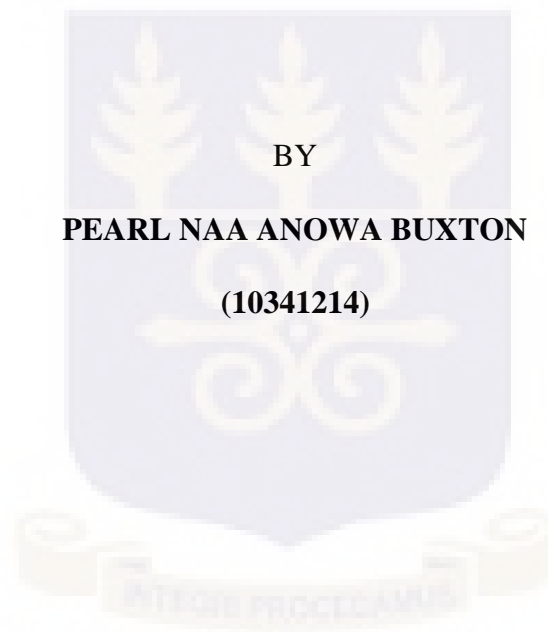


**THE USE OF MEDIA ADVOCACY BY CIVIL SOCIETY  
ORGANIZATIONS (CSOs) IN PUSHING DEVELOPMENT AGENDA IN  
GHANA**




**THIS DISSERTATION IS SUBMITTED TO THE UNIVERSITY OF GHANA IN  
PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR THE AWARD OF MA  
COMMUNICATIONS STUDIES**

**OCTOBER, 2019**


## DECLARATION

I declare that except the works of other authors which have been duly referenced, I personally, under the supervision of Prof. Margaret Ivy Amoakohene, did this work.

I also affirm that this work has not been submitted in whole or part to any educational institution for any purpose.

  
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## **ABSTRACT**

The study examined media advocacy as practiced by Civil Society organizations in pushing for development agenda in Ghana. The study employed an exploratory research design and a sample size of three(3) CSOs namely Ghana Integrity Initiative, Media Foundation for West Africa and the Centre for Democratic Development using the purposive sampling technique. Underpinned by the Agenda Setting and the Two-step flow theory, interviews were conducted for data collection. Interviews were then transcribed and analyzed using thematic analysis approach. The findings revealed that, CSOs use various strategies accompanied with different media forms depending on their target audience and the specific issue at hand. It also found that media advocacy plays a significant role in their work towards development as it reaches a wider audience in the shortest possible time. The outcome of their media advocacy, either results in a policy or behavioral change, contributing to the development agenda in Ghana. It also found that the use of social media for media advocacy cannot be overlooked in this era of smart phone usage especially in serving as a tool and a platform for building relationship with media practitioners.

The study recommended that further studies can be done on the external communication relationship between CSOs and media institutions taking special focus on the costs and benefits in their media advocacy roles.

## **DEDICATION**

This work is dedicated to my parents, Mr. Thomas Nii Baah Buxton and Mrs. Cynthia Omolora Buxton and my siblings, Thomas Esilfie Buxton and Adar Baanorkor Buxton for their immense support and prayers. I love you All.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACILA.....	African Centre for International Law and Accountability
CDD-GHANA.....	Centre for Democratic Development
CED.....	Community Economic Development
CLGA.....	Centre for Local Governance Advocacy
CODEO.....	Coalition of Domestic Election Observers
CSOs.....	Civil Society organizations
EC.....	Electoral Commission of Ghana
GACC.....	Ghana Anti-Corruption Coalition
GCGL.....	Graphic Communications Group Limited
GII.....	Ghana Integrity Initiative
HIV.....	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
IDEG.....	Institute for Democratic Governance
MFWA.....	Media Foundation for West Africa
M&E.....	Monitoring and Evaluation
MMDCE's.....	Metropolitan, Municipal, District Chief Executives
NGOs.....	Non-Governmental Organizations
REC.....	Regional Environmental Centre, Sweden
RTI.....	Right to Information
TI.....	Transparency International
TV.....	Television
UNICEF.....	United Nations Children's Fund



## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### **1.0 Background to the study**

According to Rahmato (2002, p.104), “CSOs occupy the space between the state on one hand, and the lowest unit of social life, the family, on the other hand. They include all non-market and non-state organizations and structures in which people organize to pursue shared objectives and ideals”. Similarly, Drah (2003, p.118) also defined CSOs as “an ensemble of intermediary associations or organizations which operate between the primary units of society in general (like the individual, family or household) and the state and its agencies”. Examples of these are farmers’ associations, professional associations, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), community-based organizations, environmental groups, cooperatives, independent research institutes, faith-based organizations, labour unions, employers’ associations and media organizations or independent media organizations, as well as other groups.

The establishment and work of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) by individuals and groups is seen to be the driving force of most societies (Frimpong, 2017). They are known to form an important force towards successful policy advocacy and implementation. CSOs are also recognized to be beneficial to society and have contributed in a number of ways by increasing policy and research attention in countries (Pollard & Court, 2005). Their impact is visible, can be measured and is of social, economic or democratic gain to citizens of a country. Today, the work of CSOs have impacted governance, health, education, trade etc. of countries. Impressive gains in all aspects of life are partly brought about due to the consistent efforts made by CSOs.

Development, as defined by the Society for International development (SID) is “the process that creates growth, progress, positive change or the addition of physical, economic, environmental, social and demographic components to bring about a rise in the level and quality of life of a population, and the creation or expansion of local regional income and employment opportunities, without damaging the resources of the environment”(SID, 2018). Going by this definition, this study will focus on the positive change that brings about a rise in the level and quality of life of a population through the media advocacy work of CSOs.

### **1.1 The Formation of CSOs in Ghana, media advocacy and their contribution to development**

In Ghana, the formation of CSOs dates back to the country’s pre-independence era. At the time, CSOs were mainly established to help provide basic social services such as electricity, water, schools, hospitals among others to citizens in the country (Drah& Ocquaye, 2013). However, the progress of CSO work could not thrive in Ghana as a result of unfavorable conditions and unstable democratic governance at the time (Drah, 2003).

According to Edwards (2004), CSOs and the media are able to thrive better in a democratically stable country where policies are likely to work than in countries that have experienced wars, famine, and worse economic conditions. In addition, the political culture, legal environment and corruption are factors that can lead to different levels of engagement or disengagements of CSOs. Grugel (1999) also argued that, the progress of CSOs work is dependent on the political context of a particular country.

In other studies, Blankson (2000) and Tandoh (1995) pointed out that the intensification of liberal and democratic reforms in Ghana in the mid 1990s resulted in the establishment of multi-party democracy, privatization of the airwaves and most importantly, the emergence of independent mass media operations. This gave way for many independent owned media institutions, numbering over two hundred, to broadcast alongside the state-owned media thereby significantly changing the media environment in the country. As a result, independent owned media institutions, especially radio, took centre stage in the democratic and civil society building process. This opened up the space for free expression of divergent and discerning views as opposed to the military era where the state-owned media was controlled by the ruling government (Blankson, 2002). Thus, giving rise to the formation of many CSOs and the space to thrive (Ohemeng & Ayee, 2013). This has led to the production of media programs where civil society groups use the mass media as a platform to exchange ideas and communicate with their audiences or target groups (Blankson, 2002).

Over the years, the presence of CSOs and their media advocacy work, have played a key role in Ghana's policy making (Ohemeng, 2015). Some CSOs, for example, have been very vocal on issues of corruption, constitutionalism, governance, democracy, human rights, gender and the economy, among others using the various forms of media i.e. television, print, radio, online digital platforms and social media.

Hence, media advocacy, is the “strategic use of mass media to advance public policy initiatives” (Wallack, 1994).

Many countries have benefited from the media advocacy work of CSOs in promoting development and peace. In Ghana, many CSOs influence public policy choices through media advocacy (Ohemeng 2015, p. 672). CSOs' influence on policy brings about positive change. To cite an example, in Ghana, the Institute for Democratic Governance, the Centre for Democratic Development and the Institute of Economic Affairs through their media advocacy have gained recognition for their contribution to Ghana's policy making in achieving good governance (Botchway, 2018). Thus, their recognition gives them an opportunity, or an invitation to make an input as a Stakeholder in working with select committees in the Legislative arm of Government. That is, in the formulation and passage of bills to protect the interest and rights of citizens. The passage of the Disability and Freedom to Information Bills is an example of how CSOs influence decision making. Similarly, with the Right to Information (RTI) bill, some selected CSOs (Media Foundation for West Africa, Ghana Journalist Association, and the Coalition on the Right to Information Bill) have worked with the Government (Ministry of Communications) alongside other institutions like the Ghana Media Commission in passing the bill into law.

In recent times (2019), some CSOs in Ghana, through their media advocacy efforts have been able to drive the need for a law to check crime and punish culprits of vigilantism offences. They have collectively worked with the Legislative arm of Government in putting together a comprehensive Bill on Vigilantism and related offences. This has been passed into a law. These efforts by the CSOs play key roles in influencing public policy. The extent to which this influence on public policy is a significant contribution towards development will be examined in this study.

### **1.3 Problem Statement**

In a democratic society where there are three main actors, i.e. the public (government) sector, the private (business) sector and civil society, CSOs interact with citizens by bringing out specific concerns of theirs, giving them an effective voice and therefore helping them take part in the decision-making process of a country. Arguably, CSOs are sometimes referred to as “the building blocks of democracy” as they facilitate effective interlinkages between a variety of interest within society as described by the Regional Environmental Centre, Sweden (REC, 2019). CSOs role in these activities are mostly done through media advocacy. According to Paffenholz and Spurk (2010), their main functions are advocacy and public communication or awareness creation, intermediation and facilitation, social cohesion, lobbying, monitoring and service delivery. CSOs play important roles in enhancing transparency and good governance in developing countries by contributing to increased public debate on issues surrounding the formulation and implementation of policies. In achieving this goal, media advocacy is used. Media advocacy is mainly done to raise awareness, create change and build a movement or momentum for a cause (Pickles& Frescina, 2013). Through the use of media advocacy, CSOs and the media set the agenda to raise awareness and influence issues which pushes for actions to be taken.

Many contributions made in the past by CSOs in Ghana used media advocacy as their key strategy (Ohemeng, 2015). Research has shown that media advocacy by CSOs has aided in promoting development in Africa (Bukonya & Hickey, 2013). Omotoso (2010) focused on media advocacy and its influence on citizens in Nigeria using a form of medium i.e., radio whiles Silpakar (2012) focused on the influence of media advocacy on policy making in Nepal. However, other studies have not clearly stated what media advocacy strategies have proven to be

helpful to pushing development agenda. Furthermore, there seem to be few studies on media advocacy by CSOs in Ghana in pushing development agenda. The study will provide insight by offering the Ghanaian perspective on CSOs media advocacy strategies and its effectiveness to development thereby, filling the gap in literature.

This study will assess how CSOs media advocacy strategies contributes to setting the agenda for development in the social, economic and political aspects of life. It will look at how the media advocacy of these CSOs influence the public on what to think about and how the public should think about the issues. The study will examine the tactic/techniques used, the significance of CSOs media advocacy work and the various forms of media employed.

#### **1.4 Objectives of the Study**

The overall objective of the study is to explore the nature of CSOs media advocacy and how the media advocacy efforts contributes to development in Ghana.

The specific objectives are;

1. To examine the nature of CSO media advocacy in Ghana.
2. To evaluate the extent to which CSO media advocacy contributes in pushing the development agenda in Ghana.

#### **1.5 Research Questions**

1. What are the areas of specialization, media forms and tactics/techniques of CSO media advocacy in Ghana?

2. What is the significance of CSO media advocacy in contributing to the development agenda in Ghana?

### **1.6 Significance of Study**

Although there have been several studies around the work of CSOs, many of these studies have been conducted in other disciplines such as political science. Empirical studies focusing on advocacy, activism and CSO's in the field of Communication Studies are still limited (Mueller, Pagé and Kuerbis, 2004). Therefore, this study is significant because it provides a Ghanaian perspective and insight in to media advocacy by CSOs in Ghana in influencing public policy choices and the development agenda in general. The study also adds to the scholarship on media advocacy by CSOs in Ghana.

### **1.7 Definition of Terms**

The following terms were used in the study;

**Areas of specialization of CSO media advocacy:** This was used to denote particular aspects or areas the CSOs specialize or focus on.

**Civil Society Organizations:** These are a variety of autonomous, voluntary institutions which provide services to individuals and also articulate public interest.

**Development agenda:** In this study, the term refers to the systematic use of technical knowledge to address issues that require long term approaches to achieve in improving the quality of life.

**Media Advocacy:** This term refers to the way CSOs use to influence decision making through the media outlets such as newsletters, journals, magazines, radio, television, news outlets and even on social media.

## **1.8 Structure of Study**

This study is organized into five (5) chapters. The first chapter looks at the introduction and the background to the study. It looks at CSOs and their contribution to development, the history of CSOs in Ghana, the problem statement, research objectives and questions. It also delves into the significance of the study, operational definitions and the structure of the research.

The second chapter discusses the theories underpinning the study i.e. the Agenda Setting theory, and the Two-step flow theory and reviews some literature related to the study. It illustrates with diagrams.

The third chapter discusses the research methodology approach used in this study. The research design, sampling, data collection, and data analysis are discussed in this study. It also gives a brief description of the sampled CSOs in Ghana.

The fourth chapter discusses the findings from the analysis made from data collected through the use of a semi-structured interview guide and also gives a brief description on the work of the sampled CSOs media advocacy work.

The last and fifth chapter gives a summary of the findings, conclusion and recommendations.

## CHAPTER TWO

### THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND RELATED STUDIES

#### 2.0 Introduction

This chapter examined the Agenda Setting theory and the Two-step flow theory as the theoretical framework underpinning this study. The choice of theory was informed by previous studies which looked at media advocacy for development like Maputseni (2006) and Fayoyin (2014). The application of these theories gave an understanding on how media advocacy influences development. The theories helped examine the logic and processes involved in achieving the objectives of this study. Additionally, this chapter also discusses literature related to the concept of media advocacy by CSOs, their development agenda and the various approaches used in achieving them.

The literature review is in three parts. The first part looks at the concept of media advocacy for development, followed by communication models or approaches used by CSOs and the last focuses on the forms of media used.

#### 2.1 Theoretical Framework

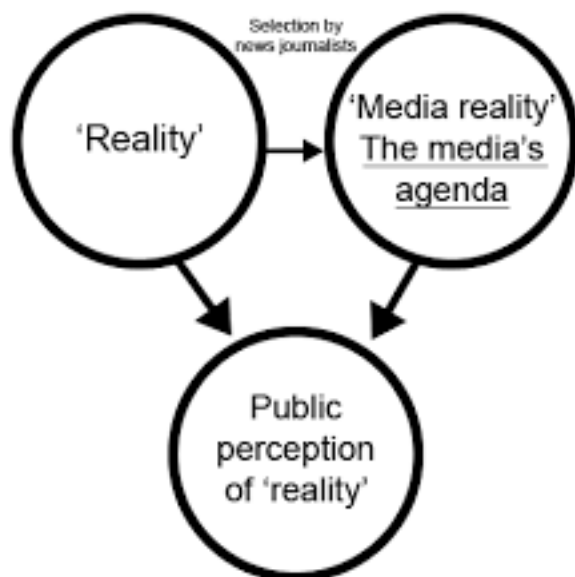
#### 2.2 The Agenda Setting Theory

This theory was first introduced by McCombs and Shaw in 1972. McCombs and Shaw believed that “mass media have the ability to transfer the salience of items on their news agenda to the public agenda”(Griffin2012, p.378). The theory states that news plays an integral part in the shaping of political realities. The theory is based on the assumption that, what issues media characterize as important is eventually mirrored in what people think are important. It is also based on the assumption of curiosity or the need to know what is going on in the world around

us. Thus, the agenda setting theory was built on the notion that mass media sets agenda for what people should care about. In terms of transfer of salience from the media to public spaces, the agenda setting occurs on two levels; “the transmission of object salience” being the first level and “the transmission of attribute salience” (McCombs & Ghanem, 2001, p.68). In other words, the first level influences public opinion or public dialogue by making specific topics or objects more salient within the mass media agenda, suggesting to the public the topics in mass media that are the important ones to focus on (Kiousis, 2004; Diakov, 2015). The second level on the other hand, limits discussion to specific attributes of the broader topics thereby suggesting how the public should think about the issue (Kiousis, 2004). This is also referred to as framing.

There are three types of agenda setting namely public agenda setting, media agenda setting and public policy agenda setting. The public agenda setting occurs when the public develops an agenda for which stories are considered important. Media agenda setting occurs when the media develops an agenda for which stories are considered important and public policy agenda setting occurs when both the public and the media agenda influence decisions of public policy-makers.

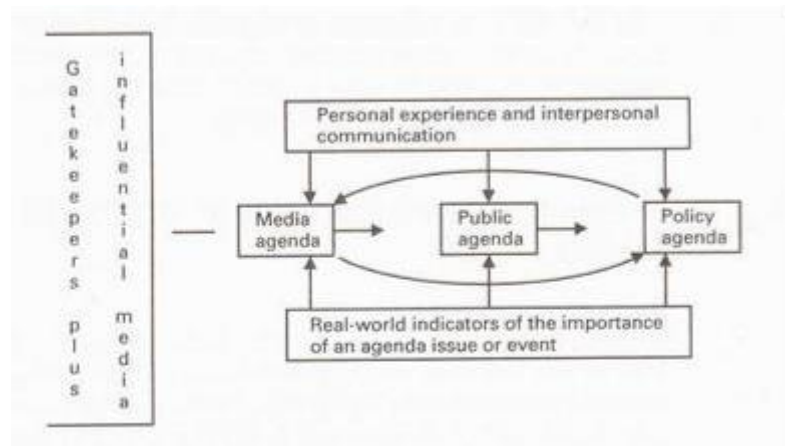
**Figure 1. Agenda setting theory model**



Source: Google images

In figure 1, Journalists select agenda from “reality” which forms “media reality”. The public’s perception of “reality” is then shaped as a result of what is in the media. Thus, citizens perception of reality is formed in their minds on what has been read, heard or seen in the media.

**Figure 2: Agenda Setting Theory model**



Source: McQuail & Windahl (1993)

Figure 2 further explains that, the personal experience and interpersonal communication in conjunction with real-world indicators of the importance of an issue or event, sets the agenda in a given time.

The agenda setting theory was adopted for this study because, the media, in collaborating with the CSOs, in their advocacy work, are able to bring out issues which the media then characterizes as important. It is eventually reflected in what people think the important issues of the day are. In doing so, the agenda is set and a public perception of “reality” is created in the minds of citizens

on what issues they should care about. Having the issues portrayed in the media as important in the minds of the public, the media provides a platform to dialogue issues of national interest which tends to contribute to the development agenda of the country.

This theory helped to understand what areas of specialization, and techniques CSOs employed in using the media to set the agenda for their advocacy and how that influences the citizens or public to think are the most important issues. The theory also formed the basis in understanding and determining how CSO media advocacy efforts impacts development agenda. The theory helped in identifying how CSO media advocacy techniques employed sets agenda in the media giving priorities to certain issues which later turn to influence policy making.

Though the agenda setting theory purposely fits for this study, it has its own limitations. It is not clear how directly and to what degree the media sets public agenda or the development agenda. Some studies proposed personal variables that can mitigate the effects of media agenda setting on individual or audience (Matsaganis and Payne, 2005; Gross and Aday, 2003; McCombs and Shaw, 1997). To explain how personal variables can influence the effects of media agenda setting, is an example of how an individual may believe that his/her elected official is the best choice for office despite numerous compelling reports to the contrary presented by the mass media.

### **2.3 Two-step Flow Theory**

The two-step flow theory is a media effect theory. It was first introduced by Paul Lazarsfeld, Bernard Berelson and Hazel Gaudet in a study that focused on the process of decision-making

during a Presidential election campaign. The research expected to find empirical support for the direct influence of media messages on voting intentions. However, at the end of the research, the findings revealed that informal, personal contacts were mentioned far more frequently than exposure to radio or newspaper as source of influence on voting behavior. The data derived from this research developed the Two-step flow theory of mass communication.

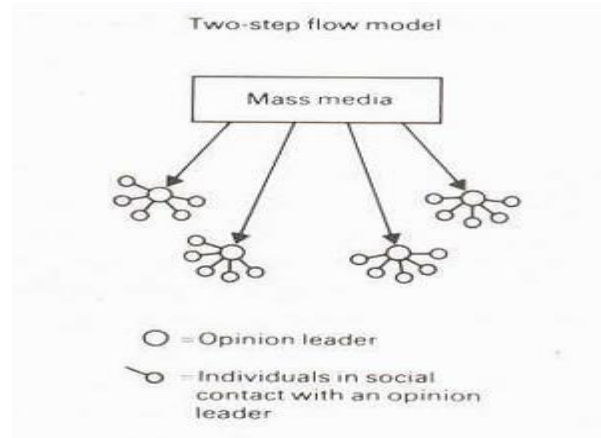
The basic assumption of this theory is that media moves in two distinct stages. The first are individuals (opinion leaders) who pay close attention to the mass media and its messages in receiving the information. The second stage is when opinion leaders then pass on their own interpretations in addition to the actual media content. These opinion leaders are well respected people in a given community. Opinion leaders are quite influential in getting people to change their attitudes and behavior and are quite similar to those they influence. The other assumption of this theory is that the media may not have a wider reach or citizens or the public may not necessarily pay attention to issues discussed in the mass media or not have access to the media and hence rely on these opinion leaders with access for information.

To some extent, and for the purposes of this study, the opinion leaders described here, going by the theory are the CSOs. These CSOs have background knowledge and the expertise to effectively analyze issues in the media and bring out the necessary recommendations which are then translated into their advocacy work with the aim of influencing the public in policy making or for a social cause.

Some criticisms of the theory are that information flows to people on the whole and it is not relayed by opinion leaders. Also, some scholars have criticized the theory of not adequately describing the flow of learning. Weiss (1970) thought that the theory oversimplified the relationship between mass media, opinion leaders and the public. Lazarsfeld (1995) and his associates were unable to determine the specific flow of influence.

Even though there have been criticisms of the theory, the theory can be applied to this study. CSOs, due to the nature of their work particularly in advocacy, deploy a lot of intermediaries to reach their target. The mobilization of public support for or against public policy, which is at the core of advocacy, is usually done through opinion leaders such as traditional leaders, Chiefs, Assembly members, Members of Parliament, influencers or CSOs etc. within the society. Because opinion leaders are huge influencers in Ghana, CSOs tend to route their advocacy through them most of the time for reach and influence. This is because the public or citizens in general may not fully pay attention to the happenings in the media or may not have access to the media and as a result may rely on or look up to these opinion leaders as sources of information and education. The opinion leaders, based on their own prejudices and biases filter the messages before onward dissemination to the public. This creates a two-step flow model for the conduct of advocacy by CSOs in Ghana. The two-step flow theory will therefore help in understanding how CSOs media advocacy influences citizen in decision and policy making, through their act of interpreting messages and information disseminated in the media and how they use the media again in sharing their interpretations/findings on research among others.

**Figure 3: Two-step flow model**



**Source: Kats& Lazersfeld (1995)**

In figure 2 above, information is shared from mass media to individuals through opinion leaders. Once the opinion leaders receive the information, they then relay it to individuals/citizens. That can be said for CSOs who relay information through various means such as using the media again, as a tool to further discuss an issue, to remote areas and also through the use of conferences, workshops and on social media platforms.

## **2.4 Review of Related Studies**

Many CSOs have contributed to policy making over the last decades (Fioramonti and Heinrich, 2007). Despite their numerous challenges, their efforts have contributed to making an impact in policy making and development. The following studies looked at how some CSOs have contributed to development and caused a form of social change through media advocacy. The review took a critical look at the concept of media advocacy for development, communication models/approaches and tactics used by CSOs, and the forms of media used and their impact.

## **2.5 The Concept of Media Advocacy for Development**

The concept of media advocacy is embedded in the agenda setting theory. Williamson and Rodd (2016) in their study, defined advocacy as the process of persuading targeted audience to take a specific policy action especially government officials. The study identified that “advocacy can impact policies at any stage of the policy cycle from the agenda setting, formulation, adoption to implementation and evaluation” (p.2). It is important to note that the desired outcome is a policy change. The study focused on media advocacy and service delivery roles of CSOs working in HIV prevention and mitigation. The findings revealed that media advocacy rather focused on behavior change of the people rather than influencing government. The study notes community mobilization in relation to behavior change. This behavior change collectively leads to social change and in the long run development. The findings of this study reveal how the media influence the quality of the messages sent to the public by CSOs. The current study sought to explore this within the Ghanaian context by identifying any similarities or differences. In understanding thoroughly the nature of CSO media advocacy to development, another study Fayoyin (2014), linked media advocacy to development agencies and stated that most development agencies employed various strategies of media advocacy to achieve specific outcomes in the area of social development. The objective of this approach was to ensure that important social issues become objects of media discourse and public agenda. The study described media advocacy as a part of a broader health promotion and development communication programme intended to shape media coverage and ultimately affect the public agenda. Meaning that, media advocacy influences the public debate by engaging with and putting pressure on mass media to focus on specific social issues. The study concluded that media advocacy by developmental agencies is established on the need to address information

gaps in the process of policy or political influence and promote specific development issues in the public domain. It recommended that media organizations need to be more discerning in their relations with development organizations to equip them to hold development agencies accountable for the promised results. The current study sought to explore this by looking at what training programmes have been made available to in equipping CSOs for their media advocacy efforts. The literature also provided a strong basis for choosing the agenda setting theory to underpin the current study.

Gildemyn (2014) in another study, focused on CSOs in Ghana that engage in independent monitoring and evaluation of government programs and policies at the district level. The study showed that most CSOs relied on a combination of M&E tools in addition to advocacy strategies to hold government accountable and improve the implementation of programs and policies. The study revealed that behavioral mechanisms used showed collaborative changes in practices following an M&E of the National Health Insurance by a CSOs in Ghana. The findings proved that the role of organized discussion spaces and advocacy strategies acts as catalyst for certain influence mechanisms. The literature provided insights into choosing the two-step flow media effect theory for the current study. This is because the study revealed that CSOs in using certain behavioral mechanisms and advocacy strategies as catalyst to influence policy making thereby making them opinion leaders themselves.

The above studies provided insight into the nature of media advocacy and its impact to development. It also revealed the second level agenda setting i.e. framing in the approach that CSOs use in framing the issues in the media. Thus, traces of agenda-setting in the media advocacy work of the CSOs were evident. This was beneficial to forming the bases of the study.

## **2.6 Communication Models/ Approaches and Tactics of Civil Society Organizations**

The two-step flow theory is often employed by CSOs in their media advocacy to influence public decision making. As mentioned earlier, these CSOs serve as opinion leaders themselves or make use of opinion leaders in their communication models or approaches. In Vozab (2012) study, the criteria for the selection of the CSOs was based on their goals and issues each CSOs were dealing with in advocating for social change. The change was in the interest of the public and dealt with issues that promoted development. Vozab (2012) pointed that CSOs relationship with mass media cannot be overlooked as it served as an important instrument for CSOs to legitimize their actions and bring issues of concern to the public. Vozab (2012) identified several methods CSOs use in their advocacy work and grouped them under 4 main forms. These are (i) adjusting to mass media logic by adapting to communicative techniques, (ii) influencing mass media institutions, (iii) creating alternative forms of communication and (iv) the use of alternative media such as social media.

The first method stressed on the use of a professional journalist or the establishment of a public relations unit by the CSOs. It also noted in the findings that some CSOs change their organizational structure and its activities to suit the demands of the mass media institutions in order to be visible or to sustain their positive image. The purpose of this method was to change one's own organizational structure to suit the media institutions' style in order to obtain coverage on activities carried out by these CSOs. With a specific CSO for example, they made their messages understandable to a wider audience and in suitable form. Their messages were short, concise and of public interest. That notwithstanding, it was noted that the flexibility of the message, the fast reaction and the ability of recognizing the right moment to get the media

attention was the key to successful communication. The second method employed by CSOs was to influence mass media through the use of workshops and trainings to educate media persons or journalist on issues CSOs dealt with. This approach helped improve the representation of the issues of the marginalized and minority group as a whole to the public domain. However, this type of approach worked for CSOs who have already gained public recognition or legitimacy. The last method Vozab (2012) identified was the creation of alternative forms of media. This happened when media activists or CSOs create independent media that incorporate participatory democratic practices in their work to create a discourse that eventually improved the communication relationship between the audience, the media and the CSOs or activists. This literature provided a good understanding into the techniques and approaches used by CSOs in their media advocacy work. However, Vozab (2012) limitation in the literature did not cover how the advocacy through the traditional and new forms of media impacted development in Croatia. The current study would explore that.

In pushing the debate for the various approaches in CSO advocacy further, Silpakar (2012), in another study on policy advocacy by CSOs, found that, CSO's used different approaches for their advocacy based on the overall vision and goal of the organization and the relative strength of the organization within the state-society relations. It also noted that some advocacy may not necessarily make the desired change or impact because some CSO lack very little or no knowledge on issues they advocate on and are not able to communicate well to the public on these. It proposed that background research must be conducted to gain the necessary knowledge on the basic concerns of citizens which will subsequently enable CSOs to gain an understanding of the long-term impact of their advocacy work to development. It further noted that the politicization of issues in policy advocacy by CSOs, limits the issues from being worked on. As a

result, the advocacy for issues remains only in speeches deprived of any action. The above studies forms basis of identifying similar approaches or tactics used by CSOs in their media advocacy work. It also provides insights into why proper background research should be conducted before any advocacy is conducted on an issue. However, this study revealed limitations on the part of CSOs lacking the necessary knowledge for their media advocacy work. As explained earlier, taking into consideration the Two-step flow media effect theory, there is a likelihood of negatively influencing the public in their media advocacy work due to the CSOs inadequate knowledge.

## **2.7 Forms of Media Used and Their Impact**

Over the years, media technology has reached some level of expansion which has motivated the application of innovative ways in content, platform and devices. In other words, the proliferation of media technologies and devices and its usage has presented unique ways of communication which play key roles in influencing development. The growth in social media adoption and use in Africa has reached a tremendous height, especially during the last decade (Dutta & Lanvin, 2013; BBC World service trust, 2010). Its adoption has been used in all sectors of economies including agriculture, rural development, education, science and technology, and politics, among others (Ross 2010; International crisis group, 2011). Stakeholders of political activities in Africa are adopting to the use of social media by developing themselves to fit in the social media revolution.

In a study, Atengble (2014) looked at some activities that threaded on social media platforms and identified some particular effects these activities had on Ghana's 2012 Election petition session. The study found that, although social media was used as a tool for the provision of information

and advocacy, commentaries on the proceedings of the court and opinions were expressed using the same platform. These discussions were sometimes objective analysis of the proceedings as others towed usual partisan lines. Drawing from this, it can be said that these commentaries directly or indirectly had somewhat effect in setting the agenda on the minds of citizens i.e. what to think and how to think about it. The study identified four effects of social media use during the 2012 Election petition; (i) the public was more informed and educated public, (ii) a collective creation of Ghanaian knowledge, (iii) transparency in proceedings and (iv) general law and order. Drawing on Atengble (2014) study, the current study would explore different forms of media; traditional or new forms and how efficient it has been in the CSO media advocacy work in Ghana.

Contrary to Atengble (2014) study which focused on social media platform use, Omotoso (2010), also elaborated the significance of traditional media as an important tool in pushing for development. Focusing on a specific geographical area, the Village square in Nigeria, the study revealed that radio jingles, television, videos played vital roles in promoting Community Economic Development(CED). It analyzed the potential capabilities of the forms of media used to enhance effective implementation of CED projects and how effective the use of media transforms development projects into best practices. The study concluded that media intervention and the impact on community development cannot be overestimated. The study also provided a perspective into how the media advocacy interventions have a direct correlation with development in the Nigerian context. The current study sought to explore the various media forms available for CSO media advocacy work.

## **2.8 Chapter Summary**

This chapter explained the theoretical framework within which the study was situated. It discussed selected studies related to the concept of media advocacy, communication approaches/tactics for media advocacy and the forms of media used for media advocacy to form the basis of this study. The agenda setting theory and the two-step flow theory were the theories underpinning the study.

## CHAPTER THREE

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### 3.0 Introduction

This chapter explains the methodological approach used in this study. It explains the procedures used and the reasons behind their use. It discusses the research design, sampling, source of data, data collection and the data analysis techniques used in conducting this study. It also gives a brief description of the sampled CSOs in Ghana.

#### 3.1 Research Design

Research design as defined by Babbie (1992, p.89) is “the planning of scientific inquiry- designing a strategy for finding out something”. Creswell (2009,p.3) further defined it as “the plans and procedures that span the decisions from broad assumption to detailed method of data collection and analysis”. This study is an exploratory one, in that it explores how media advocacy is used by CSOs in pushing for development thereby helping the researcher to make an informed insight and analysis of findings which will meet the aim or objectives of the study. Therefore, the research design was designed to help realize this focus. The choice of conducting an exploratory research was to enable the gathering of useful information in meeting the objectives for this study. This research approach helped to fully examine what goes into the media advocacy work of CSOs and how they contribute to development.

A qualitative research methodology was used for this study in order to realize the objectives of the study. The qualitative approach helped to understand the meaning people attribute to issues affecting society (Creswell, 2014). It also helped to understand the perspective of individuals of groups of people (Creswell, 2014).

### **3.2 Population and Sampling**

The population for the study included CSOs in the Greater Accra Region that perform media advocacy work. In this study, a purposive sampling technique was employed. Purposive sampling, which is also known as judgmental or expert sampling is a type of non-probability sampling that selects based on the characteristic of the population and the objective of study. The objective of purposive sampling is to logically assume representatives of a population (Lavrakas, 2008). In applying this technique of sampling, expert knowledge of the population was used to select in a non-random manner a sample of elements that represented a cross-section of the population. Three CSOs were sampled namely Ghana Integrity Initiative (GII), Centre for Democratic Development (CDD) and Media Foundation for West Africa (MFWA). The three (3) CSOs were selected based on their record of media advocacy programs in their work and their contribution to public policy over the past two decades.

#### **GHANA INTEGRITY INITIATIVE (GII)**

GII is a local chapter of Transparency International (TI), and is a global civil society organization leading the fight against corruption. TI brings people together in a powerful worldwide coalition of over 90 locally established national chapters and chapters-in-formation to

end the devastating impact of corruption on men, women and children around the world. TI's mission is to create change towards a world free of corruption. GII's strategy and all its activities are rooted in its core values. These core values are: Integrity, Transparency, Accountability, Independence, Impartiality, Objectivity and Cooperation (GII, 2019).

The GII is known for having contributed to the public policy through their advocacy work in Ghana's democratic dispensation, hence its sampling for this study.

### **CENTRE FOR DEMOCRATIC DEVELOPMENT (CDD-Ghana)**

The Ghana Center for Democratic Development (CDD-Ghana) is an independent, not-for-profit research and advocacy think tank, working to advance democracy, good governance, and inclusive economic growth. CDD-Ghana works to complement the broader objectives of strengthening democratic governance, the principles of popular participation and the demand for public accountability. The Center harnesses the power of evidence-based research, ideas, partnerships to encourage dialogue, inform and influence public policy through its work (CDD-Ghana, 2019).

CDD-Ghana was sampled due to its contribution towards democratic governance and development in Ghana. It is known for providing apt policy recommendations to the Ghanaian government. They also work hand in hand with media institutions on several programmes.

## **MEDIA FOUNDATION FOR WEST AFRICA (MFWA)**

The MFWA is a regional independent non-governmental organization. It is the biggest and most influential media development and freedom of expression advocacy organization in West Africa with national partner organizations in all 16 countries of the region. Its mission is to promote and defend the right to freedom of expression of all persons, particularly the media and human rights defenders in West Africa (MFWA, 2019).

The MFWA was chosen for this study because of its media advocacy contribution to public policy and development.

### **3.3 Data Collection**

#### **3.3.1 Interviews**

The method of data collection was through the use of in-depth interviews. Wimmer & Dominick (2011) defined an interview as a purposive conversation aimed at eliciting responses to a particular phenomenon. The tool used for data collection was the interview guide. This approach and method provided an in-depth knowledge for the researcher to critically examine and understand the basic concepts of each media advocacy strategies by CSOs. The interview was guided by a semi-structured question guide of eight (8) questions. The first two questions on the interview guide explored the nature of the media advocacy by CSOs and other specific areas of focus. The other six (6) questions focused on the significance of media advocacy to CSOs, tactics, and the forms of media employed by CSOs. The interview was in two segments. The first was on the nature of CSO media advocacy work and its significance to them and the second was segment was on the approaches/tactics used by CSOs in their media advocacy work.

### **3.3.2 Data Collection Procedure**

An introduction letter was obtained from the Department of Communication studies and delivered to all three (3) CSOs requesting for an interview. Interviews were then scheduled. Interviews were conducted by the researcher only. A Senior Officer of the CSOs was interviewed. The semi-structured nature of the interview guide enabled the researcher to ask follow-up questions in a bid to probe much deeper into emergent issues. Prior to the beginning of each interview, the interviewee was briefed on the intent of the study. The proceedings of the interview were recorded after each interviewee consented to its use. Relevant notes were taken by the researcher while the interview was ongoing, noting the significant cues that were helpful for data analysis. The recorded interviews were transcribed on the same day of interview to have a good memory of what transpired.

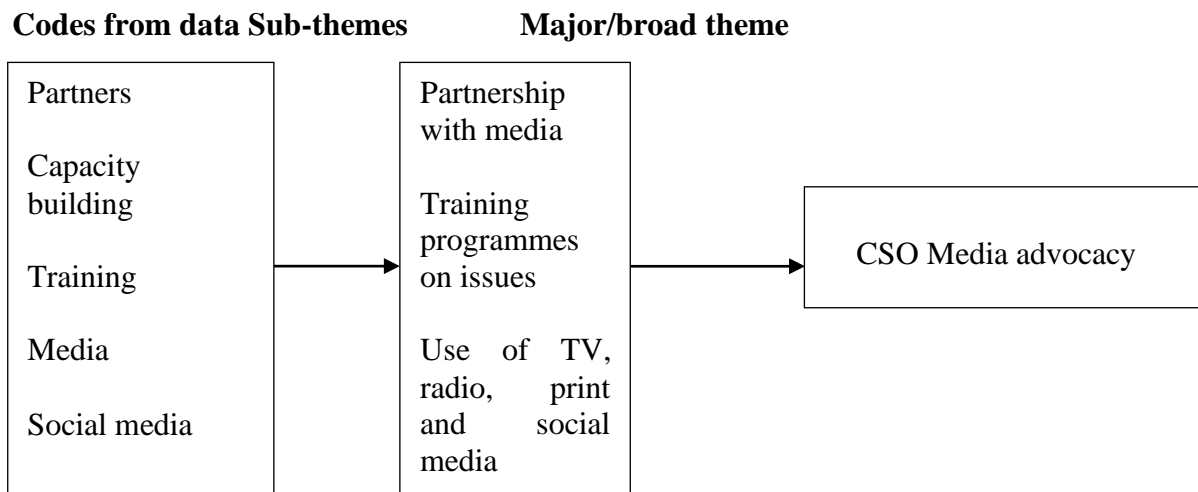
### **3.4 Data Analysis**

The recorded interview was transcribed and analyzed thematically, by identifying recurring themes. Thematic analysis is the process of looking out for recognizable reoccurrence of topics, ideas, patterns or themes occurring within data that provide insight into communication (Allen, 2017). The use of this data analysis technique enabled the researcher to understand similarities and differences employed by the sampled CSOs under examination in their media advocacy work.

Keywords or codes were identified and labeled as a result of carefully examining each transcript of the interview paying particular attention the segments of the interview. Sub-themes were then

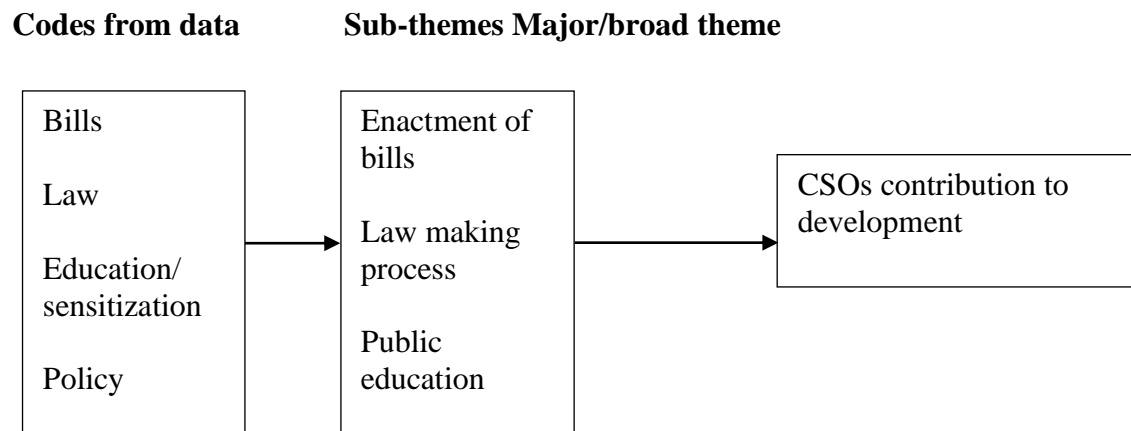
generated from a group of similar codes. For example, sub-themes like partnership with the media, training programs on issues, use of TV, radio, print and social media platforms formed a broader theme *Media advocacy*, likewise sub-themes like bills enactment, law making, public education formed a broader theme, *Contribution to development* in responding to the research questions. Thus, the major themes derived were Media advocacy and CSOs contribution to development. The thematic analysis process is illustrated in the figure below:

**Figure 4: Structure of thematic analysis conducted**



Source: Author's own construction (September 2019)

**Figure 5: Structure of thematic analysis conducted**



Source: Author's own construction (September 2019)

## CHAPTER FOUR

### FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

#### 4.0 Introduction

This chapter analyses the data gathered from interviews with Senior Officers of three CSOs. It discusses the major themes from the interviews namely Media Advocacy by CSOs and CSOs contribution to development. This chapter, therefore, presents the findings made from data analysis of each interview transcript. The CSOs to be discussed include, Centre for Democratic Development, Ghana Integrity Initiative and Media Foundation for West Africa.

The chapter also discusses the findings in relation to the underpinning theories of this study, related studies and literature where necessary to highlight the similarities and differences that exist between this current study and previous research findings in local or international context.

#### 4.1 CSO Media Advocacy

This section discusses the sub-themes that defined the major themes i.e. *CSO Media Advocacy*: from the research findings.

##### 4.1.2 Use of Print, Television and Radio media and social media for advocacy

The CSOs confirmed the use of the media for advocacy. This includes digital online platforms, radio, TV, print and social media. According to CDD-Ghana, the Afro barometer report draws on data from ordinary citizens to point out their needs to government. The attention these reports get from the media changes the discussions (sets the agenda) on morning shows, news programs among others. To corroborate this, a senior officer at CDD-Ghana said;

“...But I think what Afro barometer seeks to do is to go and talk to these people. So we speak to these people, we gather what they are trying to say and then we make it available for policy-makers, the media and CSOs advocates, international organizations, so that when it comes to the formulation of policies and all that they can refer to these documents and find out the thoughts of Africans”.

This is consistent with the agenda setting theory proposed by McCombs & Shaw (1972). One of the main assumption of this theory is the priority the media gives to certain issues. This is in the case of CDD-Ghana’s Afrobarometer report. When the findings of the report are discussed in the media, citizens are influenced by the salience issues as to what to think about and how to think about them. For example, the Afrobarometer report may include issues of accountable governance, health, corruption among others. When these are disseminated in the media, the media may give priority to issues of corruption, thereby setting the agenda on all corruption related matters. In turn, these issues of national interest are discussed on media platforms and when the voices of discerning citizens are aired to the government, it results in coercing duty bearers to act or serve the people better.

CDD-Ghana also organizes the District League Table, which is an assessment of the performance of the various districts, in terms of health, education, sanitation and provision of certain public services, etc. At regular intervals during the year, they produce a League Table to assign grades to each district. All the ratings of these districts are made available to the general public in the form of press releases and reports which are disseminated to the media. In most cases, the MMDCEs get uncomfortable and offended because they feel they are being publicly denounced. However, in line with the literature where Williamson and Rodd (2016) in their study, defined advocacy as the process of persuading targeted audience to take a specific policy action especially government officials, the League Table is not a tool for naming and shaming but a source of information to the citizens and/or residents so they can, among other things,

demand for accountability and delivery of better services from their duty bearers. This information, when made available to the people, empowers them to ask questions and demand for better services. CDD further stated that;

“So, let’s take the district league table, it’s like a league or an assessment of the various districts of how well they are doing in terms of health, education, sanitation and provision of certain public services. So at the end of the year or whichever round we produce a league table and then we sort of grade them. So maybe this district did well in sanitation, this district had this marking... so it is posted out there in the media. Sometimes the MMDCEs and stuff gets a bit offended because they feel like we are naming and shaming but it’s not a tool for naming and shaming, it is to give information to the citizens or residents so that they can demand for accountability, they can demand for better services from the duty bearers because they are there to provide these amenities. So why is it that my district is last in sanitation? Is it because we haven’t provided enough toilet? Is it because there aren’t enough bins? So that, this information, when it’s made readily available to them gets them the power to ask questions and demand for better services”.

CDD-Ghana emphasized the use of all forms of media and these include, television, radio, print, online and social media. Yet, the use of any of these forms of media depended largely on the type of project, type of message and the target audience. For example, they use community radio when they want a kind of message to be disseminated to a particular group of people, especially at the grassroots level and this target audience are reached through the use community radios. It said;

“...but we always rely on the media to send this information around. Community radio, especially for these campaigns that advocate for behavioral change, we use a lot of community radio stations, we have partnerships with Community radio stations”.

The MFWA on the other hand, stated for example, that when there is a press statement or a report for public consumption and education, they organize a press conference or a public forum and invite the media. In doing so, the report is presented and questions and comments are addressed. Occasionally, the statements or information are sent to the media via email but first

published on their website and their social media platforms. The MFWA also invites the media for coverage during their event or project launches. They sometimes schedule interviews with the media if the need arises to discuss specific issues. For example, the media may call on them, to speak to issues. The Senior officer at MFWA said;

“...so for instance if we have a press statement that we want to push it out or we produce a report that we want people to know about it, we either would organize a press conference or a public forum where we would invite the media to come , we present the report and take their questions or sometimes we just publish our report, sometimes via mail or first of all on our website before we get it published on other media platforms. So when we have event launches, project launches, we would invite the media for coverage, we would schedule interviews if we need to discuss specific issues, for example the media would call us on an issue and would like us to speak to it. So we do a lot of media interviews”

MFWA added that the choice of press statements is to ensure the quality of message they want in the media and public. Periodically, they use press kits, which are distributed to the media to suggest the correct message they are putting across. The use of the press kit is to prevent the possibility of a reporter choosing to be silent on certain raised concerns of MFWA. MFWA said;

“We always put out our statement. The statement we want to put out, we put out. Sometimes we use press kits. So that this is what we are saying, if you say any other thing, which sometimes happens because we can have an event and they won't even say the event was organized by MFWA”.

MFWA stated that, its website is the first point of call to the public, hence, every information on any programme is published on their website for public consumption. Beyond the website, they engage people in mainstream media to get issues published or/and amplified. This is, however, dependent on the geographical location. For example, the Ghanaian media are engaged with respects to Ghanaian issues. Similarly, the media in Burkina Faso are engaged with matters concerning their country. In cases of regional issues, media within the region are engaged with, in that order.

The MFWA acknowledged the use of social media platforms for some discussions. Twitter forums and Facebook are used for discussions and engagements. This is in agreement with the literature, Atengble (2014) which found that activities on social media platforms played an important role in the 2012 elections, it kept the public more educated on the issues and informed their voting decisions. Accordingly, the MFWA publishes news updates, statements and policy briefs, first on their website and then on Facebook and other social media handles. A respondent at MFWA stated that;

“Occasionally on Twitter, MFWA conducts e-forums. We term it the *Twitter forums*, on a particular subject. There have been instances of a number of internet shutdowns in some countries, either in West Africa or in other parts of Africa, where we organize tweet forum and have people come on to Twitter, at a particular date and time and to discuss these issues. People tweet their suggestions, recommendations, and perspective on a particular subject matter”.

Similarly, GII employs the use of social media in their advocacy work depending on the issue at hand and the urgency of it. The senior officer interviewed said;

“...like I said it's the issue at stake, so for instance when you are dealing with an issue that requires visuals, you know, it's obvious that people don't like to read long reports. Whenever we are translating reports into visuals, info-graphics, your best platform is to use social media to a very large extent. And let's not forget the immediacy of the issue. Because the social media is more spontaneous and faster. And the fact that these days it's become extremely interactive, you will want to use social media to propagate an issue that require some immediacy, time and the likes. So there are a lot of considerations that informs the type and choice of media. We use social media when we are targeting students and middle-aged persons”.

CDD-Ghana mentioned that most of their campaigns included social media. They use info-graphics, animated videos, general artworks, explainer videos but always rely on the traditional media to disseminate information. It said;

“We include a lot of social media stuff so info graphics, animated videos, general artworks, explainer videos but we always rely on the media to send this information around”

#### **4.1.3 Partnership with Media Institutions**

Vozab (2012) stressed the importance of CSOs relationship with the media as an “important instrument for CSOs to legitimize their actions and bring issues of concern to the public” (p. 17)

One of CDD-Ghana’s programme designed and dedicated to fight corruption, called *The Corruption Watch* seeks to change the narrative by pushing for policies to be made, demand accountability and push for culprits to be punished. This, according to CDD-Ghana, is prudent because corruption has become an endemic and normalized. *Corruption Watch* is a partnership project between Joy FM and some CSOs including CDD-Ghana which is aired every Wednesday. They investigate cases, dig up corruption cases that have been swallowed up or buried and put pressure on government, security agencies and other relevant stakeholders, to prosecute culprits. CDD-Ghana said;

“What Corruption Watch seeks to do is to change the narrative, so we are pushing for policies to be made, we are pushing for culprits to be punished, we are pushing for...we are persistent, you know so that, we sort of like prevent these corrupt acts and you see that it’s a collaboration that we had with some CSOs and Joy FM. And it’s a Wednesday show on Joy FM, the morning show. We investigate cases, we dig up certain cases that have been buried, we put pressure on government and the security agencies and whoever is in charge to make sure that the culprits are prosecuted and we have this thing we say that ‘we don’t forget’, right, so we keep pushing until justice is served. So that is what corruption watch is about”.

CDD-Ghana also revealed some forms of partnerships with the media. In the year 2019, CDD-Ghana had Graphic Communications Group Limited (GCGL) as its media partner to organize an annual lecture on good governance called “*Kronti ne Akwamu*” lectures. GCGL provided live streaming for the lecture. It is however worth noting that, in certain instances, the services of the

media need to be paid for due to its commercial obligations. Nevertheless, the partnership provides an opportunity to strike a fair deal of paying about 20% or 30% of what ordinarily a business entity would have paid. CDD-Ghana said;

“I don’t know if you follow the *Kronti ne Akwamu* lectures? So the very recent one was on Gender. So our key media partner was Graphic. So they did live streaming and everything for us. There are times that you don’t get everything for free because they are also into business, but you can strike a deal so that you put something on the table, so end up paying 20% or 30% of what ordinarily a business entity would have paid. So you sort of put something on the table so it’s a trade-off”.

Some other partnership technique employed by CDD-Ghana in their media advocacy work is the creation of a press corps made up of media practitioners on a WhatsApp platform. CDD-Ghana engages them on daily basis thus building an informal relationship with them. Therefore, they have direct access to them as they engage the press corps on daily basis. They have informal discourses with the press and discuss trending issues as friends. In essence, a good relationship is forged. This, among other things, gives them the urge over other business entities, and provides them with certain privileges in making it possible for them to have a front-page spot in the print media when deadline for submission of the said news item are missed. Similarly, when they have a programme, for example, and they need a TV station to cover at the very last minute, a text can be sent to a media partner and their request will be granted. In most cases, CDD-Ghana is given exclusives by their media partners because the media expects a newsworthy story that would sell. So, they give the media a good deal, in terms of the news. At other times, due to the relationship between them, the media houses are given preferences and advance notice, in terms of what to expect from an upcoming a press conference, especially with an Afro barometer research findings, which is usually a hot cake. CDD-Ghana also create special partnerships with the media.

In terms of using the word ‘media’, MFWA reiterated that they use that word advisedly because in as much as the media comes across as a tool, they are also regarded as partners in the work that MFWA engage in, as a CSO. The media is a whole constituency for the MFWA so they do a lot of trainings for the media. They provide the media with funding support so they can report on any other issues, quite apart from issues typically considered as MFWA issues.

In executing GII’s core mandate in the fight against corruption, GII makes use of investigative journalism. Due to this, the GII has formed a partnership with the media. Therefore, when some corruption cases are brought to light, GII gathers information from investigations conducted by investigative journalists as proof or evidence before advocating for culprits to be punished. This is because allegations leveled against persons in public in the attempt to the fight corruption may have an implication on people’s freedoms and rights. Hence, before going out to accuse people of corruption, one has to be mindful of having facts as basis, generated requisite evidence to substantiate the claim, and the emergence of investigative journalism helps to a very large extent, in generating at least civil evidence to begin any litigation process. The senior officer at CDD said;

“...what other platform or tools to use than to use the media? So the media is a very important part of Ghana Integrity Initiative. The other part of the fight against corruption is also investigation because the fight against corruption also has an implication on people’s freedoms and rights. Before you go out accusing people of corruption, you have to be mindful of the fact that you have covered your basis, generated requisite evidence to substantiate your claim, and the emergence of investigative journalism helps to a very large extent in generating at least civil evidence to begin any criminal proceedings”.

#### 4.1.3 Media Training Programmes on Issues

CDD-Ghana asserted to organizing public dissemination events, where only the media are invited. Sometimes, other stakeholders who are interested in that public dissemination project are also invited. For instance, with the sensitization on the election of MMDCEs this year (2019), CDD-Ghana organized a workshop where Parliamentarians, MMDCEs, the Ministry for Local Government and the media as well as other key stakeholders were invited. They discussed issues from their research findings and invited experts in those areas to interpret the data. This is done because the data collated is mostly quantitative and having experts from the field of Local Governance to interpret, makes the data meaningful, making the research findings and recommendations more practical. CDD-Ghana said;

“We also have what we call public dissemination event where we invite the media, sometimes it could just be the media but sometimes we invite other stakeholders who are interested in that. So for instance, the election of MMDCEs we had an event where we invited Parliamentarians, MMDCEs, the Ministry and the media and other key stakeholders. And we train the media and discuss the issue that this are the findings”

GII also mentioned how they involved the media in training programmes in order to build their capacities. They said;

“There are times also that the media itself becomes our audience because when an issue breaks up and you want to ensure that you help the media to set an informed agenda you ought to build the capacity of the media so an example is when beneficiary ownership disclosure became an issue in this country and we started discussing it in Ghana. We thought that it’s important to build the capacity of the media so that they understand the issues around beneficiary ownership disclosure and its impact on the fight against corruption. Then having built their capacity, the media becomes well-equipped and then they do informed reportage. We have done same with Open Governance partnership, you know. All these new or emerging development issues, anti-corruption issues that are happening, anytime we get involved we build the capacity of the media to understand the issues, the components of it, how it works so that at least we guide and shape the media’s thinking around the issue so they become more informed and then they can do their own independent reportage”.

## **4.2CSOs Contribution to development**

This section discusses the sub-themes that defined the major theme i.e. *CSOs contribution to development* from the findings.

### **4.2.1 Public Education**

According to GII, their core mandate is to fight corruption. The fight against corruption cannot be won solely on sanctions as per the ACT 29 of 1960 of the Criminal Offences and Procedure Act. As observed by GII, the Act engages the use of sanctions but a lot of lessons have emerged or has been revealed that the fight against corruption can be won if education, sensitization, public knowledge and public involvement is enhanced, therefore, GII seeks to promote participation in the fight against corruption. This, they opined could be done effectively through the media because at any given time, one cannot bring so many people together, which may be due to resource constraints. They said;

“...it has emerged or has been found that it can be learnt that the fight against corruption can be won if we enhance education, sensitization, public knowledge and public involvement to promote participation in the fight against corruption and that can be done effectively through the media”.

From their words, one of MFWA focus area is the monitoring and campaigning around issues on human rights such as the violation of journalists. Therefore, the two main programmes are media and governance and freedom of expression. These areas make use of the media a lot, depending on the project at hand. During elections, for example, they organize the language monitoring and sensitization project that seeks to get political party communicators and programme hosts, hosts of political talks, discursive programmes and show hosts, to be moderate or decent in the language they use. This is one of their major flagship projects of MFWA. The MFWA said;

“...so for instance during elections, we do the language monitoring project and it is a project that seeks to get political party communicators and program hosts, hosts of political talks, discussion programs and shows to be more moderate or decent in the language they use and it’s been one of our flagship projects during elections so usually, right from the beginning and as we get to 2020, you realize we probably start around December. We talk about it on all our platforms”

CDD-Ghana also mentioned that they engage in a lot of public education on issues like voter participation. They said;

“We have been able to educate people and enhance voter participation because the times that voter participation was really low, people thought it was like they wouldn’t care.”

#### **4.2.2 Enactment of bills**

There are quite a number of bills that have been passed as a result of media advocacy, such as, the Right to Information Bill, RTI. CDD-Ghana played a key role in media campaigns in addition to the marching and demonstration on the streets for the bill to be passed. The media campaign and demonstration were in conjunction with the media. The media made a lot of education on the need for the RTI bill. Both CDD-Ghana and the media also made use of social media platforms.

GII also emphasized that, largely, CSOs in partnership with the media have chalked some successes. One of those success stories is in the area of the passage of the RTI Bill and the Whistleblowers Act. The Whistleblowers Act was featured prominently in the works of GII and became a success because of their media advocacy works. They also argued that the media advocacy on the Public Procurement Act, which was supported by the media, has helped in successfully prosecuting culprits. GII said;

“...but let’s talk about the Right to information. The media spearheaded the right to information bill campaign. Recently we also talking about the whistleblowers act. A lot of the media advocacy around the whistle blowers act has also been very successful. And not too long ago the issue of the public procurement act. It was an initiative that GII supported and the media effectively helped in prosecuting”.

#### **4.2.3 Law Making Process**

According to CDD-Ghana, it found from its Afro barometer research that a large proportion of Ghanaians supported the election of MMDCEs. This endorsement of election of MMDCEs was validated by findings of the research. CDD said;

“...there were issues about the election of MMDCEs and stuff and we asked Ghanaians what they think about that. Now, a large majority of Ghanaians said that they wanted it. So if you follow the news, you’ll realize that even though they were drawing their roadmap and everything, the Ministry of Local Governance was always referring to that”.

Consequently, the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development in partnership with a coalition called *the CSO Coalition on the National Referendum and election of MMDCEs*, are currently playing key roles in the lead up to the amend article55(3) in the 1992 constitution. The coalition is made up of CDD-Ghana, the Centre for Local Governance Advocacy (CLGA) and the Institute for Democratic Governance (IDEG).

#### **4.3 Discussion of Findings**

This section discusses the findings in relation to the research objectives and questions of this study to examine (1) the nature of CSO media advocacy; areas of specialization, forms of media tactics and techniques in influencing public policy choices in Ghana, (2) to examine the significance and contribution of CSO media advocacy to the development agenda. This discussion is also in relation to literature reviewed and theories underpinning this study.

#### **4.3.1 General Description of Sampled CSOs**

The major objectives of each of CSOs under consideration place emphasis on promoting good governance, eliminating or fighting against corruption and advocating for the rights of individuals in the media, and the rights of citizens in general. Their advocacy works are either targeted towards policy change or behavioral change as argued by Williamson and Rodd (2016). Each CSO has different programmes or projects with different objectives and specific target audiences. All of these, come together to create an impact on Ghana's development in one way or another.

To cite few examples, CDD-Ghana has various programmes like the Afro barometer research with an objective of providing policy-makers with data from their survey, processed and made meaningful with assistance from experts and technocrats. Under this programme, policy-makers are the target audience and the research conducted by Afro barometer serves as a background information used to influence policies, resulting in a positive change thereby satisfying the needs of citizens. CDD-Ghana and other CSOs like GII, GACC and ACILA in partnership with a media outlet in Ghana, Joy FM, host a weekly programme called the *Corruption Watch*. The program seeks to address the issues of corruption in efforts to pile pressure on the political rhetoric of fighting corruption. Each weeks' show tackles allegations of corruption, exposure of corruption from investigative journalists, revelations of corruption from whistle-blowers etc. The platform reports and interrogates officials about actions taken against the culprits of corruption and whether funds have been retrieved (Corruption Watch, 2019). The data available for this study suggest that the programme is used to advocate for behavioral change. This is in line with

the findings of Williamson and Rodd (2016) as it is targeted at leaders of political parties and individuals in government.

GII, like that of CDD-Ghana, has engaged in similar programmes which were directed at policy and /or behavioral change. The advocacy on the need for the Whistleblowers Act and the RTI law made it possible for it to be realized in the country. As mentioned earlier, the GII works in partnership with CDD-Ghana and other CSOs on the *Corruption Watch* TV program.

The MFWA, under one of its programmes, also use the media to advocate for the use of decent and moderate language on media platforms. The advocacy is targeted at talk show hosts, programme hosts, political talk show hosts among others during election periods. The goal of this flagship project is to ensure that hosts radio or television programmes do not look on unconcerned when there is an indecent use of language that may incite fear or anger by any of invited panelist, discussants or guests. They do this by monitoring all radio, TV and print media across the country. The findings and recommendations are published in a report which is shared with the media. The expected end result of this project is to create behavioral change in the tone and decency of language used in the media.

#### **4.3.2 Nature of Media advocacy by the CSOS**

It can be deduced from the findings that, the basic concept underlining each CSO's media advocacy work in influencing development agenda is the use of media in advocating for programmes or projects. They do this by partnering with the media houses and practitioners or by using the media as a tool. This is in agreement with the findings of Vozab (2012) which

described the mass media as an important instrument. It also stressed on the importance of CSOs creating a relationship with the media.

Relating to the agenda setting theory, and from the findings of this study, the CSOs, with help from the media sets agenda on various issues like the RTI bill, the Local Government Reforms; the election of MMDCEs, the Afro barometer research, findings on the performance of each district (District League Table), the fight against corruption, the Whistleblowers Act and the monitoring of language in the media among others. For example, when CDD-Ghana releases the ratings or performance of the districts, (which is called the District League Table) to the media, news and discussions on district performance become the highlights or top stories in the media. As a result, district performances issues are left on the minds of citizens who may eventually think those issues are the important news of the day.

Once the agenda is set, citizens are able to perceive what is important and what is not (Griffin, 2012). As a result, the issues become more like the objects of media discourse and public agenda (Fayoyin, 2014). Citizens are somehow influenced and are better informed on the issues at hand to make an informed choice in pushing for a cause i.e. a positive behavioral change or a policy change. This also puts citizens in a better position to demand for accountability.

It can be noted that, the Agenda Setting theory was initially propounded for the news media only. However, anecdotal evidence from the findings reveal that CSOs through their media advocacy work have taken the agenda setting theory to suit their operations. This is because the report from the research findings and advocacy work when disseminated or aired through mass media

sets the agenda in the media. The agenda is set on issues of the economy, governance, health, education, corruption, trade among others.

#### **4.4.3 CSOs Areas of Specialization**

One of the research questions of this study was to understand the areas of specialization of CSOs in Ghana. The findings indicated that the CSOs studied have their areas of focus and specialization based on their Institution's mission, vision and objective. That is, CDD-Ghana is focused on promoting good governance, GII focuses on the fight against corruption and the MFWA focuses on protecting the rights of individuals in the media and that of citizens in general.

All literature reviewed did not clearly state which areas the CSOs focused on. On the contrary, it generalized the nature of the CSOs overall objective which is to influence policy in order to create a change.

#### **4.4.4 Tactics or Techniques Used In Targeting the Public**

In addressing the research question, the findings from this study has revealed other forms of tactics used by CSOs in their media advocacy work in pushing for development. Vozab (2012) identified four approaches used by CSOs and they are namely; (i) adjusting to mass media logic by adopting to communicative techniques, (ii) influencing mass media institutions, (iii) creating alternate forms of communication and (iv) the use of alternative media such as social media. The first two approaches will be elaborated under this section whiles the other two will be explained in the next section.

It can be said that, the findings of this study are in accord with the findings of Vozab (2012). In adjusting to mass media logic by adopting to communicative techniques, GII, MFWA and CDD-Ghana have adjusted their media advocacy work to include social media. They have created content for social media that makes it easy to be understood by all. This content includes infographics, explainer videos, charts, tables, artworks and animated videos for their target audience. Looking at the second approach, GII and MFWA influence the media institutions through trainings and workshops for media practitioners. In doing so, they are able to better explain the issues at hand to the media practitioners who in tend are better placed and equipped to set the agenda and demand accountability.

Additionally, CDD-Ghana has created a Press corps on a WhatsApp messenger platform, made up of editors and journalists to enable them interact on issues. This has created a very good relationship between both parties and has provided them with some privileges. Some examples of these privileges are partnership on projects, good deals and the provision of newsworthy stories to media practitioners to be the first to disseminate news worthy stories from CDD-Ghana. Through the process of interacting with the media practitioners on the platform, CDD-Ghana's attention is sometimes drawn to happenings in the country. CDD-Ghana, accordingly, conducts research into the issues and provides feedback to the media through trainings and workshops. In so doing, the media becomes well informed on matters and this translates in their reportage. It can be noted from the findings that, and as explained by Vozab (2012) and Silpakar (2012) that the process of providing training opportunities for media practitioners on issues by the CSOs helps improve the representation of issues of the marginalized and minority groups as

a whole to the public domain. CDD-Ghana, MFWA and GII all pointed this out in their submissions.

CDD-Ghana for instance, in sharing the findings of the Afro barometer research, disseminates information in bits to the media practitioners through workshops. MFWA and GII also conduct similar capacity building workshops and trainings for media practitioners under their programmes. This process of capacity building of the media practitioners has empowered them to demand accountability and improved their reportage on issues.

In relating this to the two-step flow theory, (which is based on the assumption that opinion leaders receive information, break it down and pass it on to others), CSOs can be described as the opinion leaders because when issues are brought to light in the media, they take it upon themselves to further break it down, in the form of reports, workshops and trainings among others for citizens in order for them to make informed choices. For example, this can be said on the fight against of Galamsey in the Ghanaian media. This resulted in some CSOs taking up the issue and forming coalitions with some media institutions to intensify the awareness in order to bring it to an end. In this case, CSOs and the media practitioners themselves acted as opinion leaders by breaking down the message to targeted groups of the Ghanaian population.

Persistence in media advocacy is also one of the techniques employed by MFWA, CDD-Ghana and GII. They consistently advocate for actions to be taken. This puts pressure on the responsible authorities and stakeholders to take actions on issues of public concern. They commend these authorities when the desired results are achieved on the same media platforms.

Finally, the use of digital online platforms such as social media; Twitter, Facebook, YouTube and Instagram and websites are employed in the media advocacy works by GII, CDD-Ghana and MFWA. The CSOs pointed that media campaigns tend to gain momentum on these platforms and are able to reach a wide array of audience in the shortest possible time. As posited by Atengble (2014), the use of social media platforms resulted in educating and informing the public.

#### **4.4.5 Forms of Media used**

As found by Omotoso (2010), media technology has reached some level of expansion which has motivated its usage in innovative ways in content production, platform and devices. This is consistent with the findings of this study, as the sampled CSOs use these various media in different innovative ways including the use of social media. In addition, the three main traditional media namely, radio, TV and print remained the most used by all the CSOs sampled for this study. The advancement and proliferation in media forms has provided the CSOs with various media platforms for their media advocacy work.

In addition, as pointed out by Vozab (2012) that CSOs use alternate media such as social media in their advocacy work, the findings of this study confirm that assertion. CDD-Ghana use social media platforms such as twitter, Facebook, Instagram in their advocacy work. MFWA mentioned that a particular platform, Twitter, is used for forums where people get to share experiences, suggestions and recommendations. They call this Twitter forums. They also use Facebook where updates on reports, statements or press releases are posted. GII also use Twitter and Facebook in

their advocacy work. The common platform among them all is the use of online websites where details on their advocacy work is shared for public consumption. The use of these new forms of media has been efficient in reaching a wider audience and also helpful in educating and informing the public as posited in Atengble (2014) study.

#### **4.4.6 Significance of media advocacy to CSOs in contributing to Ghana's development**

In answering the second research question, the significance of media advocacy to CSOs in contributing to Ghana's development cannot be overlooked. This is evident in what each CSO described as the significance of their media advocacy work to Ghana's policy making and development. The study found that, the CSOs' media advocacy reaches a wider audience within the shortest possible time. Their media advocacy work, depending on the issue at hand, the form of media used and target audience is able to reach the remotest part of the country in a short time. In doing so, citizens and stakeholders through the media agenda setting and framing are influenced on what to think about and what specific characteristic of these topics or issues. The use of opinion leaders or CSOs acting as opinion leaders also goes a long way in influencing the public in making public policy choices (the two step flow theory). The public becomes well informed and advocates on the issues at hand. As a result, policies are able to be made or a behavioral change is achieved.

This can be said for GII. Through their media advocacy work, the RTI bill and the Whistleblowers Act have been passed. CDD-Ghana, under their CODEO programme have been able to sensitize citizens through their media advocacy work, on the importance of voter participation. These efforts sum up to bringing about progress, positive change, and a rise in the

level and quality of life of the Ghanaian population. This finding is similar to the findings of Williamson and Rodd (2016) and Fayoyin (2014) who both agreed that media advocacy plays a crucial role in influencing public policy choices towards development in a country.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.0 Introduction

The study sought to explore the nature or concept of CSO media advocacy in pushing for development in Ghana by studying three CSOs in Ghana. It sought to examine the differences in their tactics or techniques of their media advocacy work in targeting their public, the significance of their media advocacy to development in Ghana and the forms of media used by them. This chapter summarizes the key findings of the study, by addressing the research objectives and questions of the study as stated out in the first chapter of this dissertation.

A qualitative approach was used in this research, due to the explorative demands of the research objectives and the need to gather an in-depth information on the topic. Data was collected by using a semi-structured interview guide in conducting interviews with the three CSOs. The interviews were recorded with a mobile phone and transcribed on the same day of interview by the researcher with the intention of having a good memory of what transpired. The transcript of the interview was analyzed based on major themes derived from recurring sub-themes guided by the objectives of the study. This chapter also presents the conclusions drawn from the results of the analysis of the interviews and makes recommendations for further studies.

#### 5.1 Summary of Findings

One significant finding from the study is that, all the three CSOs engage in media advocacy work. It forms a basic part of their work, and without the use of the media in communicating the issues, their advocacy cannot reach a wider audience. As implied earlier in chapter 2,

development cannot occur without any form of communication. The application of this and the two-step theory, forms the basis of CSOs media advocacy work. The CSOs' focus on the media advocacy, depending on the programme, aims at policy change or influence or a behavioral change.

The study also found that, in order for the CSOs to effectively execute their media advocacy work, a form of relationship or partnership needs to be created with the media. This is because, it helps the media to better understand the issues, become fully informed and as a result, become part of the advocacy themselves in demanding for the desired positive social or policy change. However, on the other hand, the CSOs believed that in certain cases, they only use the media in their advocacy work as a tool when the need arises. The use of the various social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook and YouTube by the CSOs is an example of such instance.

The study also found that media advocacy done on social media platforms has a wider reach in the shortest period of time and it is able to reach the young and middle-aged population of the country. They believe that in the era with rise in demand of smartphones usage, content developed on issues are mostly designed for these social media platforms.

It is however, worth noting from the findings that, CSO media advocacy could either drive towards development of thwart development. Hence, careful considerations are made by these CSOs on issues before bringing it out to the public.

## **5.2 Conclusion**

The study explored the nature and concept of CSO media advocacy work, its tactics and techniques, CSOs media advocacy significance to Ghana's development and the forms of media employed in their work.

The findings of this study indicate that CSO media advocacy is very significant to Ghana's development as it serves as a source for the education of, and sensitization of citizens. Media advocacy also helps reach a wider audience, even to the remote part of the country, with information trickling down to the grassroots level. Accordingly, as people become more abreast with issues, they are able to make informed choices. These choices influence policy making and causes behavioral change thereby leading to development.

## **5.3 Limitations of Study**

The researcher encountered some limitations and the following are the most prominent ones. The first was the availability of scant literature as most focused on advocacy only and only a few were relevant in forming the basis for this study. It therefore, made it challenging for the current study to draw on and relate its findings to studies in the local context. Secondly, the initial sample size of the CSO was four in number. The fourth CSO, IMANI Ghana was unable to grant the interview request on time. Due to time constraints on the part of the researcher, the study could not include them. Finally, this study cannot be generalized, but provides a Ghanaian perspective to the growing literature on CSO media advocacy and its impact to development.

#### **5.4 Recommendations**

This research has provided some form of insight into the general outlook of CSO media advocacy work in Ghana and its contribution to the development agenda. Further studies can be conducted to look into the external communication relationship between CSO's and media institutions, taking specific interest or focus in their costs and benefits in their media advocacy roles. Future studies can also look at specific media advocacy programmes and trace their impact on Ghana's development.

The study also recommends that CSOs should be more social media oriented in their media advocacy work by forging a relationship with the media using social media platforms such as WhatsApp. CSOs can create groups on WhatsApp with the media that will help cultivate media relationship and goodwill in pushing the former's advocacy agenda before the public and the state.

The CSOs could identify community opinion leaders on certain issues or community exemplars that can participate on community discussions organized by them.

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## **APPENDIX A**

### **INTERVIEW GUIDE**

My name is Pearl Naa Anowa Buxton. I am a Masters Student at the Department of Communication Studies, University of Ghana. I am conducting a research on the use of media advocacy by Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in pushing Development agenda in Ghana and would be grateful if you find time to respond to these questions for academic purposes only.

#### **Nature and significance of CSO media advocacy**

1. What is the nature of your media advocacy work as a CSO?
2. Is it driven towards development?
3. Do you have any specific areas of focus? If any, what are they and why?
4. Any successful media advocacy work done in the past that is tailored towards social development?
5. What is the significance of using media advocacy in your work?

#### **Tactic/approaches of CSO media advocacy**

6. What tactics are employed in using media advocacy for your work in targeting your publics?
7. How do you craft your message to suit the media advocacy style?
8. What are the various forms of media employed in your work?
9. Any other form of your media advocacy work? How do you do it?
10. Any additions you might add that may be helpful for this study?