware of the fact that, the ratio of female to male in political representation in our country is extremely wide. This is why we try to train the women so they can run for offices within our party, at the district and national platforms so that women too can have a voice and protect our interest in decision-making” (Key informant, NDC respondent, Yilo Krobo municipality)

In addition, political parties promote women’s representation in local government through nomination or appointment into local government. Although the local government institution is non-partisan, incumbent government, have the mandate to appoint its MCEs and DCEs and other members of the local assembly. According to the representatives of the two political parties, their respective parties, strategically increases women’s nomination and appointment into local government. The NPP respondent explained that:

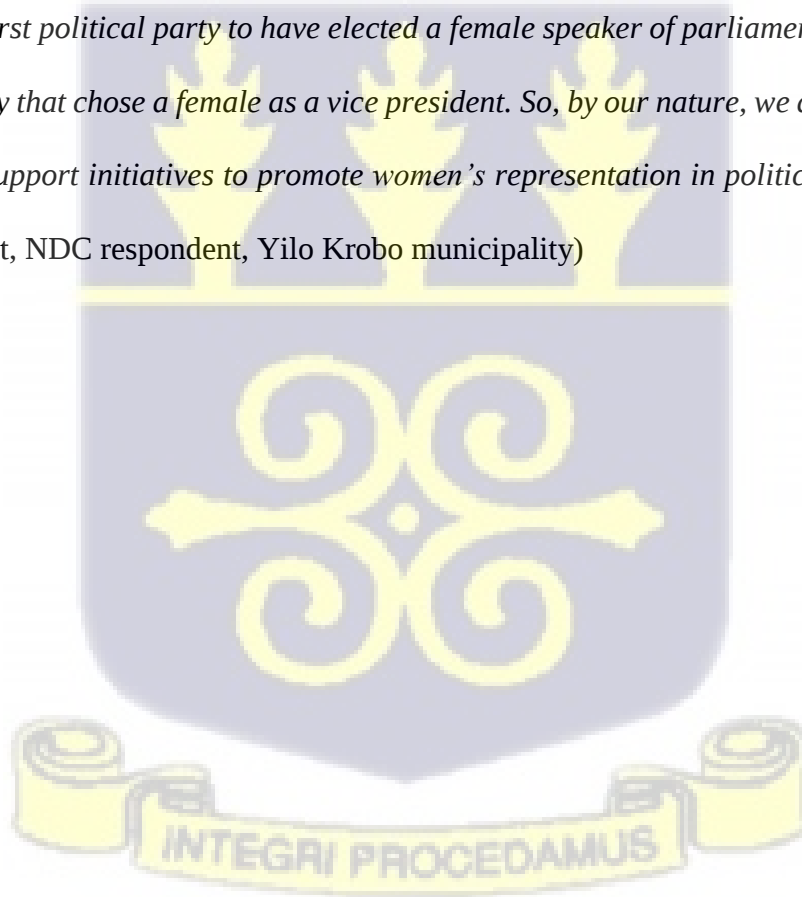
“When we are in government, we try to appoint or nominate more women into local government. We do this because usually, very few of the women are elected into office. So, in order to balance the equation, we try to appoint as many women in various positions in the local government structure. This gives the women some level of power to influence decision-making.” (Key informant, NPP respondent, Ga East municipality)

Furthermore, the study found that political parties promote women’s representation in local government through advocacy. The two political parties asserts that they are strong advocates of gender sensitive initiatives such as quota systems and affirmative actions. A respondent replied in this way:

“The NPP is dedicated to ensuring that women’s voices are heard in our political landscape. We firmly stand behind measures like affirmative action and quotas that promote equitable representation. Even though these measures are met with strong opposition by traditional men, we are still determined to push for their acceptance.” (Key informant, NPP respondent, Ga East municipality)

The NDC representative also reveals that her political parties support pro-women policies. This view is captured below:

“If you are looking for a political party in Ghana that is pro-women, then it is NDC. We are the first political party to have elected a female speaker of parliament. We are also the first party that chose a female as a vice president. So, by our nature, we as a political party always support initiatives to promote women’s representation in political spheres.” (Key informant, NDC respondent, Yilo Krobo municipality)



ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

4.5 Trends in Voter Registration

The analysis of voter registration trends in Yilo Krobo and Ga East Municipalities reveals several noteworthy patterns and implications for women's political participation and representation. In Yilo Krobo, there was a substantial increase in the total number of registered voters from 2010 to 2015, indicating a growing interest and engagement in the electoral process during that period. However, this trend reversed in 2019, with a significant decrease in the total number of registered voters. A study conducted by Kuug et al. (2018) reveals that fluctuations in voter registration could be attributed to various factors, including voter apathy. Additionally, Morline-Yron (2016) believes that fluctuations in voter registration can be attributed to a lack of faith in the electoral process.

From the perspective of the Civic Voluntarism Model (CVM) by Verba, Schlozman, and Brady (1995), the disparities in voter registration trends can be linked to the three core components of political participation: resources, psychological engagement, and recruitment networks. Women's registration fluctuations may be influenced by limited financial resources, lower levels of political efficacy, and inadequate recruitment by political networks, which are all critical aspects of the CVM. The decline in female voter registration in 2015 suggests that psychological engagement and recruitment efforts may not have been sustained, reinforcing the role of external mobilization in women's electoral participation.

One remarkable aspect of the analysis is the gender distribution among registered voters in Yilo Krobo. In 2010 and 2019, there were more female registered voters than male registered voters, indicating an encouraging trend of women's participation in the electoral process. However, in 2015, the number of female registered voters decreased, and the gender balance shifted towards a higher number of male registered voters. This aligns with Feminist Standpoint Theory (Harding, 1986), which argues that women's engagement in politics is often dictated by structural inequalities and power dynamics, making

their participation inconsistent.

Moving to Ga East, the data reflects a contrasting picture. In 2010, the number of female registered voters surpassed that of male registered voters, indicating a higher level of female political engagement at that time. However, in 2015, the total number of registered voters decreased, with a more pronounced decline in the number of female registered voters. This decline in female voter registration could be an area of concern, warranting further investigation into the reasons behind the drop and efforts to encourage greater female participation in the electoral process.

The subsequent increase in the total number of registered voters in Ga East in 2019 is promising, with a slight majority of male registered voters. However, this trend may require continuous efforts to sustain and foster women's active involvement in local politics and governance. Glass Ceiling Theory (Lorber, 1994) provides a relevant explanation for these trends, as it highlights the existence of invisible barriers that prevent women from maintaining a consistent presence in the political sphere. Women may be registering but face obstacles in translating this into sustained political action.

Overall, fluctuations in female voter registration suggest the need for targeted initiatives to address barriers that hinder women's active participation in the electoral process. The findings underscore the importance of recruitment networks (CVM) and the role of systemic biases (Glass Ceiling Theory) in determining women's involvement in politics.

4.6 Trends in Nomination

The voter turnout trends in Yilo Krobo Municipality paint a positive picture of women's political engagement. In 2010 and 2019, the data portray women as more actively involved in the electoral process, with female voter turnout exceeding that of male voters. This finding suggests a relatively higher level of political interest and involvement among women in Yilo Krobo Municipality.

On the contrary, in Ga East Municipality, the data showcase a consistent pattern where male voter turnout surpassed female voter turnout in all three years. The difference in percentages indicates a notable gap in political participation between sexes, with male voter turnout consistently higher than female voter turnout.

According to the Civic Voluntarism Model, voter turnout is influenced by the availability of time, financial resources, and civic skills. The lower turnout among women in Ga East could be attributed to time constraints due to domestic responsibilities, economic disparities, and a lack of political mobilization efforts targeting women. This is consistent with the findings of Anaman & Bukari (2019), who argue that women's lower participation in politics is often due to the competing demands of household duties and economic insecurity.

Across all three election periods in Yilo Krobo and Ga East districts, voter turnout rates remained relatively low despite the large numbers of registered voters. In Yilo Krobo, although the total registered voters varied from 58,283 in 2010 to 119,546 in 2015 and 67,428 in 2019, the turnout rates were consistently low, ranging from approximately 31.50% to 39.38%. Similarly, in Ga East, where the total registered voters ranged from 126,065 in 2010 to 122,912 in 2015 and 144,780 in 2019, the turnout rates were notably lower, fluctuating between approximately 9.88% and 17.97%. These patterns suggest a broader issue of voter engagement across both districts, with turnout rates failing to reflect the substantial numbers of eligible voters.

Moreover, considering gender dynamics, although the voter registration numbers for both men and women were substantial, the turnout rates reveal disparities in participation, with women potentially being less likely to vote compared to men. This aligns with Feminist Standpoint Theory, which suggests that women's social positioning—affected by cultural expectations and patriarchal structures—affects their ability to translate voter registration into actual voting behavior.

The issue of low voter turnout in district assembly elections is not unique to Yilo Krobo and Ga East districts. A report by the Daily Graphic (December 20, 2023) highlighted a widespread phenomenon of low participation in district-level elections. Similarly, a BBC News report (December 17, 2023) revealed a low voter turnout in district elections in Ghana. Meanwhile, the Center for Democratic Development (CDD-Ghana) attributes this phenomenon to insufficient publicity surrounding district assembly elections. The institution further opines that major stakeholders, including media houses and political parties, do not prioritize district-level elections to the same extent as national elections.

These findings reinforce the role of recruitment networks (CVM) in fostering women's political engagement. If political parties and civil society organizations actively mobilize, educate, and recruit women, participation rates could improve. Additionally, the Glass Ceiling Theory underscores how deep-rooted biases in political institutions discourage women from viewing local elections as meaningful platforms for change.

4.7 Trends in Elected Candidates

The analysis of elected candidates in Yilo Krobo and Ga East Municipalities paints a concerning picture of gender representation in local governance. Across all three years, the data reveals a significant gender disparity in the number of elected female candidates compared to their male counterparts.

In Yilo Krobo, the proportion of female candidates elected in 2010 and 2015 stands at a mere 4.5%, with only 2 out of 44 candidates being female representatives. This already low percentage takes a disheartening turn in 2019, with no female candidates securing elected positions, resulting in a complete absence of female representation in local government. These numbers signify a stark underrepresentation of women in decision-making bodies in Yilo Krobo, limiting their voices and perspectives in shaping policies and initiatives that directly impact the community.

Similarly, in Ga East, the figures demonstrate a significant gender imbalance in elected candidates. In 2010, 100% of the elected representatives were male, with no female candidates winning seats. Although there was a slight improvement in 2015 and 2019, with 10% of the elected candidates being female, the overwhelming majority, 90%, remained male. This consistent lack of gender diversity in elected positions in Ga East points to persistent barriers and challenges that hinder women's meaningful participation in local governance.

The Civic Voluntarism Model (CVM) by Verba, Schlozman, and Brady (1995) provides insight into these findings by emphasizing that political participation is influenced by resources, psychological engagement, and recruitment networks. Women's underrepresentation in elected positions can be attributed to financial limitations, societal attitudes towards female leadership, and inadequate political recruitment. The Feminist Standpoint Theory (Harding, 1986) further supports this by asserting that women's lived experiences in male-dominated structures affect their political involvement, often reinforcing systemic exclusion.

The low representation of women in elected positions can be explained by various factors. Sindhuja and Murugan (2017) point out that political parties often do not provide enough support to women who aspire to be involved in public life. Without adequate backing from political parties, many women struggle to gain the necessary momentum to succeed in political roles. Glass Ceiling Theory (Lorber, 1994) reinforces this point by highlighting the invisible barriers that prevent women from ascending to leadership positions, despite having the qualifications and capabilities to do so.

Additionally, the uneven distribution of economic resources and limited employment opportunities for rural women, as identified by UNICEF (2013), further exacerbates the challenges women face in engaging in public life. Boateng (2017) and Tagoe & Abakah (2015) argue that economic constraints hinder many women from contesting political positions due to their inability to finance electoral

campaigns. The Feminist Standpoint Theory explains this dynamic, emphasizing that women's economic subordination translates into limited political participation.

Gender equality in politics is not merely about fairness or numerical representation; it is vital for effective governance and economic development. The absence of women in political leadership results in policies that may not fully address the needs of all citizens. CVM's recruitment network component suggests that increasing women's representation requires targeted recruitment, mentorship, and advocacy by political parties and civic organizations.

4.8 Factors undermining women's participation and representation in local government.

4.8.1 Lack of finance

A number of factors were identified in this study as undermining women's participation and representation in local government. Key among them was financial constraints, corroborated by Munemo (2017) and Odame (2010), who cited the lack of resources as a key issue leading to women's low engagement in politics. Kayuni and Chikadza (2016) assert that financial constraints hinder political participation given the costs associated with political campaigns. Many women in Ga East and Yilo Krobo municipalities work largely in the agricultural sector, which yields little financial return. Meanwhile, men are employed in industrial and service sectors that provide better incomes. The Glass Ceiling Theory explains that such economic disparities reinforce gender imbalances in politics, as financial constraints prevent women from actively engaging in political campaigns.

4.8.2 Low Education among Women

Thashkeel (2021) highlights that education plays a crucial role in shaping political leaders and their ability to execute their duties effectively. Candidates with higher educational attainment tend to have an advantage in district assembly elections. Odame (2010) supports this claim, arguing that low education levels among women in Ghana act as barriers to their political participation. The Civic Voluntarism

Model (CVM) further reinforces this by linking education with civic skills that enhance political engagement. Without education, women struggle to develop the public-speaking and policy-making skills necessary for political success.

4.8.3 Lower Preference and Support for Female Candidates

Although female voter turnout exceeded that of males in the 2019 district elections in Yilo Krobo municipality, none of the two female candidates won. This emphasizes a strong preference for male political leaders, largely driven by cultural norms. Collier (1974) and Rosaldo (1974) argue that women are often viewed more as tools in male political strategies rather than as active participants. UN Women (2019) data show that over 70% of parliamentary seats worldwide are occupied by men, reinforcing a male-dominated political system. The Feminist Standpoint Theory suggests that this structural bias against women in politics needs to be challenged through affirmative action policies and gender-sensitive leadership development programs.

4.8.4 Lack of Spousal Support

The Glass Ceiling Theory also extends to personal relationships, where traditional gender roles dictate that women should prioritize domestic responsibilities over political ambitions. Elmaci (2023) argues that in patriarchal societies, women's political aspirations are often curtailed by the absence of spousal support. The fear of jeopardizing their marital relationships further discourages women from political engagement. This aligns with CVM's psychological engagement component, which suggests that when women lack familial and social encouragement, they are less likely to develop the political ambition necessary for leadership.

4.8.5 Lack of Self-Confidence

Sindhuja and Murugan (2017) link self-confidence with educational attainment, asserting that lower education levels among women contribute to their hesitancy in pursuing political office. Shvedova (2005)

further attributes women's reluctance to fear and self-doubt, despite having the qualities required for leadership. The Feminist Standpoint Theory suggests that women's exclusion from decision-making structures perpetuates their lack of confidence. Odame (2010) contends that education serves as a transformative tool for empowering women politically by enhancing their assertiveness and strategic thinking skills.

4.8.6 Biological Factors

Women's reproductive responsibilities have traditionally been used to justify their exclusion from politics. Baba et al. (2019) highlight that pregnancy and child-rearing responsibilities disrupt career progression, reinforcing gender stereotypes about women's dedication to leadership roles. Trabelsi (2023) and Huddy & Terkildsen (1993) argue that societal perceptions linking hormonal fluctuations to emotional instability further diminish women's credibility as political leaders. The Glass Ceiling Theory underscores how deep-seated gender stereotypes serve as artificial barriers to women's political representation.

4.9 Contribution of local authorities in the participation and representation of women in local government.

4.9.1 Public sensitization and education

Local government authorities play a key role in advancing gender equality and promoting women's participation and representation in politics. One of the significant contributions of local government authorities in promoting women in politics is their active advocacy for the elimination of gender stereotypes that often hinder the chances of female candidates. These authorities recognize the importance of challenging these biases that have been a barrier to women seeking political office.

In the Case of Yilo Krobo municipality, the assembly in partnership with National Commission for Civic Education (N.C.C.E) occasionally promote educational initiatives and awareness campaigns that aims at changing public perceptions of women in politics. This is done through workshops and seminars with an emphasis on the importance of gender equality and diversity in political leadership.

Asekere (2020) highlights the crucial role of traditional and religious leaders in sensitizing their communities to reject gender-based stereotypes that marginalize women. This portrays the pervasive nature of gender biases deeply rooted in the social fabric of the Ghanaian society. By leveraging their influence and authority, these leaders can effectively challenge and dismantle stereotypes that hinder women's participation in politics.

Public education and sensitization initiatives are essential tools in combating gender stereotypes and creating an environment conducive for a full participation of women in politics. Local government, with their respected positions within communities, can serve as influential advocates for change. Through targeted educational campaigns, local government can disseminate accurate information about gender equality, debunking myths and misconceptions that preserve harmful stereotypes. Through the promotion of open dialogue and inclusive values, local government authorities can help reshape societal attitudes towards women's roles in politics, paving the way for increased participation and representation.

In essence, the role of local government in public education initiatives is crucial in eliminating gender stereotypes and promoting women's political empowerment. Through strategic collaboration with CSOs and other key stakeholders, local government can challenge entrenched beliefs and promote gender equality. In order to achieve this, the gender offices at district levels should be actively engaged and well-resourced. These offices serve as crucial hubs for

implementing initiatives aimed at promoting gender equality and empowering women in various aspects of society, including political participation.

4.9.2 Through appointment and recruitment

Local government authorities also promote women's participation and representation in politics through the appointment and recruitment of women into various sub-committees of the assembly. This move serves multiple purposes. Firstly, it helps women enhance their political skills through practical experience. When women are involved in decision-making processes at the local level, they are able to gain valuable insights and expertise that prepare and equip them for broader political engagement.

Additionally, such appointments send a powerful message about the importance of gender diversity and the significance of women's voices in governance. When women are represented in sub-committees, it creates a more balanced and inclusive decision-making environment. Their perspectives and concerns are more likely to be considered, leading to policies that better address the needs of the entire community (Markham, 2013).

The presence of women in local government can also serve as inspiration for other females (ESCAP, 2019). Seeing fellow women actively participating in politics can motivate other women to step forward and pursue their own political aspirations. This role model effect is crucial in encouraging greater female representation in politics. Additionally, it can influence young girls, inspiring them to develop an interest in public affairs from an early age.

Although local governments have made strides in appointing and recruiting women into sub-committees of the local assembly, it is vital to consider the type of positions women are appointed to. Simply including women in local administration is not enough; the roles and positions they occupy should be ones that allow them to have a significant impact on local government

administration. Often, women are appointed to lower-ranking or symbolic positions that lack decision-making power or influence. To truly promote gender equality and harness the full potential of women's participation in governance, local governments must ensure that women are appointed to positions where they can actively shape policies, contribute to strategic decision-making, and represent the diverse perspectives of their communities.

4.10 Contributions by political parties

4.10.1 Mentorship

Political parties promote women's participation and representation in local government through mentorship. Mentorship programs within political parties offer various benefits to aspiring female leaders. Mentorship provides women with invaluable guidance and support. Female politicians often face unique challenges and barriers unknown to their male counterparts. Having a mentor who has navigated these challenges themselves can offer insights and strategies for overcoming them. This guidance can empower women to build confidence, develop their leadership skills, and effectively participate in political activities.

Both NPP and NDC organizes seminars and workshops often aimed at building the capacity of their members. These activities help women to build network and connection with others. In politics, relationships and alliances are important. A leader can introduce a mentee to an influential figure, provide opportunity for networking, and open doors to key positions within and outside the political party.

Political parties do not downplay the crucial role of mentorship in women's empowerment. By creating support networks specifically tailored for aspiring female politicians, political parties are

able to address the systemic barriers and challenges that often deter women from entering politics. As Okonkwo (2022) contends, such support networks play a vital role in equipping women with the necessary civic skills and knowledge required for effective engagement in the political space.

Through mentorship programs, political parties are able to provide guidance, support, and encouragement to women navigating the complexities of political participation. Mentors, often experienced politicians or party members, offer valuable insights, share their own experiences, and provide practical advice to mentees. Additionally, these programs offer opportunities for networking, connecting aspiring female politicians with established leaders and decision-makers within the party.

To maximize the impact of mentorship programs for female politicians, it is crucial for political parties to allocate adequate resources to their women's wing. These wings are often assigned the duty of women empowerment, however, the wings are usually under-resourced both in terms of finances and human resources. By providing sufficient funding and staffing, political parties can ensure that women's wings have the capacity to effectively implement and sustain mentorship programs. This includes hiring qualified mentors, organizing training sessions and workshops, and facilitating networking opportunities for aspiring female politicians.

4.10.2 Advocacy

Another way by which political parties promote women's participation and representation in local government is through advocacy. They advocate for the adoption of quota systems and affirmative action policies, which have been instrumental in addressing the gender gap in political representation. Quota systems can take several forms such as reserving specific seats for women candidates. These measures create opportunities for women to participate in politics and increase their chances of getting elected. Affirmative action policies can include measures like ensuring

that women are considered equally in the selection process or incentives for political parties to nominate female candidates.

Affirmative action policies, as advocated by organizations like ABANTU for Development (2017), are designed to address historical inequalities and promote gender equality by providing targeted support and opportunities for women in decision-making processes. By actively lobbying for the implementation of affirmative action measures, political parties demonstrate their commitment to levelling the playing field and increasing women's representation in politics.

Moreover, the implementation of affirmative action measures can have a significant impact in the political space by diversifying perspectives and priorities within decision-making bodies (Markham, 2013). By increasing the presence of women in political leadership roles, these policies contribute to more responsive and inclusive governance, addressing a wider range of issues and concerns that affect diverse segments of society.

However, it is important to state that the effectiveness of these advocacy efforts can vary depending on the commitment of individual political parties and the broader political environment. Some parties may merely pay lip service to these ideas without taking real action, while others may be genuinely committed to increasing women's participation and representation.

4.10.3 Through nominations and appointments

Political parties wield significant influence in promoting women's participation in politics, especially through the nomination and appointment of women as Municipal and District Chief Executives (MCEs and DCEs). This practice serves as a tangible demonstration of a political party's dedication to gender equality and women's empowerment within the political space. By actively selecting and endorsing women for these leadership positions, political parties send a

powerful message that women are equally capable as their male counterparts in assuming leadership positions and contributing to the development and governance of their communities.

The nomination of women as MCEs and DCEs not only challenges traditional gender norms and stereotypes but also encourages more women to engage in politics. When women are visibly represented in leadership positions, it fosters a sense of empowerment and aspiration among other women, inspiring them to pursue similar paths and contribute to public service. Moreover, the presence of women in key decision-making roles can lead to more inclusive policies and programs that address the diverse needs and priorities of communities, ultimately enhancing governance effectiveness and responsiveness.

Besides, the endorsement of women for MCE and DCE positions by political parties can have ripple effects beyond individual appointments. It can catalyse broader societal shifts in attitudes towards women's leadership and participation in politics. As more women occupy leadership positions at the local level, it sets a precedent for their increased representation in higher levels of government and reinforces the notion that women have a rightful place in positions of authority and influence.



CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This section captures the summary of the findings, conclusions, and recommendation of some key strategies to promote women's participation and representation in local government to address the persistent low involvement of women in local politics.

5.1 Summary of findings

This section presents the key findings of the study based on the research objectives. The study aimed to examine the trend and extent of women's participation and representation in local government within Yilo Krobo and Ga East Municipalities from 2009 to 2021, investigate the factors contributing to low female participation and representation, and identify the role of political parties and assembly authorities in promoting women's involvement in local governance.

The first objective sought to examine the trend and extent of women's participation and representation in local government within Yilo Krobo and Ga East Municipalities. The study revealed fluctuating trends in voter registration and participation. In Yilo Krobo Municipality, there was an initial female majority in 2010 (55%) among registered voters, which declined in 2015 (41%) but increased again in 2019 (54%). In Ga East Municipality, the number of female voters was slightly higher in 2010 (51%) but declined in 2015, with males becoming the majority. By 2019, male voters (51.5%) still outnumbered females. These trends indicate a lack of consistency in female voter participation across different election years. In terms of voter turnout, female participation fluctuated in Yilo Krobo, with a drop from 55% in 2010 to 45% in 2015, before slightly rising to 54% in 2019. Meanwhile, in Ga East, female voter participation remained below male participation across the years, standing at 44% in 2010 and 2015, with a slight increase to 48% in 2019. Regarding candidate representation, the findings indicate a

persistent gender gap in district assembly elections. In Yilo Krobo, female candidates were consistently underrepresented, with only 6% (7 out of 123) in 2010, 2% (3 out of 123) in 2015, and 2% (2 out of 123) in 2019. Ga East Municipality also displayed a fluctuating but still low representation of female candidates, with 15% (10 out of 68) in 2010, a decline to 3% (1 out of 36) in 2015, and a rebound to 15% (10 out of 68) in 2019. These figures highlight a significant gender disparity in political participation at the local government level.

The second objective was to investigate the factors contributing to the low participation and representation of women in local government. The study found that multiple factors accounted for this trend, including socio-cultural norms that discourage female political engagement, limited access to financial resources needed for campaigning, inadequate voter education targeting women, and institutional barriers within political structures that favor male candidates. Furthermore, traditional gender roles, household responsibilities, and perceived biases in leadership selection processes further discouraged women's participation.

The final objective focused on identifying the contributions of political parties and assembly authorities in promoting women's participation and representation in local government. The study revealed that while some political parties have attempted to encourage female participation through affirmative action policies and capacity-building initiatives, these efforts have been largely inadequate. Many parties still lack concrete strategies to actively recruit and support female candidates. Similarly, assembly authorities have made limited interventions in creating an enabling environment for women, with little enforcement of gender-sensitive policies or initiatives aimed at reducing systemic barriers for female aspirants.

In conclusion, the study highlights the persistent gender imbalance in voter participation and candidate representation in Yilo Krobo and Ga East Municipalities. Despite some fluctuations in voter registration trends, female candidates remain significantly underrepresented in district assembly elections.

Structural, socio-cultural, and economic barriers continue to hinder women's political participation, while political parties and assembly authorities have not made sufficient efforts to address these challenges. These findings stresses the need for targeted policy interventions to improve gender parity in local governance.

5.2 Conclusion

A major factor that was discovered as impeding women's participation and representation in local government was financial constraints. Women in these areas face financial challenges, often due to lower income from jobs, especially in agriculture. This makes it hard for them to afford the costs of political campaigns, limiting their political involvement.

Again, the research found that women in both municipalities have lower education levels compared to men. As a result of this, female candidates often face challenges in elections. People generally believe that political and public roles need candidates with strong academic abilities. This belief makes it harder for women with lower education to succeed in politics and public roles.

Moreover, the consistent preference for male candidates contributed to the low representation of women in local government. Despite higher female voter turnout, women candidates struggle to win elections, largely due to the persistent belief that men are more suitable for leadership positions, embedded in traditional gender roles and stereotypes.

Furthermore, the lack of spousal support was found to be a crucial cause of women's low representation in local government. Women still shoulder most household responsibilities, making it tough for them to engage in politics. Some male partners may resist their wives' involvement due to traditional gender expectations, leading to less support for their political ambitions.

Additionally, the study discovered that women's lack of confidence played a big role in their

limited involvement in local government. Because of lower education levels, women often feel less sure of themselves, which makes them less likely to take part in politics, even though they actively help political parties during campaigns.

Lastly, the study revealed that women's reproductive roles, including pregnancy and childcare, interrupt their careers, making it challenging to commit to political life. Traditional stereotypes about women's emotional nature also hinder their credibility as political leaders.

The study highlights significant contributions made by local government authorities and political parties in promoting women's participation and representation in local politics. The study discovered that local government authorities know about stereotypes against women in politics. In an attempt to erode the prejudice against women, local authorities undertake educational programs and awareness campaigns that promotes respect and equality for both genders. They partner with notable institutions like the National Commission for Civic Education (N.C.C.E) to sensitize the general public with the aim to change how people think about women in politics. The local authorities also hinted that sometimes they hold seminars to talk about why having equal numbers of men and women in leadership is important.

Although local governments cannot directly control district assembly elections, they still play a role. They appoint women to different assembly sub-committees to help improve their political skills. This way, women's perspectives are heard during discussions, even if they are not directly involved in the elections. This approach shows the importance of having both men and women involved in making decisions, making sure everyone's voices are heard in local government. These appointments also inspire other women who want to pursue careers in politics.

The study also found that political parties help women who want to be leaders by giving them mentorship programs. These programs offer advice, help, and ways to deal with the special

problems women face in politics. Also, the parties arrange seminars and workshops where women can meet important people and get chances for important political jobs which prepares them for higher public life.

Again, the political parties, in this case, the NPP and NDC, work to increase the number of women in politics by advocating for quota systems and affirmative action programs. They all claimed to support quota systems and policies that give women more chances to be in politics. These efforts try to set aside seats or make sure women are treated the same way as men when choosing people for political jobs. However, how well these efforts work depends on how serious each party is about making these changes.

Based on the current structure of local government, the central government or the ruling political party has the authority to appoint the Municipal and District Chief Executives. The political parties use this chance to appoint more women because there are not many women in local government, mainly because of cultural and systemic obstacles. How much political parties care about gender equality in politics can be seen in who they choose for these positions.

5.3 Recommendations

One of the effective ways to promote and enhance women's participation and representation in local government is to provide financial support to female candidates. To this effect, it is imperative to introduce and implement financial support initiatives or funds specially designed to help women candidates in financing their political campaigns. These initiatives could offer subsidies or grants to alleviate the financial burden on aspiring female leaders. Subsidies could involve partial or full coverage of certain campaign expenses, like advertising costs, campaign materials, or event organizing. Grants could provide direct financial assistance to cover a portion of campaign related expenses. The goal is to level the playing field and reduce the financial barriers

that disproportionately affect women, enabling them to compete on an equal footing with male candidates.

Another crucial way to enhance the participation and representation of women in local government is to enhance their educational level. The academic qualification and skills of women can be improved through the provision of scholarships, grants, and sponsorship programs for the attainment of higher education such as degrees, diplomas, or certifications in fields related to governance, law, public administration, or political science. Also, political parties and local government authorities can offer certificate courses or workshops aimed to develop specific skills relevant to political participation and representation, such as public speaking, leadership, policy analysis, community organizing, and advocacy.

Moreover, women's participation and representation in local government can be enhanced through intensive campaign against unfavorable gender stereotypes that fight against women's chances in political areas. I suggest that N.C.C.E partner with the Ministry of Education to institute programs at the basic and second-cycle education levels that aims at promoting gender balance and equality. Again, local government can partner with international organizations like UN Women and other bodies to embark on local campaign programs to eliminate gender-based biases that hinders women's chances in the political domain.

Furthermore, while Ghanaian political parties have voiced support for policies like quota systems and affirmative actions, there has been a lack of intentional effort to fully enforce them in mainstream politics, especially at the district level. There's a critical need for deliberate action to implement these policies effectively. Specifically, there should be intentional efforts to enforce quota systems and affirmative action policies aimed at boosting women's involvement in local government and national politics. This proactive approach is essential to ensure tangible progress

towards greater gender representation in Ghana's political landscape.



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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR FGD

Interview guide for Focus Group Discussions

Demographic Background:

1. Age:
2. Education level:
3. Occupation:
4. Marital status:
5. Number of children (if applicable):

Political Involvement:

1. How do you perceive the level of women's participation in local politics in your community?
2. What factors do you think contribute to women registering to vote in local elections?
3. What motivates women to actually cast their votes in local elections? Are there any barriers that might prevent them from voting?
4. In your opinion, what encourages women to stand for local elections?
5. What challenges or obstacles might deter women from considering a role as a candidate in local elections?
6. Can you share your thoughts on the factors that influence women's chances of being elected to local government positions?

Personal Experiences:

1. Have you personally registered to vote in local elections? If yes, what motivated you to do so? And if no, why?

2. Have you voted in local elections? If yes, could you tell me why you participated in the electoral process? If no, can you explain why?

3. Have you ever considered standing for a local election? If yes, what factors influenced your decision? And if no, why?

Community and Society:

1. How do you perceive the role of community and societal norms in influencing women's political participation?

2. Are there any initiatives or programs in your community that encourage women's involvement in local politics?

Suggestions:

1. What changes or improvements do you believe are necessary to enhance women's political participation and representation in local government?



APPENDIX B

Interview guide for Key Informant Interviews

Background Information

1. Name
2. Position
3. Experience in politics

Perceptions of Women's Participation

1. How would you describe the current political landscape concerning women's participation in Ghana?

Barriers and Challenges

1. Could you highlight the key barriers that hinder women's active involvement in political leadership roles?
2. Are there societal, cultural, or institutional challenges specifically impacting women's entry and sustainability in politics?

Policy and Institutional Perspectives

1. What policies or institutional frameworks exist or are lacking that could enhance women's participation in politics?
2. How effective have past policies or initiatives been in addressing gender disparities in political involvement?

Interview guide for Key Interviews B

Section 1: General Background

1. Can you provide an overview of your role within the local government or political party and your involvement in initiatives related to women's participation in local politics?
2. From your perspective, what are the main challenges faced by women in participating in local government or politics?

Section 2: Role of Political Parties

1. How does your political party encourage the participation of women in local politics or local government?
2. What specific strategies or programs has your political party implemented to support and promote women candidates in local elections?

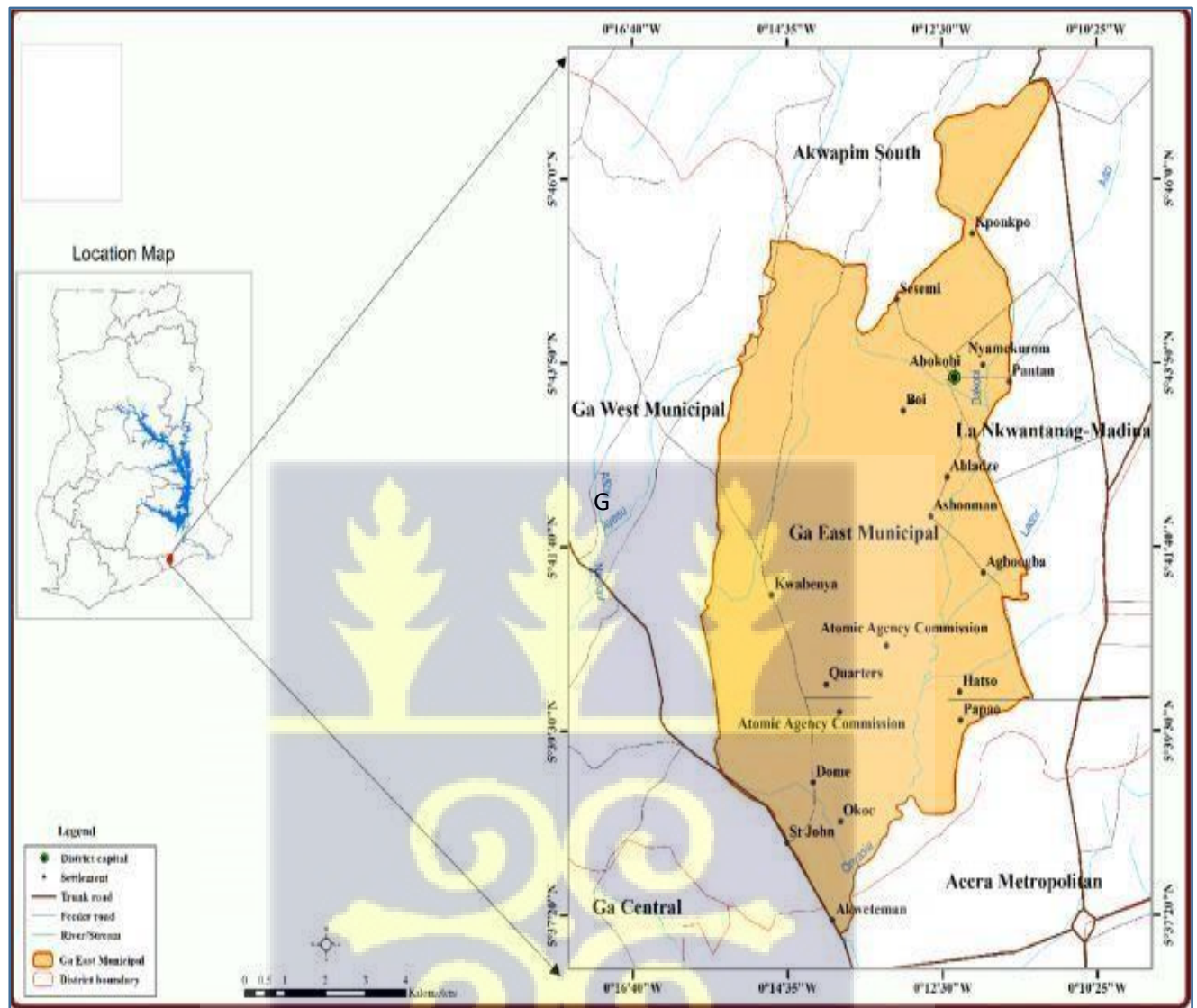
Section 3: Local Government Initiatives

1. In what ways has the local government supported or facilitated the involvement of women in local governance or political decision-making?
2. Are there any policies or measures implemented by the local government aimed at enhancing women's representation in local government? Could you provide examples?
3. Have there been collaborations or partnerships between the local government and political parties to promote women's participation in local politics? If so, what have they achieved?



MAPS

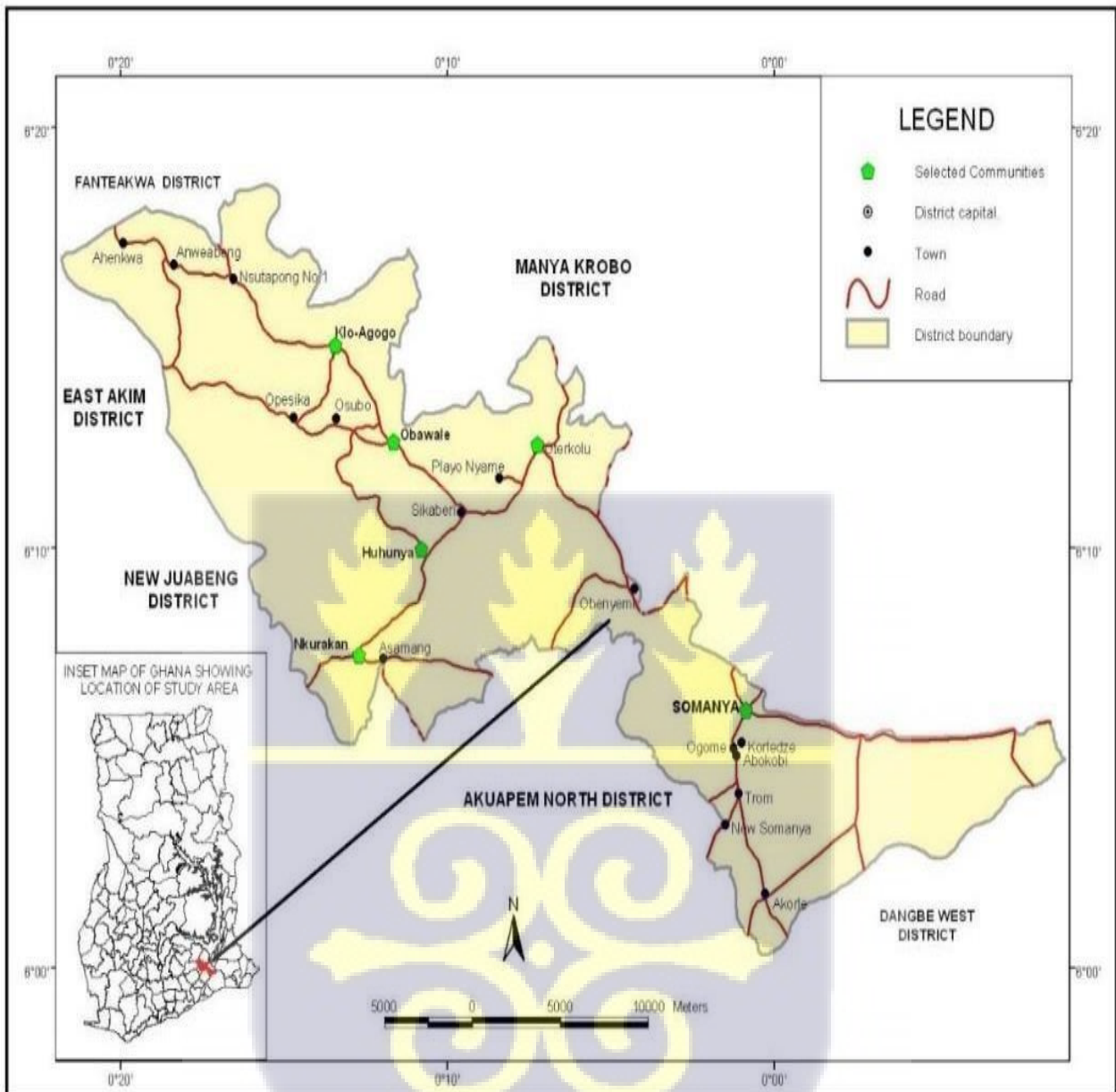
Map of Ga East Municipality



Source: Ga East Municipal Assembly



Map of Yilo Krobo



Source: Yilo Krobo Municipal Assembly