

**ASSESSING THE COMPREHENSIVENESS OF COMMUNITY
PARTICIPATION IN THE PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION OF
DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS. A CASE OF THE WOMEN AND CHILDREN'S WARD
(WCW) FACILITY IN ABOKOBI, GHANA.**



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DECLARATION

I, hereby declare that with the exception of appropriately acknowledged work from relevant secondary sources, this dissertation, **“ASSESSING THE COMPREHENSIVENESS OF COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN THE PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS. A CASE OF THE WOMEN AND CHILDREN’S WARD (WCW) FACILITY IN ABOKOBI, GHANA,** emanated from my active fieldwork/research carried out in the study location under the supervision of **Dr. Kofi Takyi Asante** and that the dissertation has not been presented elsewhere for the award of a degree whatsoever.

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(Supervisor)

DEDICATION

I wholeheartedly dedicate this research work to my adorable mother, **Hajia Sukeina Ibrahim.**

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Initial appreciation and gratefulness go to the almighty God for guiding and sustaining my life throughout this rigorous period of studies.

Special mention to my supervisor, Dr. Kofi Takyi Asante. I am humbled by your patience and unwavering support during this research. Thank you for your insightful reviews and most importantly for your support through the course of this research. The zeal and ambition you inspired in me will never burn out.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

GEMA	Ga East Municipal Assembly
MTDP	Medium Term Development Plan
CBO	Community Based Organization
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
MMDA	Metropolitan Municipal and District Assembly
PRA	Participatory Rural Appraisal
PAR	Participatory Action Research
NDPC	National Development Planning Commission
DESP	District Education Strategic Planning
IAP2	International Association of Public Participation
BHN	Basic Human Needs
USAID	United State Agency for International Development
LI	Legislative Instrument
WCWP	Women and Children's Ward Project
GPRTU	Ghana Private Road Transport Union
ADP	African Development Partners
PD	Peoples Dialogue
RCC	Regional Coordinating Council
SEPA	Social Expenditure and Public Accountability

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FIGURE 1	Arnstein Ladder of Participation
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ABSTRACT

Community development projects requires the use of participatory approaches in the formulation of plans to reflect the needs and aspiration of the people. Participatory development perceives local people as experts within their own circumstances, thus highlighting the need to draw on their strengths and indigenous capabilities. Active participation ensures that the beneficiaries of the development project are empowered to become actively involved in all stages of a project cycle.

The nine-month long (October 2018 to July 2019) study, took place in Abokobi in the Ga east municipality and examined the pattern of community participation in development project in the Abokobi municipality. Using a qualitative research approach, the study investigated the roles handed to different category of community members through in-depth interviews conducted amongst twenty-two (22) respondents in order to analyze the comprehensiveness of community participation within the study location. The study also examines some factors that hinder or enhance the involvement of community members or beneficiaries in the development process of the Municipality. The study found that there was active engagement of people at the initial stages of project execution by the Assembly. However active engagement of community members reduced as the project progressed to the implementation stage. The study also found that grassroots mobilization and the formation of community organizations were key social factors that enhanced the participation of people in the development process because the Assembly found it convenient engaging community organized groups. The study also found that the assembly uses incentivization and community sensitization as a strategy to raise awareness and encourage community members to attend meetings. The study therefore concludes that the Assembly continuously uses this strategy because the community members themselves condones it and sees it as a pre-requisite for their involvement in town hall meetings.

The study also concludes, that the low pace at which the Assembly attends to the developmental needs of the people was a disincentive for community participation. The study recommends that the assembly establishes an effective channel of information transfer between the community and the assembly to enhance share of knowledge and information towards successful community project planning. The study also recommends the deepening of education and sensitization programs to educate the people on the need for their participation and the influence they wield over their own projects.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

The focus of development has progressed beyond physical infrastructure to improving the quality of human livelihoods in terms of life expectancy, education, per capita income of individuals, access to basic needs etc. (Chukwuma, 2018). Effort by governments or development partners to improve the livelihoods of people, thereby satisfying the motive of development is largely done through projects, programs and in most cases policies. These projects or initiatives should reflect the views and aspirations of the beneficiaries for whom they are implemented (Cohen, 1980). The study thus, seek to assess the extent to which the community participate in the execution of projects and initiatives that ultimately improve their wellbeing.

Participation can basically be seen as the engagement of individuals and groups in initiatives that aim to find solutions to address problems that impede their wellbeing (Harvey, 2002). Harvey, (2002) again posits that, people cannot be forced to participate in projects or initiatives but should be given the opportunity if need be. Participation is therefore seen as a right which should be freely exercised by individuals and communities.

A community project could be any initiative undertaken for the purposes of supporting livelihoods of the community (May-Hanley, 2012). This encapsulates a broader range of different forms of interventions within a community. The involvement of those affected by the community project in its activities is considered as very imperative due to its tendency to build a huge sense of proprietorship and commitment among the community members towards the projects.

The ambitions for community participation will depend on what role the community is expected to play in the project (Quick, 2008). Genuine participation requires participants to play active roles that influences developmental plans to achieve effectiveness and the best possible outcome rather than passive engagement of people merely to legitimize and give credence to the process.

After more than forty years of providing development aid to developing countries, most donor agencies started to raise concerns about the sustainability of developmental initiatives and benefits achieved after the withdrawal of foreign assistance (Miller et al, 2017). This then called for the need to strengthen participation as it is seen as a necessary tool to properly identify community needs and generate objectives that will lead to the implementation of acceptable initiatives which will be appropriately utilized and owned by the community thereby guaranteeing the success of the initiative. Community members must feel the need to own the project, it is only out of ownership of developmental initiatives that they will be compelled to protect and ensure the safety and utilization of the project (Takyi, 2014). If a project is not understood, adopted or appreciated by the beneficiaries the effectiveness and adequate utilization of the project can be challenged (Hoverman et al, 2011).

In Ghana some efforts have been made towards advancing community participation in the development process over the years. Ghana started the enactment of a comprehensive policy initiative to decentralize the system of governance through the Local Government Act. Decentralization is essential as it ensures equitable distribution of resources and the advancement of local involvement in the developmental process (Crook & Manor, 2000). Ghana, and like most African countries moved away from the global top-down approach to development to a bottom-up approach that gives local authorities the opportunity and powers to take complete control of the

developmental process of their localities. The local government system of Ghana is streamlined to engender public participation and involve beneficiaries of development project throughout the necessary stages of project planning and implementation. Community participation is an essential component of decentralization. By the advent of decentralization and the use of better participatory practices, it is expected that Government and local authorities will understand community needs and aspirations so as to carve development plans that reflects the ordeals of communities. Strengthening the participatory process through decentralization will mean that community members will also have better opportunities to play relevant roles in the governance and development process. The study will then seek to appreciate how well community participation embedded in our decentralization process has been embarked on in the Local Assembly's quest to coordinate development within the Ga East municipality.

1.1.1 A Review of a Detailed Planning Process Towards the Adoption of Medium-Term Development Plan in the Study Area (Ga East Municipality)

In consonance with the national development agenda, a Municipal Medium-Term Development Plan (MTDP) was prepared to ensure the efficient and effective development of the Municipality. As indicated by the Planning Officer, The Municipal Planning Coordinating Unit (MPCU) of the Ga East Municipal Assembly took into consideration the needs and aspirations of the people in designing the Municipal Medium-Term Development Plan for the period (2018-2021). The Municipal Assembly, by the adoption of the MTDP, addresses the concerns of the poor in society. The preparation of the MTDP was based on the guidelines provided by the National Development Planning Commission (NDPC).

In preparing the 2018-2021 plan, a number of meetings with the Decentralized Heads of Department of the Ga East Municipal Assembly was held regarding the profile of the Municipality and a review of the targets set for the previous MTDP and achievement levels. This forms part of the performance review of the previous plan (2014-2017) MTDP, including review of the Municipal Profile. The meetings introduced officers to the concepts of the plan preparation, project implementation as well as monitoring and evaluation. At the end of each meeting, materials and handouts to guide the preparation of the plans were provided. All the meetings were facilitated by the Planning Unit of the Assembly.

The bottom-up approach in participatory planning process is said to have been used to ensure the involvement of the people from various walks of life within the municipality. This was to enable relevant contributions from people and ultimately guarantee their ownership the Medium-Term Plan (2018-2021). Fora were organized in all the two Zonal Councils. During these sessions, the community members were assisted to identify key problems and prioritized them. Major strategic stakeholders like Traditional Authorities, Civil Society Organization (CSOs), Farm/Farmers Base Organizations (FBOs), cooperative groups, Transport Unions, Sector Departments and other strategic partners including persons with disabilities, etc. Participated in this all-important exercise. To deepen the participatory process further, public hearings were held at the Zonal Councils in the Municipality after which prioritized needs were derived.

The Planning Team also had interactions with relevant Heads of Departments and some key development partners such as Accra Brewery Company, Phytobacteria Pharmaceutical Ltd and Ghana Atomic Energy all located within the Municipality. Similar ones were held with agencies namely; Ghana Water Company Limited, Electricity Company of Ghana, Police Service, Ghana National Fire Service, Commercial Banks and the Wisconsin University. This was to enable the

team know their plans for the Municipality within the planning period in order that effective projections would be made.

1.2 Problem Statement

Community participation has dominated the discourse in terms of development project sustainability. Research all over the world has shown how community participation or user involvement affects development project success or failure (Reeves, 2015). Community participation does not only ensure project sustainability, but also provide a bases for the execution of development initiatives that reflects the needs of the wider community. Participation also provides a wider and general response that calls for the empowerment and self-reliance of communities (Gaventa, 2006).

Harvey (2002) posits that most rural communities are still deprived in terms of their accessibility to basic social amenities and development initiatives necessary to improve their livelihoods and lift them out of poverty, even though they have continuously participated in the development process. In some cases, executed development initiative do not meet the expected community ownership and utilization even though the people were said to have “participated” in the process. This calls for an investigation into the comprehensiveness of the participatory approaches adopted by development agencies like the Ga East municipal Assembly. What is referred to as a desired participation is one that offers people the chance to take part in decisions regarding social, economic and political processes of their community (Arnstein, 1969).

Mayo (2015) stated that inadequate community participation in the execution of projects is largely a result of some improper approaches used by project managers as well as inadequate flow of information between lead implementors and community members. The sustainability of

development initiatives is largely dependent on its ability to guarantee the right proportion of satisfaction over a long period of time after the external implementors have exited the project location (US Agency for International Development, 1988). Sustainability is therefore threatened when community members do not prioritize or utilize developmental initiatives executed in response to their felt needs (Mayo 2015).

The benefits of participation are obtained if community members and project implementors engage in information sharing as well as the formulation and execution of plans takes into consideration the opinions of ordinary community members. This observation stresses on the need for thorough engagement of all stakeholders within the community in the planning, implementation and ultimately the evaluation of projects. Participation has been widely hailed by researchers, as it is now almost reactionary to recommend a development strategy which is not participatory (Oakley, 1991). Oakley (1991) further contends that participation is a precondition for projects success, and without the involvement of the grassroots community members, development projects may not meet the anticipated ownership and utilization needed for its success. The assertion by Oakley and a few other researchers provokes the need to examine the participatory approach adopted by entities undertaking developmental initiatives within our communities and to analyze participation in terms of roles, coverage and goal. Analyzing participation in that regard will aid in a deeper appreciation of participation not only in its normative form, but also its practice in the Ga East Municipality (GEMA). More so, the overwhelming endorsement of the application of participatory approaches by development agencies, individual change agents and particularly governments in Africa calls for a study into how individuals participate, the roles and responsibilities handed to them as well as the stages in the project life cycle they participate more or less.

1.3 Research objectives

Main research objective

- To assess the extent to which project beneficiaries participated in the execution of community project and initiatives (WCW Project).

Specific Research Objectives

1. To examine the roles beneficiaries (community members) played in the planning and implementation stages of the project life cycle.
2. To examine the factors that influenced the participation of beneficiaries in the project.
3. To assess the strategies employed by project implementors to enhance participation.

1.4 Research Questions

Main research question

- To what extent do project beneficiaries participate in the execution of community projects and initiatives

Specific research questions

1. What roles did beneficiaries (community members) play in the planning and implementation stages of the project life cycle?
2. What factors influenced the participation of beneficiaries in the project
3. What strategies were employed by the project implementors (Assembly) to enhance participation?

1.5 Relevance of The Study

The central objective of this research is to examine the intensity and dynamics of participation in the planning and implementation of developmental projects and initiatives within the Ga East Municipality. In doing this, the study will explore the dynamics of power and its corresponding influences on participation at the local levels of governance. The study investigated the ease with which community members participate in development projects, as well as analyze the factors that impedes or enhance participation. Outcomes of this study will aid the understanding of local authorities and Non-Governmental Organizations to the perceptions of participation as well as factors within their own setup which impedes participatory development.

1.6 Organization of Work

The research study is organized and presented in five chapters. Chapter One (1) is the introduction to the study. It provides background to the study and the problem statement. It further outlines the research objectives as well as the relevance of the study. Chapter Two reviews relevant literature in the field of community participation and involvement in developmental process out of which a theoretical and conceptual framework is developed and presented. Chapter Three discusses the methodology adopted by the study. It looks at the research design, sources and methods of data collection, data management and analysis, the method of data analysis used and ethical consideration in the study. The second part of the methodology discuss the profile of the study area. Chapter Four provides an analysis and discussion of the findings of the study. Chapter Five concludes the study. It presents the research findings, conclusions and recommendations.

CHAPTER TWO (2)

REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews relevant literature on the need for participation and the common factors that influence the success or failure of participation. It also discusses the ways active players within the space can work to overcome the bottlenecks that impedes participation. The theoretical and conceptual frameworks are later discussed in the concluding parts of this chapter.

2.2 Definitions and Dimensions of Participation

This study places emphasis on participation, hence the need for an extensive discussion on participation. The concept of participation has been consistently linked to the fundamental rights of the individuals as well as to democratic governance (Valderrama, 1993). There are divergent views by various scholars and development practitioners regarding the one specific definition to the concept called participation or beneficiary participation.

Parker (2003) defines citizen participation as a process which creates the avenue for every individual regardless their social standing to take part and contribute meaningfully to public decisions and has always been a critical aspect of the democratic decision-making process. Roger Hart (1995) views participation as an all-inclusive decision-making process aimed at drawing conclusions that affects the livelihood of individuals and by extension, the community. this definition faintly highlights the point where it is necessary for individuals and communities to participate in the social change process. Implying the need for the involvement of community

members in any decision making that influences their day to day living and as well, stresses the need for beneficiary participation at the relevant stages of the project life cycle.

Participation is seen as a basic human right, It is the right of every individual to willingly take part in activities that seeks to influence their wellbeing and that which occurs in the community they belong (Valderrama, 1993). It is one thing to recognize participation as a right and another to ensure its affective application. Valderrama holds the view that Participation generally has not been effectively applied and therefore informs the mindset of people to participate or not participate in developmental activities.

Cornwall (2008) defines Participation in very basic terms, as the involvement of potential beneficiaries and interest groups of an initiative in all the processes leading to the realization of the initiative. Cornwall however adds that not all potential individual players in the society adhere to the tenets and practice of participation. Project implementors have had to bear the blame in most cases when participation turns out not to be all inclusive, but the spirit of self-exclusion informed by the individuals' ideologies and mindset could also inhibit their interest in participating in the development process.

Oakley (1991) citing Paul (1987) indicates that Community participation is a deliberate effort aimed at enhancing the active involvement of community stakeholders in order to compliment and influence the direction of development projects with the view to improving the wellbeing of community members. The idea of participation is embedded in the organizational effort towards increasing the control of resource and regulative institutions in certain social situations.

Valderrama (1993) identified four linking dimensions of participation. These concepts have existed largely in the development context and has helped to explain some dynamics of participation. These concepts include, Social and Project Participation, Political Participation, Participatory Methods and Citizen Participation. They are discussed below.

In recent times the idea of participation has largely revolved around development initiatives and projects giving rise to the concept of Social and Project Participation (Valderrama 1993). The recognition of participation within this context is to serve as a means to strengthen the relevance of these projects and as well ensure that it is rightly owned by the beneficiaries as this may have the potential of guaranteeing sustainability. World Bank (1995) defines participation as process through which stakeholders influence and share control over development initiatives and the decisions and resources which affect them. This perspective of the World Bank on what constitutes participation therefore suggest that beneficiaries of projects should take the center stage of consultation in all graduating levels of the executions of projects. It does not matter who funds the projects, participation within these projects should have the sole aim of encouraging beneficiaries to involve themselves in the developmental process.

According to Valderrama (1993) The concept of political participation involves the interactions of individual or organized groups with the State, and which often focus more on mechanisms of indirect participation (Valderrama, 1993). This form of participation may not directly involve the execution of projects but the involvement of citizens in the decision-making process which otherwise would have been the preserve of public representatives and officials. Central to this concept of participation is democracy where individuals are allowed the freedom to express their opinions over government decisions and also make legitimate moves to influence the process.

Valderrama (1993) developed the concept of Citizen Participation to examine a perspective of participation that establishes a link of participation in the political, community and social contexts. This concept also aims at offering new opportunities and strategies to share the methods of ensuring genuine participation across the different dimensional concepts. So that, for instance, those who have constantly promoted Participatory Planning and encouraged development practitioners to incorporate it into their plans can as well obtain knowledge on advocacy or human rights education. This perspective also aids those who have developed participatory methods for consultation, planning and monitoring are able to link them to the new governance agenda.

Valderrama (1993) introduced the concept of participatory methods to help explain the fact that the observed concepts of participation will require different methods in order to achieve their primary goal of strengthening and enhancing participation. Given that the various concepts might have their distinct complexities, that will automatically account for the variation in the methods aimed at achieving their purpose. For instance, a concept like Political Participation will require methods like voter education, enhancing the awareness of rights and responsibilities of citizens, lobbying and advocacy ultimately aimed at equipping the individual electorate or citizen with the needed information to make meaningful contributions to the national discourse and also rightly hold their leaders strictly accountable for their actions. However, in the concept of Social and Project Participation, there have been known approaches and methods such as the Participatory Rural Appraisal tools adopted by development agents to ensure inclusion in the project life cycle.

2.3 Levels of Participation

Theories of participation have largely aimed at moving from the global top-down approach where crucial decisions of development were imposed on beneficiaries to a more grassroots centered approach that seeks to harness the views and opinions of people in the process of development. There has been an appreciable number of theories specifically propounded to explain the levels and dynamics of participation. For the purposes of this study, three (3) theories that explain the levels of participation would be discussed. They include the Arnstein (1969) ladder of participation, International Association of Public Participation (IAP2's) Spectrum and the Sarah White Typology of Participation.

2.3.1 Arnstein Ladder of Participation

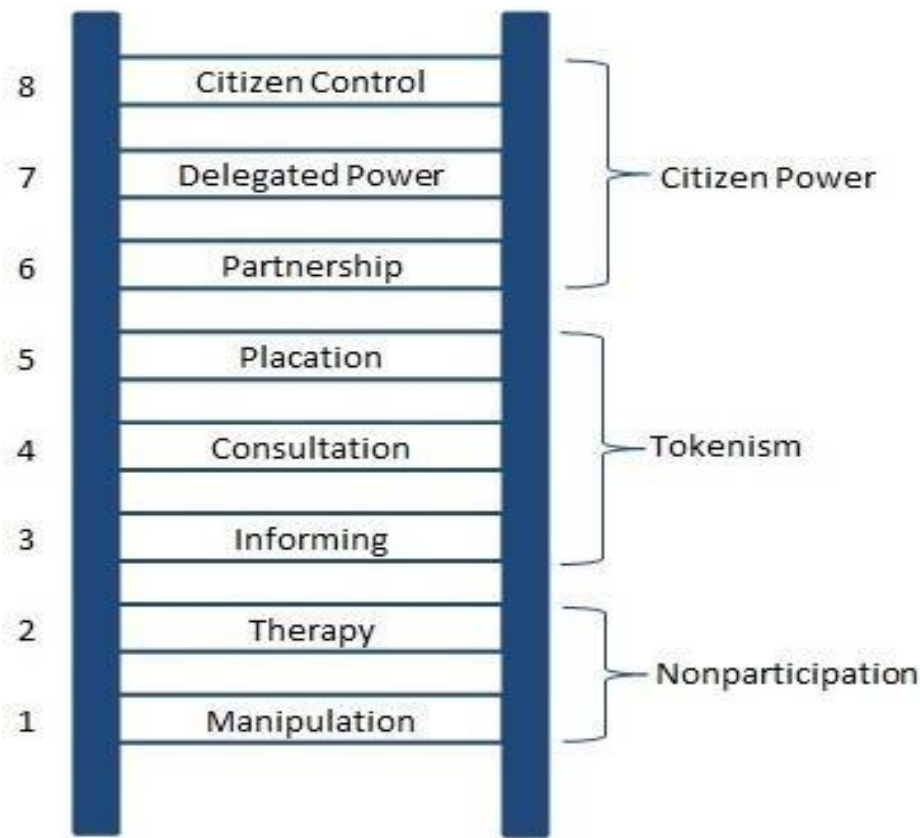
Arnstein (1969) indicated eight levels of participation in her study. These levels include manipulation, therapy, informing, consultation, placation, partnership, delegated power and finally citizen control. Arnstein's framework described Manipulation and therapy as non-participation, implying that those implementors who undertake this form of participation are not true to the ultimate aim of participation, that is, to empower beneficiaries. Manipulation involves influencing the public and gaining support for projects and initiatives through the use of propaganda. Therapy also assumes that the public is incapable of decision-making and those in power subject citizens to paternalistic education exercises, or clinical group therapy, as a form of enlightenment.

As indicated in figure 1 below, Levels three, four, and five representing the middle levels (informing, consulting and placation), are the levels of tokenism. At these levels Arnstein suggest that the less privileged are fed with the needed information about the project and their voices also given the needed attention. But they (people) may not have the power to compel implementors practicalize their opinions in the implementation stage. At this rung, information flows from the

project implementors to the citizens with “no channel provided for feedback and no opportunity for negotiations. Consultation, the fourth rung on the ladder, provides for a two-way flow of information through meetings, hearings, and surveys. However, the public input gathered throughout this process is rarely considered. Placation is the final level of tokenism and here, citizens begin to gain influence decisions through boards or committees, but they can still be outnumbered or overruled, particularly when their opinions are in conflict with the perspective of professional project planners.

Further up the ladder are levels of partnership, delegated power and citizen power, with increasing levels of the opinions of beneficiaries dominating the process. At these levels, individuals can negotiate and engage in trade-offs with implementing authorities. Ultimately at the topmost level, that is, delegated power and citizen control, the less privileged turn to dominate the planning and implementation of initiatives as their rights to the process become visible. This, as described by Arnstein is the most satisfying level of participation. The public or less privileged and the implementors are considered equals and collectively reach solutions to problems. Expectedly, at this level, beneficiaries put together some initiatives aimed at inducing change and have an appreciable level of ownership over decision brought down to them. Below is a diagram indicating the various rungs of Arnstein ladder of participation.

Fig 1: Arnstein Ladder of Participation



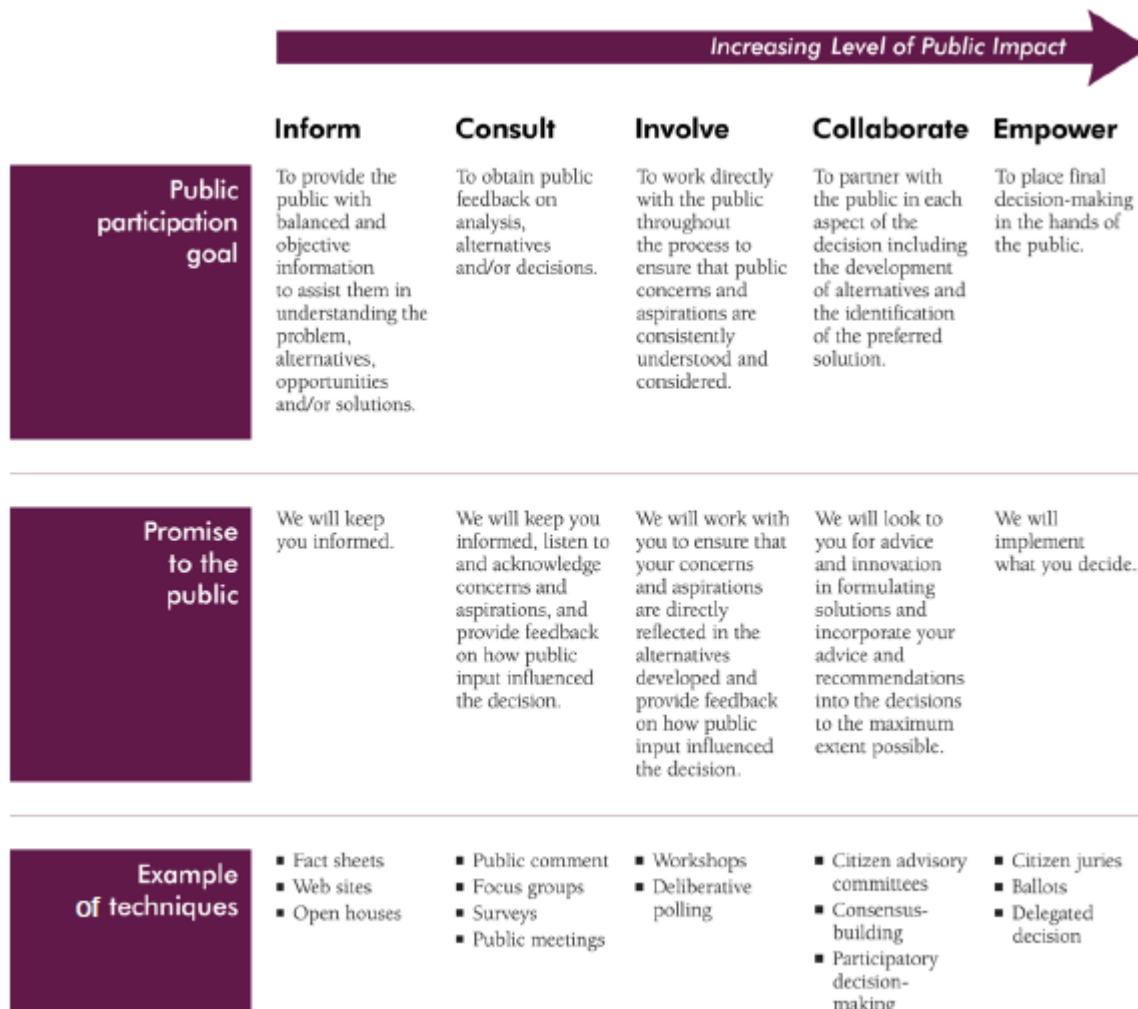
Source: Arnstein (1969)

2.3.2 IAP2- Spectrum of Public Participation

The Public Participation Spectrum was designed by the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) in 2007 to aid change agents in the identification of the various degrees of participation that explains the practical role of the ordinary individuals who are affected by community engagement programs or relevant decision about the community. The Spectrum demonstrates that the different degrees of participation are valid considering the goals, allotted time, resources and variations and degrees of interest in the decision to be made. The introduction

of the IAP2 spectrum of public participation only considered five main rungs. i.e. inform, consult, involve, collaborate and empower. From the IAP2 model it is observed that the lowest rung or the lowest form of participation is to inform the community members of problems, policy decisions and various levels of advancements in decision making. The model acknowledges a lack of real participation at this point. Consultation which is a key feature in the IAP2 model comes with an objective of obtaining relevant responses from the community members in order to incorporate into the decision-making process. The third level of the IAP2 spectrum is to involve beneficiaries in the policy making process. At this level, policy makers or change agents decide to work hand in hand with beneficiaries and keep them up to date with all happenings in the developmental process. Collaboration is the fourth level in the IAP2 spectrum. The change agents at this level adopts the public as teammates and work with them at every aspect of the decision-making process including coming up with alternatives and the preferred manner to solve the problem. Finally, the spectrum indicates empowerment as the highest level of participation. At this level the beneficiaries are placed in the driving wheels of the decision-making process and their views are said to be the most considered. Figure 2 elaborates the different degrees of participation by the International Association of public participation (IAP2).

Fig 2: IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation, (2011)



Source: IAP2 (2011)

2.3.3 Sarah White's Typology of Participation

White (1996) developed a typology of participation to focus mainly on the notion that the politics of participation is strongly grounded on tensions around actors, terms and power. White (1996) examined four levels of participation namely: Nominal, Instrumental, Representative and Transformative. According to White, Nominal participation does not demonstrate the commitment of the implementing agents to ensure the active involvement of people in the development or decision-making process. It only seeks to formalize the decision-making process since the

involvement of beneficiaries in this activity gives some level of credence to the process. Instrumental participation According to White (1996) is when participation serves as a cost to the local people but as a means of efficiency to project implementors and the project cycle. For instance, instead of an implementing agency spending an amount of 3,000GHC on inputs for the building of a toilet facility, the agency in an attempt to reduce cost may solicit help from community members to contribute towards the inputs. Contribution could come in the form of cash or personal inputs from community members. This will then cut down the actual cost that would have been borne by the implementing body.

With Representative participation, local people hear and their voices are heard in the decision-making process. Their views are considered in the character and nature of projects. From the implementors' perspective, this form of participation would do away with the risk of creating inappropriate and dependent projects and consequently guarantee sustainability. The idea of participation as empowerment is central to the transformative participation, and is premised on collective action and decision-making (White et al., 1996). White (1996) believes that being involved in considering options, making decisions, and taking collective action to erase injustice itself is transformative.

2.4 The Need for Participation (Benefits of Participation).

Participation is thought to have numerous benefits to the development process and the individuals involved. Mubita (2017) argues that proper participatory approaches teach people to help themselves by the methods and indigenous knowledge available to them as well as helping them generate their own agenda, and to assess and indicate their own aims and objectives. This therefore clearly demonstrates that participation makes use of the indigenous knowledge, experiences, skills and local resources in the planning and implementation of projects and programs. Participation

therefore helps individuals to build their own capacity and offer some form of a passive training for participants in their appreciation of the rudiments of self-development.

Sustainability is a common concern to many community development programs (Miller et al., 2017). Participation is therefore perceived to enhance the goal of sustainability of projects (Oakley, 1991). Sustainability of projects would refer to the ability of the project to exist for an extended period of time and be properly utilized by the people for whom it was initiated. The enhancement of sustainability depends largely on sensitizing the people on the need for proper utilization of development initiatives, and this can be done through participation. Because participation allows them to dominate processes of agenda setting, information gathering, organizing, analyzing and planning of developmental initiatives (Mubita et al., 2017). Participation will therefore enable the local people to view the developmental initiative as a community asset since they played a critical role in its planning and implementation thereby owning and properly utilizing for maximum benefits.

To further stress the need for participation, Oakley (1991) asserts, participation helps to break the mentality of dependency which characterizes much development work and as a result, promotes self-awareness and confidence and causes rural people to examine their problems and to think positively about solutions. Local people would therefore have a boost in their ability to depend on themselves and manage their own affairs effectively through the enhancement of their control and management of indigenous resource and capabilities as well as their involvement in all aspect of the project lifecycle.

Community participation promotes developmental initiatives and programs that address the specific needs and aspirations of the less advantaged folks in the society and that identifies well with the dynamics of the local community. Thus, participation is expected not only to improve the exchange of information among actors, but also to develop the bargaining power of the beneficiaries through involvement in project activities such as planning and decision making at all relevant levels. The involvement of people in the participatory process helps them to voice out their problems and the various impediments that hinder their livelihoods. These concerns when incorporated in the planning would inform accurate development plans that reflects the challenges faced by community members.

2.5 Factors Influencing Participation

Advocates for Participatory Development have over the years championed the need for its practice and how efficient its incorporation in developmental initiatives will yield better results in terms of sustainability and efficiency of development projects (Valderrama, 1993). However, the success or failure of participation is influenced by several factors. These factors could fall within broad sectors such as social, economic, political or individual factors.

A critical factor that inhibits participation at the lower levels of development is the skills and technical know-how of local people. Some developmental initiatives are highly technical and require a variety of sophisticated ideas and knowledge from participants in order to be able to make relevant inclusions that could change the process. The process of participation can be said to be graduating at various increasing levels (Arnstein, 1969). Informing the local people about the intention to undertake the initiatives in itself is a participatory approach. Participation can therefore graduate to other levels such as consultation, decision making, management, etc. Participatory

processes tend to be more complex and intensive at these graduating levels thereby requiring different varieties of skills, technical know-how, experience, leadership and managerial prowess (Valderrama, 1993). The issue of participatory skills as a hindrance to participation is not only on the part of the local people but also, some development implementors and local government officials lack the knowledge and skills to effectively apply participatory appraisal tools in the discharge of their duties. When the needed techniques of planning and firsthand experience of the dynamics of local people and leadership are not sufficient, this tends to stand in the way of proper and successful participation of the “have nots” in society (Crook, 2000). Development implementors or local officials should be equipped with the relevant skills and ability to understand what local needs are, so that when they develop technical proposals towards participation, it will be informed by these local needs (Valderrama, 1993).

Again, power factor as identified by Valderrama (1993) constitute the major factor that hinder participation. The central idea of citizen participation is power (Arnstein, 1969). The exercise of power is manifested at different levels and by different social actors during the engagement process between local people and authorities (Valderrama, 1993). It is therefore evident that the control and management of the participatory process lies in the hands of the authorities. They define the space, people to be included in the process, agendas for deliberations and specific procedures. The control of these powers by the authorities if not well managed to the satisfaction of the local people will pose a challenge for involvement. Mukandela (1998) found that, the decision on who to invite to take part in area meetings was greatly influenced by district government officers at higher levels of governmental administration, who invited people they deemed fit each time crucial decisions were to be taken. This practice then posed as a serious challenge in achieving appreciable levels of participation in area development committee meetings.

One other reason that accounts for the poor participation of women in development process and politics in particular has been the assumption that women are subordinate to men as a consequence of social and institutional discrimination (Bekele, 2000). There are some popular attitudes and perception about the inability of woman to take up the task of contributing meaningfully to the development process in certain social contexts. This perception has led to the discrimination against women in the decision-making process. Efforts have been made by gender activist to clear these perception and mainstream women into the development process. The emergence of the Gender and Development approach saw strong advocacy made against the exclusion of women in development. These approaches admonish the relevance of gender roles and relations in improving the livelihoods of women and the general society. Participation does not exist in a vacuum but in socio political contexts. The context in which participation exist plays some role in promoting it. Below are conditions relevant for the stimulation of participation.

The ability of local people to counter power relation and the imposition of opinions on them by outside implementors depends largely on their history of effective grassroots mobilization and the cohesion with which they confront community needs (Valderrama, 1993). When community members properly mobilize themselves to take up courses of action, outside agents will inadvertently consider their opinions because they are approaching the issue at hand with a unified front and some level headedness. Local government control and management of the participatory process may pose some hindrance on the ability of local people to demonstrate their creative, indigenous local decision making abilities because these restrictions might create friction between traditional and elected leaders (Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, 2002). Addae-Boahen (2007), observed that local government officials feel threatened by the empowerment of the local people who make up the local steering committee. The feeling of

intimidation by the local government officials prepares a favorable ground for friction to set in thereby retarding the participatory process and dwindling the enthusiasm of local members to participate. Furthermore the general idea of local empowerment does not often sit well with the elite mentality of local officials or outside implementors, the roots of this could well be traced as far back to the colonial past where the colonial elites or masters underestimated the ability of the rural folks to take up initiatives and work to attain self-development (Takyi et al., 2014).

Individual informed knowledge is an essential requirement in the developmental process as it determines the relevant contribution and influences of the individual in the development process. Participation is more effective and assiduous when potential participants readily have access to information and the capacity to make relevant submissions in the decision-making process. Proper participation in the development process requires individuals to be in a position to freely give informed opinions in deliberative meetings, in which all relevant information is provided, discussed and understood by the participating group.

2.6 Overcoming the Impediments and Enhancing Participation

The advancement of participation is considerably pursued, in many developing countries by diverse social actors, but the methods they use in achieving the aims participation vary in so many different ways (Kliksberg, 2000). Valderrama (1993) identifies some essential strategies and requirements necessary to overcome the overwhelming hindrance of participation and help development implementors and local people to achieve considerable levels of participation in the development process. These strategies are explained below.

The use of proper of participatory planning methodologies is a strategy that could help achieve maximum levels of participation (Valderrama, 1993). Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) and

Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA) tools are social science research techniques used in the field of participatory development. In designing approaches for participation, implementing agencies should do so through proper political and social analysis by incorporating community values and knowledge in their designs. This will mean the development implementors appreciate specific contextual conditions needed to guarantee maximum participation of the generality of community including the marginalized and minority groups (Mubita et al., 2017). In many instances, participatory planning methodologies, such as PRA, are being used, and NGOs and others who have these skills are being called upon by local governments authorities to provide such assistance. Participatory education efforts have not only focused on creating the awareness and building the capacity of local people, but it has also taken keen interest in developing the skills of officials of the local government sector and lead implementors of non-governmental organization in development (Valderrama, 1993). While it is important to empower local people to play key roles in the participatory process, efforts should also be made to equip development practitioners with the needed leadership experience to develop and undertake participatory approaches in the decision-making process and ultimately their developmental agendas. In Uganda and in Tanzania, for instance, large scale participatory poverty assessment projects have been used not only for helping to identify the priorities of the poor, and their perceptions of local governance, but also to strengthen capacity of local government staff in areas such as participatory planning (Valderrama 1993). The primary aim of this approach was to create an enabling environment for elected officials in local areas to engage the local people in a more participatory approach.

Again in overcoming the impediments of participation, Cornwall (2008) argues that it is imperative to properly situate efforts aimed at engaging communities and people in context if they have to succeed. Cornwall's assertion is formed on the bases of the fact that development organizations

and agencies operate in complex and diverse societal frameworks. The dynamics of societal existence will not be favorable for the use of a generic approach to engaging community members in the developmental process. This is based on the fact that societies are characterized by different social, political, and cultural systems (Mubita et al., 2017). In attempt to vindicate this view, Cornwall (2008) argues that, understanding these dynamics calls for an approach that consider participation as an inherently political process rather than a technique. It then becomes a responsibility on the part of development implementors to make deliberate efforts to assess the obstructions participation has got on the relations and dynamics of power in order to establish differences in power and interest, so that participatory approaches will be implemented without the risk of consolidating the power and dominance of the perceived higher class or advantaged groups and individuals within the society. The beneficiaries of projects must be given power and control to regulate developmental initiatives and as well, they must be put in strategic positions to negotiate conditions and be in charge of managerial aspects of development interventions (Arnstein, 1969).

Promoting the accountability of elected officials within the local government sector could be a drive to achieving greater participation in its proper form (Chukwuma, 2018). Whiles this may not be a direct participatory enhancement method which immediately addresses the challenge of participation in the decision making process at the local level, it focuses on ensuring and maintaining accountability of elected officials and government agencies to the citizenry (Valderrama, 1993). This action goes a long way to repose confidence in the local people regarding the developmental efforts of officials within the local levels of governance, thereby whipping up their interest to involve themselves in the developmental process since they know they are working with credible facilitators whose interest is in line with the general good of the society. Citing the

work of Blair (1998), Valderrama, (1993), indicates some traditional methods which have been used to ensure accountability at the local levels i.e. local elections, strong and active opposition parties, media, civil society and advocate groups, public meetings and formal redress procedures. A movement of non-governmental organizations whose primary focus has been on community engagement, capacity building and interactions are putting in greater efforts to examine various ways to strengthen these citizen monitoring committees as a bottom-up approach to development to insure accountability of elected officials and consequently enhance the participatory process (Valderrama, 1993).

2.7 The Project Planning Phase

Planning can be defined as the process of stating project objectives and then determining the most effective activities or accomplishments necessary to reach the objectives (Igwe, 2018). Thus, the planning process defines the activities, the time, cost targets and the performance milestones which aid in the successful achievement of the project objectives. The plan must indicate what materials, equipment, facilities, human resources and other resources that are necessary. Project planning is concerned with establishing a predetermined course of action within a forecasted environment. Planning involves decision making of choosing alternative courses of actions to accomplish the project set objectives. Banjoko (2009) remarks that project planning involves all managerial activities necessary in structuring a course of action.

In directing the intent of the project, the plan clearly identifies the project objectives, goals and any special influences or constraints on the project scope. Objectives are the end result of a project, whereas the goals are those desired operations, specifications or cost time relationship.

Perhaps one of the most daunting aspects of project planning is ensuring representativeness of the beneficiary community (Igwe, 2018), which is the main subject which was studied in this research.

This is largely because community mobilization requires knowledge and the right participatory skills necessary to facilitate effective planning meetings, large community fora, and public presentations. Community engagements are essential to the development of a project with broad grassroots support. A large part of guaranteeing community involvement will depend on how lead implementors utilize and develop the community process, or the way in which a community or organization involves its members in the decision-making process.

For effective and rigorous community project planning, the implementing agency should constantly be in touch with the community members at all material times throughout the planning process (Prokopy, 2005).

Properly facilitated meetings provide a great way to harness traditional, cultural, and local knowledge for project planning. They also serve as a means to receive community input on goals, objectives, and activities in order to determine ways to best prioritize them. Sometimes the community engaged in project planning is a subset of the overall community. The community subset might be the community elders, local school student population, Social groups within the community, or any other definable sub- populations found in the community. Critical to the project planning process is the need for a stake holder analysis and risk analysis to monitor the feasibility of the project.

Stake Holder Analysis

The most relevant interest group of public projects are communities for which these projects are executed (World Bank, 2003). They must be engaged in each phase of the project life cycle from the point of conceiving project ideas to the point of deriving project benefits. Their representatives must necessarily be included in the project selection process and into other projects (Igwe, 2018).

community projects typically have multiple stakeholders like governments, regulatory bodies, communities of interest to mention just a few. Due to the large number of stakeholders, it is important to produce efficient, easily accessible channels of information sharing between actors implementing projects and other stakeholders. This helps keep track of the project and opens the way for the constant contribution of views to ensure the ultimate success of the project.

Risk Assessment

Risk Assessment is an integral part of project planning and implementation (Chukwuma, 2016). effective risk management is a critical success factor for delivering projects in defined cost, time and quality (Igwe, 2018). Project risk management provides benefits when it is implemented according to good practices principles and with organizational commitment to taking the decisions and performing actions in an open and unbiased manner. In simple terms, risks are unforeseen occurrences which when they occur have negative impacts on at least one of project's goal, time, costs, contents or quality. Despite the aforementioned explanation, project managers most often include risks as challenges and technical or organizational issues. It is well to note that risks are potential events in future which have not occurred while problems are risks that have occurred (Parker, 2003). Risks are characterized by probability always less than hundred percent (100%) and impact measured changes on project objectives. According to Igwe, (2018), risks associated to projects may be measured in costs (monetary risks), in time (delay risks for time management) or quality (usually affecting contracts through monetary costs of improvement). Therefore, uncertainty in project planning and implementation is inevitable since projects are unique and temporary undertakings based on assumptions and constraints, delivering project results to multiple stakeholders with different requirements.

2.8 Project Implementation Phase

Subsequent to a successive project planning is the implementation phase. Implementation of projects involves putting the project plan into action (Igwe, 2018). At this stage, the project implementing officers coordinate and direct effective use of project resources to meet expected objectives of the project. Project implementors are expected at this stage to put all plans into action and produce desirable outcomes to fulfil project objectives. The outcomes of projects may vary depending on the kind of project that is being implemented. The implementation phase uses the most project time and resources, and as a result, costs are usually the highest during this phase. Project managers also experience the greatest conflicts over schedules in this phase. It may be discovered in the implementation process that the actual time scheduled for the execution of the project is longer than the amount of time planned.

As the project unfolds, implementors direct and manage each activity at every step of the way. That is what happens in the implementation phase of the project life cycle: implementors are to follow the plan put together and handle any uncertainty that come up in the course of implementation.

The project implementation process is complex, usually requiring simultaneous attention to a wide variety of human, budgetary and technical variables (Igwe, 2018). As a result, project facilitators are faced with a difficult job, characterized by role overload, frenetic activity, fragmentation and superficiality (Pinto and Levin 1987). It is important that the project implementation be managed by people who understand the project. In addition, there must exist adequate technology and reasonable inclusions from implementors and beneficiaries alike to support and ensure the success of the project. Technical task here refers to the necessity of not only having the necessary personnel for the implementation, but ensuring that they possess the technical skills to perform these tasks.

2.9 Theoretical Framework

The study will adopt some key concepts within the Sarah Whites' participatory model to form a bases for study. These concepts give some hypothetical responses to some questions raised in the first chapter of the study. For example, the study sought answers on the different participatory practices that ensued in the planning and implementation processes of the Abokobi Women and Children's Ward project (WCW) and in the execution of projects, as a theoretical base, the study draws hypothetical assumptions from the Sarah White's framework where she propounds different gradating forms of participation implementors may embark on i.e. Nominal, Instrumental, Representative and Transformative. Central to the study, is the aim to examine how thorough participation is and has been in the planning and implementation process of development within the Ga East municipality, Abokobi to be precise. On the back of this core aim, the study will analyze the degree or comprehensiveness of participation of different respondents based on the participatory typologies propounded by Sarah White. Another theory on whose bases the study draws assumptions is Theory of Citizen Involvement. This theory is relevant as concepts within it gives some hypothetical responses to some of the stated objectives in chapter one. The Theory of Citizen Involvement admonishes that, private individuals be given an opportunity to influence public decisions and as well guarantee citizens a direct voice in critical decisions that potentially affect their livelihoods (Quick, 2008). Several concepts have been demonstrated in the theory of citizen involvement but for the purposes of this study few of the concepts used to draw hypothesis for this study will be discussed. For instance, it is part of the objectives of this study to identify some strategies or techniques adopted by the municipal assembly who are the implementors of the Abokobi Female and Children's Ward project to get people involved and enhance participation. The study hypothesizes in the conceptual framework that implementors will adopt either of four

main techniques to get all hands-on deck in the developmental process, which include, public input, publicity, public partnership and public education.

2.9.1 Conceptual Framework

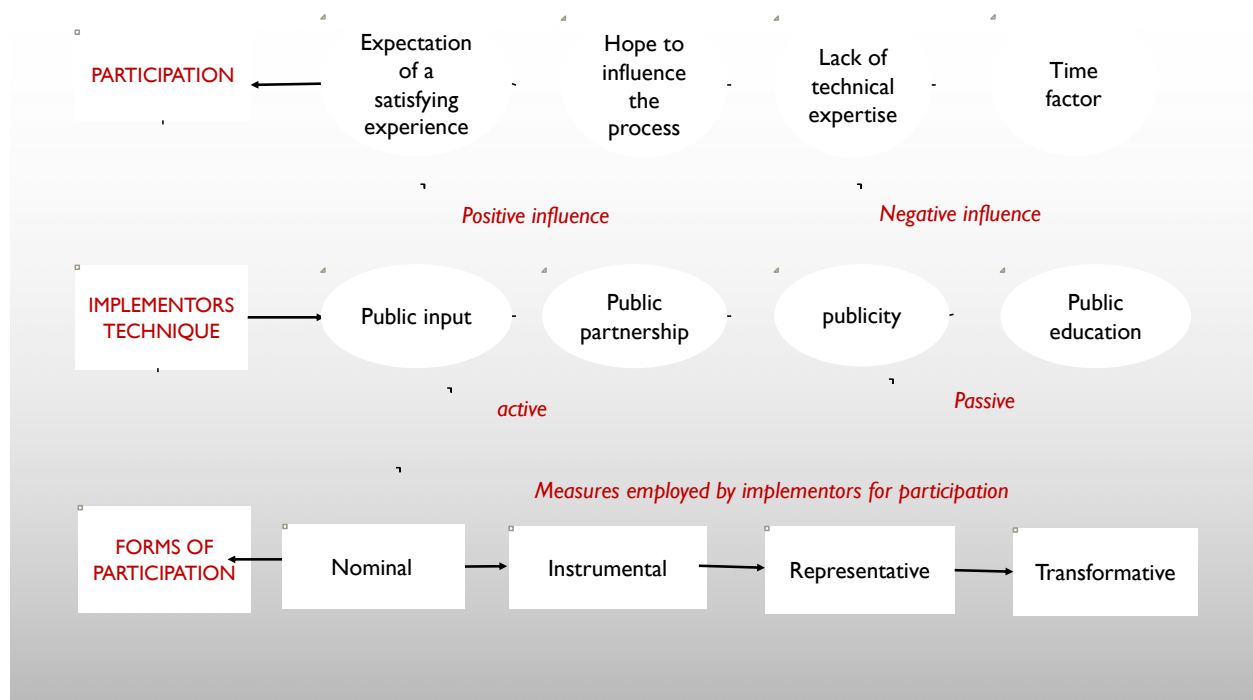
The conceptual framework discussed below is partly based on concepts drawn from participatory literature on the Theory of Citizen Involvement (Cogan, 1986) and a framework developed by Sarah white in 1996 to assess the various forms of participation. The framework hypothetically indicates some factors that influence people to participate in developmental projects, i.e. negative and positive factors. Positive factors such as the expectation of a satisfying experience and the hope of people influencing decision regarding the project could stimulate and enhance participation. Negative factors such as that lack of technical know-how about the said initiative and the constraints of time pose challenges to participation.

The frame work also hypothesizes some measures or techniques likely to be adopted by project implementors to ensure participation. Active measure such as public input and public partnership are used by implementors to promote participation. Public input is a way of securing advice and consent of community members regarding initiatives. Partnership techniques assign formalized roles to participants in the decision-making process. Implementors can also adopt passive measures like publicity and public education to raise awareness on the need to participate in the development process. These measures primarily aim at disseminating the needed information and sensitizing community members on their rights and need to participate in the decision-making process.

As part of the theoretical bases for assessing the participation process in the implementation of the Abokobi Women and Children's Ward, the study will adopt Sarah White's Module of participation. By the adoption of this module the study will assess the varying degrees of the

participation of various stakeholders in the planning and implementation of projects. The roles played by different participating groups will be assessed to examine which participating group's role is nominal, representative, instrumental and transformative.

Figure 3: Diagrammatic Presentation of Conceptual Framework



Source: Adopted from Sarah white, (1996) and Cogen, (1986)

CHAPTER THREE (3)

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

The study was conducted at the Ga East Municipality using the descriptive case study as the design. The Case study design is a method that enables the researcher to be able to closely examine the data that is available within a specific context. In certain cases, the design selects a specific geographical area or very few individuals as the study subjects (Yin, 1984). The design was appropriate for the study because the study assessed the all-inclusiveness of community participation in the planning and implementation of projects in the Ga East Municipality. The case study design was selected based on its ability to provide in depth focus of the unit to be studied and the research objectives aimed at examining and understanding events leading to the execution of the Women and Children's Ward (WCW) and other development initiative. The approach helped in getting an in-depth opinion about the subject matter. The case study method explores and investigates real-life phenomenon through mostly detailed contextual analysis of a limited number of events or conditions and their relationships (Yin, 1984).

3.2 Selection of Respondents and Unit of Analysis

Purposive sampling techniques was used in this study. Purposive sampling was used to select two officers from the Municipal Assembly (the Assembly member and the Municipal Planning Officer). The two respondents were at the forefront of the execution of the Women and Children's Ward (WCW) project and are perceived to have considerable level of knowledge and information regarding events that actually ensued in the planning and implementation stages of the said projects' life cycle with specific regards to involvement. The justification for the inclusion of the

Assembly Member, who is also part of the Social Services Subcommittee of the Municipality is based on his possession of relevant information and experience regarding participation in the community. The research categorized the members of the Abokobi Electoral Area according to some existing resident/social and groups. Considering the clearly stated study location, members of the identified group who reside in the Abokobi electoral area were considered for sampling. In all, ten (10) groups were considered by the researcher for the purposes of selecting respondents. The research considered a sample size of twenty-two (22) respondents. Of this sample size, twenty (20) respondents were purposively drawn from the identified groups and the remaining two (2) comprised the municipal planning officer and the Assembly Member of the Abokobi electoral area. Below is a table indicating a distribution of respondents;

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents

Community/Social group	No. of Respondents Selected
Driver union (GPRTU)	2
God is love Women Association	2
Association of Disabled	2
Landlords Association	2
Health Professionals	2
Boi residents Association	2
Abokobi resident's Association	2
Vegetable growers Association	2
Abokobi Traditional Council	2
Abokobi Market women association	2
Total groups= 10	Total = 20 respondents + 2 key informants (planning officer and assembly members)

Source: Student's Construct (2019)

3.3 Sources and Method of Data Collection

Primary data were gathered from the field through the use of interview guides. The in-depth interviews with respondents i.e. officials of the Assembly (Planning Officer), The Assembly Member as well as respondents from the identified resident/social groups within the community, provided relevant responses for analyzing the events of participation in the municipality. The in-depth interviews were carried out with the selected respondents to assess the roles they play in the planning and implementation of development projects and initiatives within the community as well

as understand the possible factors that affects their participation in projects. The study also relied on official documents such as the Medium-Term Development Plan (MTDP) of the municipality to obtain information on the process of participation in the area as well as some information on the demographic characteristics of the municipality. This document was obtained from the Municipal Assembly.

Observation was very helpful in understanding community perspective as the researcher watched closely on some conditions of life of the people and took pictures of certain social infrastructure just to aid his decision of the specific project to conduct this study on. During the interactions with community members the researcher tried hard not to send “I am watching you” signals to them as it might create some suspicions in their minds and further restrict them from giving relevant information in the process. This measure aided in maintaining a more natural lifestyle amongst the community members. In the course of gathering data for this study, the researcher’s initial objective was to orient himself with the participants’ way of life and to absorb as much information as possible regarding some social and cultural perspective of the community. This is important because every social setting has differences which a researcher needs to get acquainted with.

3.4 Data Management and Analysis

Data collected from interviews were transcribed, edited, coded and analyzed. Coding was done by developing broad themes based on the research objectives under which specific text that linked the themes were discussed. Content analysis method was used in presenting findings, as the researcher directly quoted responses of key informants and respondents under relevant thematic areas. The content analysis technique was applied by the researcher to quote and draw inferences from replies of respondents to help explain findings. This qualitative research technique is important as it

allowed the researcher to examine the dynamics of community behavior, perception of community members towards participation and the general development process (Chambers,1994).

3.5 Ethical Considerations

The study took the needed steps to make sure that no respondent in the study felt uncomfortable, pressured or feared to give any relevant information thinking his/her identity may later be revealed. The process of conducting research should not in any way be detrimental to the human values of respondents, and in line with that, consent was sought prior to engaging the respondents in the interviews. The researcher obtained copies of official letter from the University of Ghana and presented it to the respondents as an introductory letter before any interviews were conducted. Voluntary participation was also adhered to in the study, as respondents were not forced to partake. They were allowed to make a choice to join the study or otherwise after being made aware of the primary purpose and relevance of the study.

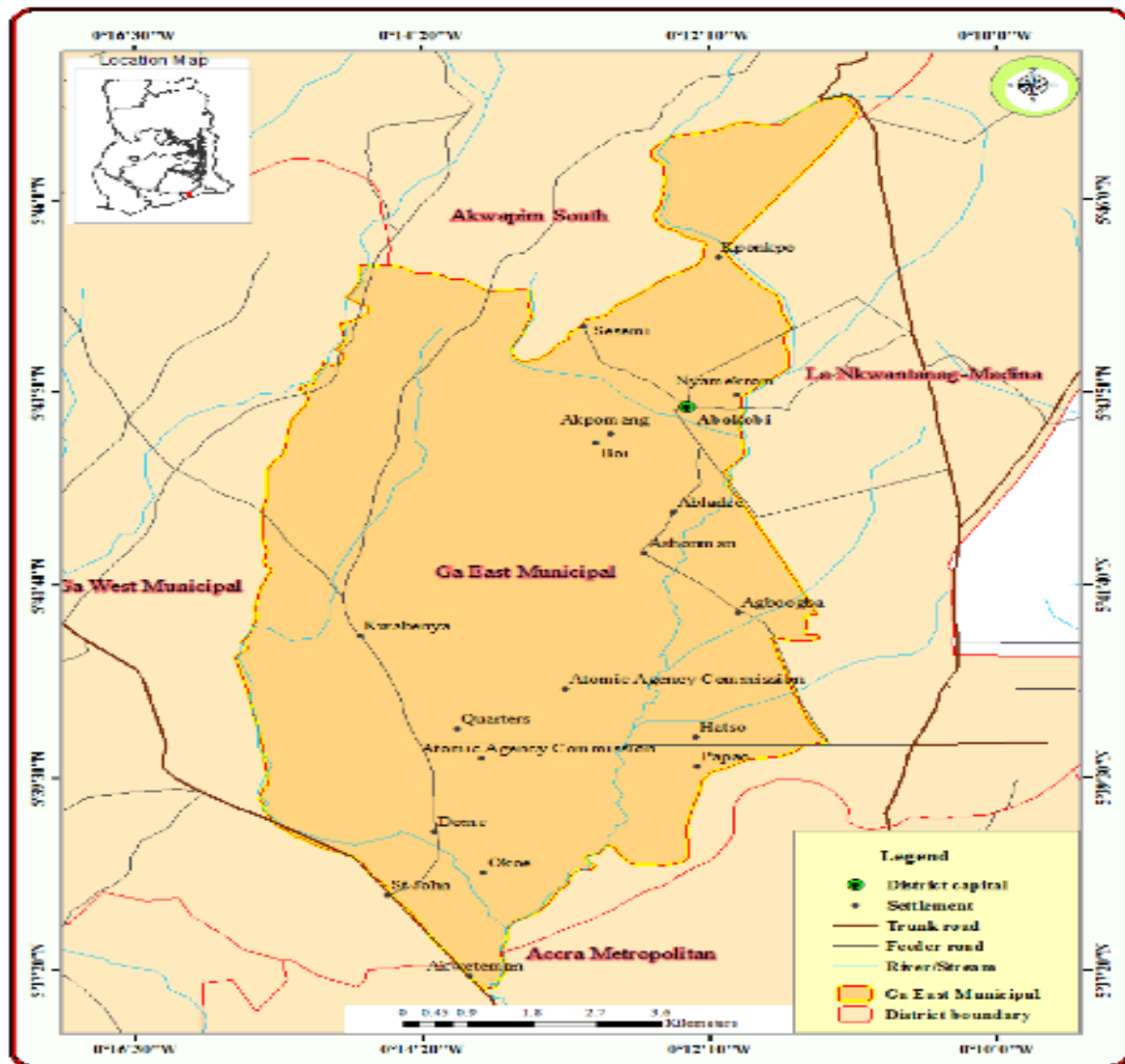
3.6 Profile of Study the Area

This section looks at the background of the study area with respect to the location and size, population growth, climate and vegetation, education, health and many other characteristics of the Ga East Municipality. The researcher considered the Ga East municipal assembly due to the project understudy. Community visits that took the MA class to various municipalities revealed the WCW project as a fairly new project. It was the belief of the researcher that event that led to the planning and implementation of the project was still fresh in the minds of the people and as such respondents would easily recall these events and give detailed accounts in in-depth interviews to help the researcher draw realistic conclusions and findings.

3.6.1 Location and Size

The Ga East Municipality is located at the northern part of Greater Accra Region. It is one of the Sixteen (16) Districts in the Greater Accra Region and covers a land area of about 85.7 square kilometers. The capital of the municipality is Abokobi. It shares boundaries with the Ga West Municipality to the west, the La - Nkwantanang Municipality to the east, Accra metropolis to the south and the Akwapim South District to the north. The Municipality is sub divided into two administrative areas, namely the Abokobi Zonal Council and the Dome Zonal Council (GEMA-MTP, 2014)

Fig 4: Map of Ga East Municipality



Source: GEMA-MTP, (2014)

3.6.2 Population Growth

The 2010 National Population and Housing Census put the Municipality's population at 259,668 comprising of 127,258 males and 132,410 females. It has a population of 252,914 with 66,286 households and a household size 3.8. The growth of the population is mainly due to the influence of migration inflows. The communities in the municipality include Dome, Taifa, Agbogba, Ashongman, New Ashonmang, Haatso, Kwabenya, Ashongman, Atomic Energy, Papao, Boi,

Abokobi, Parakua Estate, Kissieman, Akpormang, Abladjei, Sesemi, Ajako, Ayimensah and Adenkrebi (GSS, 2013). The population is concentrated mainly along the urban and peri-urban areas of the municipality particularly along the border with AMA. These include Dome, Taifa and Haatso just to mention a few among others. (GEMA-MTP, 2014)

3.6.3 Education

The distribution of schools in the municipality is quite even. There are six (6) privately- owned Senior High Schools, which include Perfect Senior High School, The Masters School and Maxvic School, Dard Senior High School, Oxbert Senior High School and Christ International Senior High School (GEMA-MTP, 2014). The municipality, however, is yet to have a public Senior High School of its own. There are 31 public Basic Schools made up of Kindergarten, Primary and Junior High Schools and 109 private schools that are sited mainly in the peri-urban areas of the municipality (GEMA-MTP, 2014). Most of the schools lack libraries, ICT resource centers and recreational grounds. It is home to the University of Allied Science that has trained many high- and low-level manpower management human resource needs of the municipality. It is also home to the Ghana Atomic Energy School and Research, which has done a lot of research into energy. From the Early Childhood to the Senior High School (SHS) level, the private sector owned more than two third of the schools. (GEMA- MTP, 2014).

3.6.4 Health

Malaria continues to be a major public health issue. It accounted for 25 percent of Out-Patient Department (OPD) attendance in 2013 (GEMA-MTP, 2014). Lifestyle diseases (hypertension and diabetes mellitus) are posing a challenge to the health service delivery. For three years in succession, hypertension has occupied the 3rd position. Weekly specialized clinics are organized

at Madina Polyclinic for these lifestyle diseases. Regular health walks and screening of the community members have been adopted to ‘Catch them early’ and managed appropriately. The position of diarrheal diseases has not changed. An outbreak of cholera in the region trickled down to the municipality. In 2013, three of the cases that were reported at Achimota Hospital in a neighboring district hailed from Kwabenya, and Haatso (GEMA-MTP, 2014).

3.6.5 Waste Management

The rate of waste generation and management in the municipality is a matter of concern to the Assembly. With the increasing influx of people and the rapid urbanization, huge amounts of human and industrial waste are generated at an alarming rate. It is estimated that about 750 tonnes of solid waste is generated monthly out of which 490 tonnes are collected which represents 63 percent. This leaves a substantial amount of backlog that creates various kinds of inconveniences including health hazard to people in the Municipality. Out of the 490 tonnes collected the private sector collects about 81 percent through door-to-door collection (GEMA-MTP, 2014). Apart from the door-to-door collection, waste is collected in containers placed at vantage points by the Assembly. The situation is compounded by the inadequate machinery and equipment by the Assembly and the private collectors. Furthermore, the absence of proper engineered final disposal site is a major constraint. In addition, solid waste is brought from neighboring municipalities that is the Adenta Municipality, Accra Metropolis and Ga West Municipality to the crude dumping site at Abloradjei (GEMA-MTP, 2014).

CHAPTER FOUR (4)

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

The aim of the study is primarily to examine, how detailed participation has been in the execution of project by the Ga East Municipal Assembly with a special interest in the WCW Project funded by the government of Ghana and implemented by the Municipal Assembly. Findings and analysis in this chapter is based on the Medium-Term Development Plan (MTDP) of Ga East Municipality, qualitative data from interviews held with respondents as well as observations made during the course of the study.

4.1 Socio-economic Characteristics of Respondents

This section presents data on the socio-economic life of the responded interviewed in this research. The socio-economic information presented in this section was collected directly from respondents. They were asked questions regarding their age, gender, level of education, employment status, marital status and religion.

Table 2: Socio-economic Characteristics of Respondents

Characteristics	Frequency N=22	Percentage (%)
SEX		
Male	14	64
Female	8	36
Age		
18-25	2	9
26-35	5	23
36-45	6	27
46-55	7	32
Above 55	2	9
Education		
No formal education	7	32
Basic	5	23
Secondary	6	27
Tertiary	4	18
Religion		
Christian	16	72
Muslim	6	28
Occupation		
Employment	18	82
Unemployment	4	18

Marital Status		
Single	4	18
married	17	77
widowed	1	5

The descriptive analysis of the sex of respondents indicates that more males were interviewed in the study. Thus, of the 22 respondents, 14 were males representing sixty four percent (64%). Cumulatively, thirty two percent (32%) of respondents were youth within the age bracket of 18-25 and 26-35. This is almost in agreement with a Ghana Statistical Service (GSS) report that suggest that the population of the Municipality is not youthful (GSS, 2014).

Similarly, as part of the social appraisal, the educational levels of the respondents were sought as it plays a significant role in understanding issues relating to the inclusion and exclusion of people in development. The data also shows that majority of the respondents representing sixty eight percent (68%) were literates i.e. having at least a basic education and the remaining thirty two percent (32%) never had any formal education. Thus, the study revealed that twenty three percent (23%) of the respondents had basic education, twenty seven percent (27%) had secondary education and eighteen percent (18%) had tertiary education at the time the interviews were conducted.

The educational data of the respondents meant that a large proportion of the respondents could read and write as well as comprehend basic English language hence enhancing their engagement and interaction with the Elites in the assembly. In terms of employment status, as much as eighty two percent (82%) of the respondents were actively involved in one occupation or the other whiles the remaining eighteen percent (18%) were economically inactive. The data supports Christianity

as the leading religion in the area as majority of the respondents representing seven-two percent (72%) were Christians and the remaining twenty eight percent (28%) were Muslims. In the aspect of marital status, the data showed the 17 respondents representing seventy seven percent (77%) were currently married at the time of the interviews, four (4) respondents representing eighteen percent (18%) were single and 1 respondent representing 5 percent was widowed at the time of the interview.

4.2 Community/Stakeholder Roles and Responsibilities

Assessing the roles and responsibilities of interested parties involved in the planning and implementation of projects and programs in the municipality is an important element in achieving the ultimate goal of this research. Genuine participation aimed at empowering community members can increase the effectiveness of decision making and consequently the efficiency and success of projects by providing local people with the opportunity to understand and make informed contribution necessary to impact the project positively.(Takyi et al., 2014) posits that when the interested parties are adequately involved in the planning and implementation of projects, they are likely to accept and own the project because their views and opinions inform the outcome of the project.

The roles and responsibilities handed to community members during a participatory process will determine how detailed participation is. Reeves (2015) posits that research into participation of beneficiaries in development projects should explore the interaction and specific activities of participants during the process. He opined that it will be inappropriate to measure the success of participation by merely considering the number of people who turnout for meetings without really assessing the responsibilities handed to them by the project implementors. Work done by

(Arnstein, 1969) on community participation has continuously championed the need for Participatory Action Researchers (PAR) to among other things, look critically at the exact roles and responsibilities handed to participants in the development process as a basis to determine credibility of participation. She opined that merely involving people in the participatory process without handing them significant roles is not participation and only meant to frustrate them. The researcher's resolve to investigate roles of community members is further consolidated by an assertion made by Quick (2008) to the effect that what genuine participation seeks to achieve is reflected in the role's community members play in the development process.

4.1.1 Roles and Responsibility of Local Authority (Municipal Assembly)

A satisfactory role that implies proper participation in the planning of developmental projects should mean that the identification of the problems should emanate primarily from the people (Parker, 2003). Municipal Assemblies and local authorities have moved away from the top down approach where decisions of development were made on behalf of the people to a more consultative bottom-up approach where individuals must be placed in the center of planning development initiatives. In the execution of the WCW project, the Municipal Assembly through the Development Planning unit in Consultation with stakeholders made the necessary planning, implementation, monitoring and project evaluation. The WCW project along with other projects followed a comprehensive needs assessment process undertaken by the Development Planning office in all fourteen (14) communities within the Abokobi Electoral Area. The facility surfaced strongly after health practitioners of the Abokobi Medical Facility bemoaned the inadequate wards for women and children. Interviews with the Planning Officer revealed that there were some number of issues that surfaced in the communities where they carried out the need assessments.

But the WCW project was urgent as it served all the fourteen (14) communities in the Abokobi electoral area and beyond.

As part of their responsibility, the planning officers undertook a prioritization exercise to adopt projects and programs that had been conceived at the need assessment stage. The prioritization exercise again saw a team of officials from the Assembly engaging people within the electoral Area mostly on community levels. Projects that had been adopted by the planning office subsequent to the prioritization was then factored into the Medium-Term Development Plan (MTDP) for onward implementation of which the WCW was part. When asked about the role of his outfit in the realization of projects, the Planning Officer had this to say;

So basically, as a Planning Unit our role is to plan, implement, monitor, evaluate and also coordinate all other activities within the municipality. So, by this role we generate quarterly report about the implementation of the project on the basis of the monitoring that we undertake. We also undertake the evaluation of the project, be it ex ante evaluations, mid-term or post evaluation of the projects. The reports that we generate from these evaluations is submitted to both National Development Planning commission and the Regional Coordinating Council for onward ratification.” [Planning Officer, key informant interview, 4th April 2019].

The Planning Office as much as possible engaged some stakeholders for deliberations. For instance, the Assembly is responsible for organizing and moderating town hall meetings and other relevant gatherings where deliberations of community challenges and way forward is discussed. Town Hall Meetings (THM) are relevant events where the members of the Municipality converge to deliberate and adopt development plans for the Municipality. A respondent said;

The Assembly puts together the Town Hall Meetings, they call on us and when we attend they normally would tell us their plans and call for us to also share our opinions on various issues. We only see it as an opportunity to put our grievances forward to them and expect that they find ways of solving them [in depth interview, 17th April, 2019]

The study observed that it is the Assembly's responsibility to organize this program each time the need arises and do well to ensure the success of it. Prior to Town Hall Meetings the Assembly tries as much as possible to spread the information across board as its a public event and opened to all manner of persons within the municipality. In most cases when the Assembly requires the presence of some chiefs, it sends representatives to personally invite them to participate in the process. It is not only the town hall meetings the assembly initiates and lead most of the deliberation gatherings in the developmental process.

4.1.2 Roles and Responsibilities of the Community

White (1996) believes that genuine participation should seek to put the community at the frontiers of decision making and this is done by the roles and responsibilities assigned to participants as well as the level of attention given to opinions and views of ordinary participating members. On the back of White's assertion, the study paid keen attention to what the community's roles were as a way of measuring the intensity of participation. It was observed from the interviews that, for most community projects, the nature of the project in terms of its target group and intended aim may influence the roles of participating groups. This is to suggest that the magnitude in terms of roles played by community members differ according to the scope and target of the project.

With specific reference to the WCW project, the community as a whole did not part take in its identification even though deliberations were made about it when it got to the Town Hall Meeting during the MTDP adoption process. The role of the health practitioners may denote what White (1996) describes as representative participation, as they were the body that laid the complaints to the Assembly during one of their meetings thereby making that group of professionals the major players in the WCW project identification. They also contributed significantly in terms of how the

facility should look, what it should be composed of and as well proposed timelines for its completion facility. It could be seen that health professionals acted on behalf of the community to articulate the interest of the larger society. White believes that participation is representative when the voices of beneficiaries are heard and put into actual practice in terms of implementation. The WCW project was a demanded project by the health professional in the interest of the people so they laid their concerns adequately on relevant matters that had to with its implementation.

In an interview conducted with a 52-year-old midwife who has been working in the Abokobi health center for nearly a decade gave accounts for their role as health practitioners in the planning of the WCW project which essentially is an extension of the Abokobi health center. She opined;

“You know this clinic serves almost all the communities within this electoral area and other parts of the municipality, so our facilities were overburdened. The wards for women and child delivery became increasingly inadequate. There were instances where new mothers and children on admission had to perch in the balconies which were unacceptable and risky. So, we called on the Assembly and put this issue before them, after series of meetings and deliberations we successfully drum home the need for this facility.” [Midwife, in-depth interview, 11th April 2019].

At the planning stage, when the need assessment was conducted, the major contributory role the community played was to help in the identification of problems for the Assembly to formulate their objective which gave rise to the said project. Planning of projects is dominated with engagements and consultation meeting with the community members at the town hall gatherings and other avenues. Not all community members get to attend the Town Hall Meetings where the major decisions are made. The Assembly sends out invitations to heads of some social or community groups within the municipality. This practice by the Assembly could be likened to what Mukandela (1998) observed, where the district officers exclusively decided on who to invite to participatory meetings for deliberation of relevant community issues. The Assembly

acknowledges that Town Hall Meetings are open door events and will not turn away any individual who voluntarily shows up but their actions meant that they required the presence of some specific individuals. It appears at this point the participatory process is not all inclusive as the Assembly is more convenient working with some specific individuals and groups within the community. It appeared that this consultative nature of the assembly was because they saw the social groups as already organized groups of people who have ready views and opinions about issues within the community and who are easily accessible due to their previous engagements and the relationship the Assembly established with them. Valderrama (1993) encouraged the grassroots mobilization of community to form local organization as he believes this would put them in a position where they are able to discuss and appreciate their problems and as well take collective measures to solve them. It is therefore evident that community members who are part of organized groups within the Abokobi community stands better chance to be part of the participatory process than ordinary members who do not belong to any organized groups. Addae-Boahen (2007) observed that local government officials were compelled to engage with local organizations partly because these organizations had built their own capacity to understand the rudiments of the developmental process and were very much empowered.

During the implementation of the WCW after all the necessary arrangements was on course, the community played a huge role by the provision of a piece of land for the facility. Youth in the community led by the assembly member also took the responsibility of clearing a land presented to the assembly by the traditional council for the contractor to move on site and begin work. During the sod cutting of the project the chiefs and members of the community were invited essentially to witness the process. The community's role continued as they played a watch dog role on the contractor and the construction process. The Assembly Member in the company of some of the

community members would routinely visit the site on their own accord, to monitor the progress of work. If there are any delays or issues, they present it before the Assembly during Town Hall Meeting or any other opportunity they get. Ordinary members of the community who live near the project site in most cases store the easily moveable tools of the contractor in their homes for safekeeping. The relationship between the contractor and the community at the implementation stage continued, as time to time, the contractor falls on the community for some ancillary support. The presentation of a piece of land by the Traditional Council as well as the energy and time invested in the preparation of the site by the youth bestows some cost element to these parties, but to the Assembly, this measure goes to improve the efficiency and make their work a lot easier. This relationship between the Assembly and the community represents what White (1996) describes as Instrumental participation. This was an account by a respondent who lives very close to the WCW project. He is a bus driver and member of the Ghana Private Road Transport Union (GPRTU) within the Abokobi branch.

“With this project, I chanced on the contractor during one of his site visits, we even exchanged contacts. There were even times when the contractor entrusted his equipment and other small tools in my care, because I live very close to the site.” [driver, in depth interview April 14th 2019]

The question of who plays the lead role in the planning and implementation process of projects and programs may sometimes depend on the kind of project. Considering self-help projects within the community, the ordinary members lead the process of planning and implementation. They make all the relevant decisions with regards to what suitable intervention should be considered for implementation, how the implementation process will fashion, what form and shape the project should take. They set their own targets and determine their own source of funding. With self-help

projects it obvious that the community takes complete control of the project and play all the relevant roles with regards to its planning and implementation.

The 61-year-old Assembly member of the Abokobi Electoral Area who also doubles as A businessman had this to say about the roles they play specifically with self-help projects during an interview session with him in his building material shop.

“Sometime last week, the rains came heavily, and amongst other destructions this footbridge over there (pointing to a nearby minor foot bridge linking some two section of the community) was heavily eroded and some of the wooden works carried away so as you can see, it is more of a death trap. So, I met with the community youth and we decided to reconstruct it from the scratch. They have agreed to make contributions, we also have masons and carpenters here who are willing to do it for free. The Assembly is not involved in this, it is our own project and myself with the community members will execute it.”
[Assemble member, key informant interview, April 17th 2019]

The above response from the Assembly Member is a demonstration of the power the local community wields when it comes to implementation of self-help projects. So, the study at this point intended to find out if they still had such power or anything close to in terms of relevant roles when it comes to the local assembly led projects. It should also be noted that in most cases the Assembly or Local Authority also play some critical roles in the execution of projects conceived and executed by the community (self-help). The interview with the assembly member revealed that for the most part, the Assembly steps in at the invitation of the community to provide some assistance for certain technical intensive community led projects. The community members believe that the Assembly has the needed human resources, engineers and other relevant experts to provide guidance to the community in terms of the execution of community projects. It is therefore observed that the Assembly plays very limited roles in community self-help projects. A response from the Planning Officer confirmed the account made by the Assembly member.

“When it comes to community self-help projects the people take full control of it. We only step in when they require some technical expertise. Everything relating to financing, labor and implementation is left in their hands. Sometime ago, the people of Abokobi required the assistance of an engineer from the Assembly to help them on how to channel a drainage, they did not know whether it was supposed to be a point 1 drainage or a point 9 drainage. For instance, if you direct a point-9 drainage to meet at an intersection with a point-6 drainage that could be problematic because the point 9 drainage carry heavy volumes of sewage which should meet with a bigger drainage. So, these are some of the technicalities which the people did not know so the Assembly stepped in with the engineers to help them execute this project”. [Planning officer, GEMA, key informant interview, 4th April 2019].

4.1.3 Roles and Responsibilities of the Civil Society

Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency,(2002) defines civil society as the groups of networks and associations that is voluntary and that involves people acting mutually in a public scope to express their interests, passions, preferences, and ideas, to exchange information, to achieve collective goals, to make demands on authorities, to improve the structure and functioning of the state, and to hold state officials accountable.

The involvement of community members in the relevant stages of project execution is very much strengthened by the community’s ability to appreciate the rudiments of the developmental process and the need for their involvement throughout the stages. In most cases the intervention of individuals or organizations like the civil society is required to lead the education and sensitization of ordinary community members about their right to participate in the decision-making process so as to make relevant inputs on how initiatives targeted towards them should be implemented.

The research revealed that the Municipal Assembly in most cases rely heavily on the Civil Society in their developmental process. Some key CSOs that operate within the study area and lead most of this sensitization and awareness programs are the African Development Partners (ADP) and the Peoples’ Dialogue (PD). These non-governmental and nonprofit local organization both operate in the area of governance and working to address social issues.

The ADP primarily focuses on issues of local participation in governance, youth empowerment and ultimately looks at ways developmental efforts can mainstream some marginalized groups like women and the disabled. Peoples' Dialogue is mainly involved in advocacy and sensitization. Their primary target is women and the less privileged in society. The operation of Peoples' Dialogue takes the form of training and building capacity of people to take up small scale businesses primarily to secure improved livelihoods and be self-reliant.

Generally civil societies have played the relevant role of reducing unfair relationships between local authorities and the local community. A respondent had this to say;

I am interested in community issues and sometimes I am limited in terms of the contributions I make when I attend Assembly meetings. For instance, I did not know anything about budgeting and management of public finance until I attended one of the seminars organized by the Peoples' Dialogue, I must say there was a lot we learnt and I think they are doing a great job with their initiatives. [In-depth interview, Assembly member May 17th 2019]

Beyond uplifting the local community socioeconomically, the role played by these civil societies goes a long way to expand the opportunity for the local people to communicate effectively as well as enabling the construction of interpersonal relationships between the local authorities and the community. They do this through effective advocacy and awareness creation of community members about social and governance issues. When community members are empowered to understand the dynamics of everyday political issues and happenings in their settings, they make informed contributions and suggestions essential to drive the development process.

A response from the planning officer on the restricting factors to community participation, reechoed the role of the civil society in building the capacity of community members to contribute meaningfully in the developmental process. He responded;

for instance, if we are talking about the budget of the project, unless a community member is enthused about it or has some basic appreciation of budget, they themselves will not be

interested. Perhaps the civil society can also educate them on say, the technicalities in terms of budgeting or some technical drawings [Planning officer GEMA key informant interview 4th April 2019].

the civil society undertake these roles with the view to ensure that community members can appreciate the power they wield and their ability to influence the development process if they make it a priority to involve themselves. Not all respondents recognized the active role civil society plays in the development process but that may depend on their social orientation and proximity to the activities of these CSOs.

4.2 Facilitating and Constraining Factors of Participation

Abokobi is a suburban community with a growing trend of service production and economic activities. Almost all respondent interviewed in this research either belonged to one of a service production and economic activity. Participation of community members may encounter some setbacks as result of factors caused by either beneficiaries or project implementors. These factors may be deliberate or inadvertent. The researcher outlines some themes along which the ensuing factors are presented and explained.

4.2.1 Socio-economic Factors Affecting Participation

Predominantly, the constraints of time and the opportunity cost of attending community meetings and taking part in decisions was an issue for most of the respondents interviewed. The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency,(2002) succinctly agrees with this finding as it posited that, the participation of economically active people is constrained by the absence of time, since they must work for their daily survival. This category of people as indicated by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency,(2002) also lack the material and technical requirement necessary to effectively mobilize for collective action to take up relevant roles in the participatory process.

It is therefore true that time constraint, triggered by the need for residents to undertake their economic endeavors was a key factor that impeded peoples' ability to avail themselves to the participatory process. Though the urgency and need for participation if well understood by people will compel them to honor planning meetings in the midst of their limited time. A fifty-five (55) year-old respondent, who sells vegetables at the Abokobi market had this to say when asked what her biggest barrier to involving in the community development process was.

“As you can see I am here in the market every day of the week including Sundays. I have no one to help me take care of the place, if I leave my business to travel all the way to Dome to attend planning meetings. The decisions they make at the meetings affects me and my children as well so it is in my own interest to be part but I don't just have the time” [market woman, in-depth interview, 2nd May 2019]

This sentiment was shared not only by this trader. Some of the respondents who also work in the public services and private establishments gave similar accounts. Taking part in the development process is widely accepted on paper by both implementors of projects and beneficiaries but in practice these two parties have their shortfalls in its enhancement. Some of the respondents, after ruling the time constraints out in our interview, still provided reasons like the distance to the meeting venues as excuses to why they may not avail themselves to MTDP town hall meetings.

The municipality consist of about 3 electoral areas. Each electoral area hosts not less than fourteen communities but as the study revealed, Town Hall Meetings are held in Dome or other places as decided by the Assembly. This then makes it difficult for people from other communities such as Boi, Ablahdjo, Taifa and others to honor planning meetings. Mr. Kwarteng, a 42-year-old bus driver known in the local parlance as “Tro-tro driver” has lived in Abokobi since childhood and had this to say when asked about what hinders his ability to honor community meetings.

“My brother I am aware of the Town Hall Meetings and the engagements the assembly holds with the community but considering the nature of my work I don’t have the time at my disposal to attend, and besides the MTDP venue is not located here. Look, I have to be up early everyday including Sundays to go to work. My car owner doesn’t care if I attended a community meeting or not. All he knows is that he has to take sales at the end of each day. [in-depth interview 2nd May, 2019]

As part of the possible social factors that may hinder the community’s interest to participate in development planning process, interviews held with the respondents during study revealed that there was a lost touch between the ordinary community members and the local authorities (Assembly). Information accessibility appeared to be a problem for community members seeking knowledge on the operations of the Assembly as well as avenues to seek redress for their problems.

Mapuva,(2015) indicates that the voluntary participation of people in the development is threatened if there are no appropriate organizational channels for them to express their interest and grievances. Community members who made efforts to get in touch with the Assembly for the purposes of making enquiries with regards to their grievances have not received favorable responses. In most cases they are only given excuse and turned away with hopes which never suffices. When the information needs of community members are not adequately met, the outcome is their inability to productively participate in development planning process and enjoy the benefits thereof. The relevance of information accessibility in suburban areas like Abokobi cannot be overemphasized because information dissemination has become a necessary tool for the success of many development programs. Mayo (2015) points to the improper flow of information between lead implementors and the beneficiary community as a major factor that affects the levels of participation in development projects.

It appeared that some of the respondents even though were aware of the existence of the project understudy, they did not really appreciate the events that went into adopting and implementing the

project. They seem not to be aware of some community engagement initiatives like the MTDP meetings and Need Assessment Forums organized by the local authorities. The respondents claimed the Assembly does not make any effort to seek their opinions on matters affecting community wellbeing.

A thirty-five-year-old visually impaired respondent expressed his sentiments when asked whether he was aware of the project understudy and his involvement in planning meetings.

“I have never attended any planning meeting because I have never been called. I don’t know when and where community meetings are held. They don’t make us aware of these planning engagements. I have son who carries me around when u need to go somewhere so why not, if I am invited I will avail myself but the thing is we don’t know how and when these meetings are organized” [Respondent, in-depth interview, 12th May 2019]

Similar observations were made by some of the respondents with regards to their connection to the Assembly and their accessibility to information. There was a growing concern among respondents about the lack of appropriate structures through which they channel their grievances to the Assembly and consequently get the Assembly to help address these problems. The study revealed that the Assembly member of the area was the only lead the community members had to the assembly. Community members would usually meet and invite the Assembly Member to pass information onto the local authorities on their behalf. A respondent had this to say;

“I don’t know what goes on in the planning of development in this area because we hardly hear of any announcement to the effect that there are MTDP meetings. we just see some of the developmental programs ongoing but as to how it is done we don’t know [in-depth interview, May 13th 2019]

The relevance of community access to information from local authorities should not be underestimated, because the peoples’ access to information about the developmental plans puts

them in a position to better appreciate their potentials and weaknesses all together and work together in their own way to ease their burden and not wait on local authorities.

A good number of the respondents perceive the Assembly to be the sole agent of development and for that matter have huge expectation of the Assembly in terms of their development needs. The reality therefore is that the assembly as an institution is limited in terms of what developmental projects it can initiate given their mandate and financial constraints. On the back of the perception of some community members, they expressed so much disappointments in the assembly in the course of the study and clearly indicated the inability of the Assembly to meet their developmental needs as a recipe for their lack of interest in the development planning process. This observation is appropriately in line with the findings of Takyi (2014) in his work on the beneficiary participation in the District Education Strategic Planning (DESP) process. He observed that the grassroot were not so enthused about participation and had an indifferent feeling about the whole participatory process. In this study, respondents cited some key developmental challenges within the area much of which was road networks i.e. the Ashongman-Abokobi and the Abokobi-Boi roads. They expressed worry in the Assembly's lack of preparedness to address these developmental needs, and that as observed by the researcher was a disincentive to community participation. A 64-year-old landlord who owns and manages houses rented out to tenants within the Abokobi community and has lived almost all his live within community, He shared with the researcher his thought on why he does not prioritize community meetings and planning efforts.

“I will not attend development planning when in fact there is no development going on. We have made several efforts to bring the Assembly to the plight of the road system within this area but nobody attends to us. They drive through this area and they know the bad nature of the road but still does nothing about it. [Landlord, in depth interview, May 2019].

Haven examined some of the social factors that hinder participation within the municipality, the researcher also wanted to understand how participation is enhanced by the activities of the Assembly and the community. The study revealed that the community's power and claim to participation was greatly enhanced through the establishment of social groups and proper community action through mobilization. (Valderrama, 1993) asserted that the ability of the people to get local authorities to listen to them resides in how well they organize themselves. The Assembly, as the research observed, engages the community at group and organizational levels rather than focusing on the reaching out to individuals. In the case of community engagement like the Town Hall Meetings, the Assembly only sends out invitation to organized groups within the community like the Landlords Association, Market Women Association, etc. Work done by (Finsterbusch, 1989) affirms this finding as he argues that implementors find it easier working with organized groups because they are within reach and it is easier to solicit and incorporate beneficiary inputs into the project. The Planning Officer opined that it was easier and more convenient engaging people in organized groups. Depending on the nature of problem that requires the attention or involvement of the people, the assembly meet specific groups since they are already organized and can easily be contacted. The Planning Officer when interviewed responded;

“Well you know, it will be difficult to get down to individuals to discuss Assembly objectives and plans so we resort to identifying some established social groups within the municipality for engagements. When issues arise and we have to act, it might be targeted towards a specific group, like market women or the disabled so instead of trying to reach everybody we simply identify those involved through their groups and discuss our plans with them” [key informant interview, planning officer GEMA 4th April 2019]

The statement by the Planning Officer seem to be indicating that community organization and mobilization is a pre-requisite for active participation in the development process of Abokobi. Checks with the Planning Officer further revealed that the office has a documented list of all these

social/community groups. With the help of Community Development Officers of the Assembly, these groups are identified, their objectives known and a communication pattern is developed for future engagements. The implication of the Assembly's engagement routine is that people who do not belong to any of the groups within their reach will find difficult to avail themselves for participation. On the issue of community groups and organization, another response that caught the researcher's attention was that from the assembly man;

“The resident groups in this community are well organized, they have a sense of responsibility towards their groups and the community as a whole, so when there is an issue to solve or a major decision to make, I reach out to them because they are always available and due to the sense of responsibility they have instilled among themselves it is easier to get them together for planning purposes”. [key informant interview, assembly member, 17th May, 2019].

4.2.2 Socio-Political Factors Affecting Participation

The study further revealed that the community and the Assembly had constituted a five-member committee known as the Social Audit Committee primarily to hold local authority accountable and play key roles in the development process. The Social Audit Committee as the study observed is not part of the structures of the Assembly but is recognized by the Assembly because it is an initiative of the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development. The members constituting this committee are mainly youth leaders from within the community who take a special interest in the development process. This idea of a Social Audit Committee even though indicative of promoting participation, the members still faced huge difficulties in doing their duty of checking and taking part in crucial decision making in the development process. The Assembly Member of the area who was also a key informant to the study recounted their ordeal as committee in observing their responsibilities. It appeared that because the committee was not recognized in the

administrative structures of the Assembly, the local officials attached little or no relevance to the concerns raised by the Social Audit Committee. The Assembly Member who also doubles as a member of the committee recounted during an interview how the officials of the Assembly ignored calls on many occasions where the committee had identified some discrepancies in the execution of project or any other issue and required their attention. The Assembly Member during an interview recounted;

“The Ministry of Local Government introduced the Social Audit Initiative ostensibly to promote accountability. But over the years our activities have been a little bit forestalled”
[key informant interview, 17th May 2019]

It was the view of the Assembly Man that the Social Audit Committee as a representation of the community would have contributed massively to the decision-making process should the Assembly pay critical attention to their activities.

The participatory process in the area as earlier stated is threatened by the apparent dissatisfaction of community members about the inability of the Assembly to initiate essential developmental facilities for the people. The Assembly conceded to this assertion, but blamed their supposed inefficiency largely on the dictates of the Regional Coordinating Council (RCC) and the Central Government. It appeared that the Assembly operates on the dictates of the RCC to formulate their developmental objectives and prioritization of development projects. According to the Local Government Act (Act 938) that stipulate among other things the functions of various actors in the local government set up, the RCC plays an oversight responsibility on the development plans of the Assembly by ensuring that the plans of the Assembly are in harmony with the national development agenda.

It appeared that even though the assembly is now operating under a new development approach called the bottom-up approach, there are still some traces of top-bottom developmental approach

as the plans of the assembly appears to be distorted by the controls of the RCC. For instance, budgets for developmental initiatives that go beyond five hundred thousand cedis is subject to the approval of the RCC. The Assembly indicated in their interviews that delays in these approvals and other relevant data from the RCC for developmental projects affect their developmental output which then forms the bases for apathy in the minds of people and consequently influencing their participation in developmental process. In an interview, the Planning Officer stated;

“Some of the people who blame their lack of participation on our inefficiency do not understand that, the assembly is also under the control of the regional coordinating council and that some developmental initiatives do not fall completely under our jurisdiction. Sometimes it takes them time for the RCC to approve budgets for essential developmental initiatives”. [In-depth interview Planning Officer 4th April 2019]

The Assembly also indicated they were on the path of training and building capacity of their internal Development Planning Officers on the right participatory approaches as way of enhancing participation in the municipality. This move is supported by (Mubita et al., 2017) as they argue that the adoption of right participatory tools can build a sense of commitment amongst local people as they tend to feel part of the process and work together towards its success.

In the view of the Planning Officer, the apparent lack of participatory and mobilization skills on the part of some of their officers have accounted significantly to the little urgency with which community members join in the developmental process. Participation as a practice strategy will require that even those leading the process should be equipped with some appreciable levels of community mobilization and human relation skills. The study revealed that aside just having some educational qualification, most of the Community Development Officers who go down to the people did not have any prior training in the field of participatory development and this hugely

affected their interrelationship with the people. Some of the officers of the assembly did not even know the boundaries of the community well enough. The Planning Officer indicated;

“We are rolling out a program as an assembly to initiate some in house training and capacity building programs for our officers in the fields of participation, budgeting, community mobilization and other relevant areas. We believe this move will help improve their engagement with the people and as well enhance participation in development projects”. [in-depth interview, 13th May 2019].

The issue of weak participatory skills on the part of project implementors has been identified by Valderrama (1993) and Crook, (2000) as a great influencer of effective participation. They both held the view that those leading developmental initiatives and seeking to engage beneficiaries should be equipped with the needed skills of community engagement and mobilization in order to draw developmental proposals that reflect the actual needs of people.

4.3 Adopted Strategies of the Municipal Assembly Towards Enhancing Participation

In the advancement of development, participation is said to have gained some level of prominence (Kliksberg, 2000). Various implementing organizations including local development authorities have taken the initiative to incorporate participation in their development agenda. Gone are the days when development objectives were determined on behalf of the people by government and development organizations. By the advent of the bottom-up approach it required that the people for whom initiatives are implemented should take to the driving seat of development and be the primary source from which development objectives are conceived.

In light of this, many development implementing entities have made it a pre-requisite to engage thoroughly with the people in their effort to bring forth development initiatives. The assumption is that the people have the lived experience of what their problems are and the factors that hinder

their efforts to sustaining reasonable livelihoods and as well are in the best position to identify and determine their developmental objectives. Implementors of development knowing this and also very much concerned about the sustainability and complete ownership of their initiatives by the community employ various strategies to get community members to attend need assessment and development planning meetings. The study revealed that the local authority in the assembly in most cases had to go extra mile to get people to take part in all forms of development planning meetings. This study made efforts to elicit from the Assembly all the strategies and measures they use to encourage people to show up during planning meetings.

4.3.1 Beneficiary/Community Enticement

Enticing community members with cash and some other incentives was primarily the biggest strategy the Local Authority used to convince people to attend MTDP meetings as found by the study. It appeared, that most of the community members especially members of the social groups who are mostly invited for meetings expected some form of incentivization from the Assembly. The Planning Officer indicated that this had been a norm for a very long time and an attempt once made to replace the cash incentives with refreshment saw huge decline in the numbers that were present in the meetings. This was an account by the Planning Officer;

“We always have to give them some stipends when they come to the Town Hall Meeting. It poses some financial burden on the Assembly because these expenditures are mostly not budgeted for.” There was a time when we could not meet up with the requirement of providing them with stipends even the chiefs declined invitations to MTDP meetings, so we had to reinstitute it”. [Planning Officer, 4th April, 2019]

It appeared that some of the community members had genuine reasons for their expectation as most of them indicated that they needed those stipends to transport them from their locations which was obviously distant away from the meeting venues. Interestingly, some of the community

members were of the view that the monies that were given to them by the Assembly during meetings were budgeted for and they were rightfully entitled to it, so even if they declined, the Planning Officers moderating the meetings would siphon it. This view was held by a good number of the respondents. One of the traditional leaders interviewed had this response;

I have subjects around me, each time the Assembly calls for Town Hall Meetings I have to move with my handlers all the way to Abokobi. I cannot be handling this at my own expense so it is only proper that the Assembly provide some form of stipends so that I can transport myself and my handlers. [In-depth interview, 12th May 2019]

Even though the Assembly laments the turnout of events, it has to compromise and always make stipends ready for participating members or face the reality of their none attendance. When community members appreciate very well the purpose of participating in decisions that affects their wellbeing they may not wait for incentivization to participate. The issue of community members expecting some incentive is avoidable if the community realize that their participation will inure to their own benefit. The danger of incentive expectation is that the assembly may discourage participation by simply deciding not to incentivize potential participants just so that they simply push some planned agendas through for implementation.

4.3.2 Moving to the Beneficiary/Community

The study as well revealed that the assembly developed a participatory strategy to engage as much people as possible into the planning process. The planning officer indicated during the interview that, they were revising their initial methods of need assessment engagement where they simply brought people to a known venue for deliberations. Interactions with the planning officer revealed that during need assessments or any other issue that require the attention of people, the planning officers moves to the people with their development team.

The assembly identified some social gathering places and took deliberation to the people right at their convenience. They had engaged with people in churches, mosques and some other community events. This initiative, as the researcher was told, was a move to capture as much community members as possible in their development plans since not all community members attended town hall meetings. As part of the assembly's initiative to reach out to as much people as possible for deliberation, a representative of the assembly is sent to sit in resident association meetings in Boi, Ablahjo, Dome, Taifa and other communities within the municipality. The role of the assembly's representative, as the researcher was told is to listen to the concerns of the people and forward same to the planning officer for the purposes of understanding community needs making informed developmental plans. This was extracted from the interview with the Planning Officer;

“We are trying as much as possible to engage the people and let them know what we are doing so in view of this, there is an officer here in the planning department who represents the planning officer in associations meeting of the social groups. We do this just so that we can be up to speed with happenings within the municipality that may require our attention”. [In depth interview, 4th April 2019]

Still within this strategy, WhatsApp platforms of the social/resident groups have representatives of the Assembly on them. This was for easy accessibility and sharing of information between the Assembly and the Community. A respondent said;

“Once in a while we see a team from the Assembly pay a visit the church and talk to some of us about their plans. I belong to Boi Residents Association and sometimes when we have meetings we invite them (Assembly) to come around and listen to us”. [in-depth interview, 12 April, 2019].

This move by the Assembly is especially important given the constraints of people to attend community meetings. It offers them another opportunity to be well informed about the plans of the Assembly as well as raise public awareness of emerging issues within the community. It is not

surprising that some community members may not be aware about the existence of some developmental opportunities within their own locality thereby depriving them the opportunity for effective utilization.

4.3.3 Awareness Creation and Beneficiary/Community Sensitization

As part of the Assembly's strategies to encourage participation in the community, they had to embark on a sensitization initiative in partnership with the civil society. The study observed that the Assembly embarked on a massive awareness journey to drum home the need of community involvement in development. This initiative was primarily activated through series of public education forums, radio conversations and banner publication of community meetings all in attempts to raise awareness for community participation. The Assembly and some heads of the social groups played key roles of mobilizing community members for these sensitization initiatives. The Civil Society came in strongly with a participatory program called the Social and Expenditure Public Accountability (SEPA). This program was essentially adopted to educate and sensitize the community on how to seek accountability on the Assembly's expenditure and the right information to require from the Assembly in relation to their day to day operations.

Chukwuma (2018) agrees that developing programs that essentially aims at promoting accountability at the local level could be a way to achieve greater community involvement. The assembly collaborated with the Civil Society on this agenda and made efforts to reach out to as many people as possible. Under this program, wide consultations and discussions were held with different stakeholder groups within the community on the need for the community to develop interest in the community development process and pay keen attention to the operations of the assembly so as to be able to properly hold them accountable.

“The community feels some detachment from the assembly, they feel the assembly is an elite group that cannot be confronted. We want to clear that notion and get them involved in our activities. Even though not all of them feel that way, but a majority of the people are not interest in what we do, primarily because they think we are not approachable. This perception as we have noticed really hinders participation, so as part of our strategies we decided to collaborate with the NGOs operating within the municipality and beyond to adopt this initiative”. [key informant interview, 4th April, 2019].

Blair (1998) indicates that when these measures of accountability are taken, the community is likely to repose confidence in the Local Authorities thereby urging them to participate in developmental programs. In a discussion during the interview the Assembly Member responded as follows;

“You know there are some communal cleaning that we do on the last Saturday of every month. Sometime last year one occasion an NGOs operating within the municipality tasked me together with some leaders of the community to organize the community members for a cleaning exercise. After the exercise we had a brief interaction with the NGO in the presence of some officers from the Assembly. We discussed so many issues and key amongst them was the need for all the community members to actively engage in community exercises aimed at promoting development”. [key informant interview, 17th May, 2019].

the Civil Society as the researcher was told, held separate meetings with different social groups within the municipality discussing community needs and taking the community through how to assess and prioritize their needs at their own levels. Findings of the study showed that community members were taken through the roles and responsibility of the local Assembly authorities ostensibly to educate them on what local authority can and cannot do given their mandate and the resource available to them. This effort was aimed at diffusing the seeming apathy in the minds of the people as a result of their loss of confidence in the Assembly.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary of findings and Conclusions

To Examine the roles beneficiaries (community members) played in the planning and implementation of initiatives.

In assessing the roles of different stakeholders in the planning and implementation of projects, the study found that at the planning stage the Assembly does well to engage and as well take into consideration the views of the people but their coverage in terms of reaching out to participants requires some improvement. The Assembly as the study observed adopted a very narrow approach to participation by simply prioritizing members of some identified social group during community engagement. Very little efforts were seen to have been made by the Assembly to capture people who happen not to be part of any of the social groups to partake in the decision-making process.

It appeared that at the implementation stage very little effort was made by the Assembly to engage the people in decision making. The participation of most of the people is more likened to what White (1996) describes as instrumental participation. Community members were used by the Assembly to speed up and improve efficiency of the project. For example, during the implementation of the WCW project, the Traditional Leaders were called upon by the Assembly to donate a piece of land for the project while the youth in the area took the responsibility to clear and prepare the site for construction to begin. Very little contribution was taken from the community with regards to the shape and form of the projects as well as issues of funding and monitoring.

To Examine the Factors that influenced the Participation of beneficiaries in projects

Factors that influenced participation in the planning and implementation of the project within the study location was classified into two main factors, that is, *socio political* and *social economic* factors. Most of the respondents interviewed seem to have prioritized the private business over community development planning activities such as need assessment programs and Town Hall Meetings. This, as the study observed, was partly due to their loss of confidence in the assembly to carry out the needed development projects. The confidence of the community members in the assembly seem to reside in the efficiency and commitment with which the Assembly attends to their developmental needs. Therefore, their seeming dissatisfaction in the Assembly in terms its ability to respond to their developmental needs served as a disincentive for their participation in the activities of the Assembly.

Political factors such as the slow pace with which the RCC and the Central Government attend to the developmental plans and agendas of the municipality appeared to be a worry for the Assembly, as they pointed it out as one of the reasons for their slow pace in delivering on developmental initiatives, thereby causing apathy amongst community members towards participation. The study concludes that community organization and grass root mobilization as a social factor is an essential tool that positively influenced or enhanced participation. Those who happened to be part of established social groups in the municipality had some proximity to the Assembly and were more likely to be considered for community engagement and decision-making gatherings. Community members seem not to really see the importance of their participation in the planning process partly because they had the feeling that their involvement may not necessarily make any impact on the decisions to be made. There were a good number of respondents who were aggrieved by the slow

pace of development in the community for which reason they did not prioritize the involvement in the activities of the Assembly. This led to the setting in of apathy among most community members towards the activities of the Assembly.

To Assess the strategies employed Municipal Assembly's Strategy Towards Participation

Local authorities in their attempts to encourage participation employed strategies like incentivizing attendees of community meetings with stipends and other items. Incentives, mostly financial, motivates most of the community members to attend Town Hall Meetings. The Local Authority noticed that participants were attending meetings from far near, for this reason they introduced cash incentives to cater for their transportation and other ancillary expenses. The fear with incentivization by the Assembly is that community members may begin to rely on incentives alone as a bases for attending town halls meetings and relegating the real purpose of their participation to the background. The Assembly also embarked on series of initiative with the Civil Society with the view to educate and sensitize community members on the need for participation. Sensitization was viewed by the Assembly as relevant strategy to get community members to attend and prioritize development. In many cases, government entities or NGOs have launched campaigns to raise awareness to sensitize local people on relevant issues, but the concern and question is whether these campaigns have really been able to change the behavior of people and achieved its purpose. though unfortunate, the study observed that this phenomenon had become the norm for every Town Hall Meeting to discuss Medium Term Development Plans (MTDP). The study therefore concludes that the Assembly continuously uses this strategy because the community members themselves condones it and sees it as a pre-requisite for their involvement in Town Hall Meetings.

5.2 Recommendations

- The study recommends that Local Authority officials especially within the Development Planning Department in the Ga East municipality should be appropriately trained and equipped with the necessary tools of effective community participation and engagement. The officials who are tasked with the responsibility of community engagement activities such as need assessment and objective prioritization meetings must have deep knowledge on the adoption and use of the right participatory. This will equip them with the needed skills of human relation and the ability to understand community needs and aspiration.
- The Assembly and Civil Society Organizations should inform and sensitize community members on the roles and official responsibilities of the Assembly as well as structural impediments and setbacks to the discharge of the Assembly's duties. This recommendation is on the back of the huge developmental expectation of the community which is not forthcoming, leading to loss of confidence in the Assembly by the community members.
- The municipal Assembly should strengthen and deepen the use of the bottom-approach to community engagement. Deliberations should not only be limited to members of the community belonging to social groups only but also an effort to reach out to individual community members to solicit views about key developmental objectives and plans
- Community projects like the WCW project typically have multiple stakeholders and interest parties. There is need for constant engagement and subsequent management. The Assembly can facilitate this by establishing an accessible channel of information sharing between actors implementing projects and stakeholders.

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APPENDIX
UNIVERSITY OF GHANA
Institute for Statistical, Social and Economic Research (ISSER)
College of humanities
Interview Guide

Assessing the comprehensiveness of community participation in the planning and implementation stages of the project lifecycle; a case of the women and children ward (wcw) facility in Abokobi, Ghana.

SECTION A

BIODATA OF RESPONDENTS

1. What is your age and Gender?
2. What religion do you belong?
3. What is your occupation?
4. What is your educational level?
5. What is your marital status?

SECTION B

Planning officer and Assembly member.

Objective 1: Examining the role of community members in the planning and implementation of community projects.

Discussion points

1. Can you briefly account for the specific roles you played in the planning and implementation of the AFCW? who assigned those roles to you?
2. How different was your role from other members in the planning process?
3. Were you content with your role or was there more you could do in the process?
4. At what stage in the cycle of the project was there high participation and at what stage was the participation not encourage. Account for the variance if there is any?

5. With specific regards to the FCWP what could be said about the level of participation?
6. In the planning and implementation of projects, what specific responsibilities was handed to participating groups?
7. Based on your understanding to participation how will you judge the participatory process in development projects in the community.

Interview guide for Respondents from Community Groups on objective 1.

Discussion points

8. How long have you been a member of this group?
9. Do you know about the occasional MTDP meetings held at the town hall council?
10. What were your contributions in the decision-making process during the MTDP meetings?
11. What were the reactions to your contribution by the facilitators?
12. Beyond the town hall meetings, were there other engagement forums? If yes, what other roles did you play?
13. Were you part of the implementation of the AFCW? If yes, what did you do?

SECTION C

Objective 2: Examining the factors influencing beneficiary participation.

Planning Officer and Assembly member.

Discussion points

14. What in your view, accounts for the involvement or non-involvement of community members in all events of projects execution?
15. Apart from the MTDP meetings, can you briefly describe the channels through which the assembly engages the community regarding development projects?

16. Why in your view, would a community member deliberately not take part in development process?
17. What different measures does your outfit take to strengthen participation?
18. As an outfit, how will you describe your interest in participation? And what accounts for your response?
19. Can you discuss some other ways your involvement in projects could be enhanced?
20. How does the community's way of life affect participation?

Respondents from community/social Groups on objective 2.

Discussion points

21. Could your participation in the community project be affected by socio cultural factors such as Gender and poverty?
22. Were there any political factors that influenced your participation? If yes, what was its nature?
23. Would you deliberately exclude yourself from the participatory process leading to the execution of community projects? If yes, why?
24. Can you discuss any other factor that affect participation?

SECTION D

Objective 3: Assessing the measures used by project implementors to encourage participation

Planning officer.

Discussion points

25. Do you entice community members with material benefits such money or any other to participate?

26. Do you undertake seminars or any form of training for development planning officers on best participatory practices? If yes, how often?
27. How do you empower community members such that they repose confidence in the process and make themselves available in the development process?
28. How relevant is community sensitization and education in your efforts to get them participate?
29. How do you inform the community about participatory meetings?
30. What measures does your outfit adopt to curb self-exclusion?

SECTION C.

Objective 4: Examining the participatory forms and trends in the planning and implementation of community projects in the Ga east municipal assembly

Planning officer

Discussion points

31. Have your outfit changed some participatory practices over the years?
32. How will you describe the Assembly's mode of participation?
33. Does this mode of participation practiced by your outfit give you the needed results?
34. Beyond consultation, what other ways do you engage community members in project executions?